



AS IT IS

## Goat's Milk Fed to Protected Elephants in Kenya

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Elephants in a protected community in Kenya are being fed goat's milk as a less costly form of food.

Workers at the Reteti Elephant **Sanctuary** in northern Kenya say the elephants enjoy drinking the goat's milk. They say the milk may be healthier for them than other choices.

The sanctuary had been using powdered baby milk to feed the young animals it cares for. But it decided to test goat's milk, which costs less and is locally available.

The sanctuary rescues young elephants that are found alone in the wild. It cares for them until they are old enough to be returned to the wild.

Dr. Steven Chege is the sanctuary's medical advisor. He told Reuters news agency the goat's milk seems to be especially helpful to baby elephants.

"This is an animal that has just maybe lost a mother, they have been separated from their family," he said. "So they get a lot of psychological **traumas**."

This kind of trauma can harm the animal's overall health, Chege said. But goat's milk has been found to be "very good for the survival and health" of baby elephants, he added.

Chege said goat's milk is helpful because it contains a different kind of "highly **digestible** protein" not found in powdered baby milk. This results in fewer stomach problems for the young elephants.

The change to goat's milk is expected to reduce feeding costs for the sanctuary, Chege said. The sanctuary usually keeps between 15 to 30 elephants.

Local community member Liwana Lenakukunyia is one of many goat farmers selling milk to the sanctuary. She told Reuters she was happy to get new earnings.

Lenakukunyia said many of the farmers now earning money are women. "Since we started milking goats and selling milk to the sanctuary, at least we have our own **cash**..you can feed your family with," she said.

I'm Bryan Lynn.

*Reuters reported this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the report for VOA Learning English. Ashley Thompson was the editor.*

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## Words in This Story

**sanctuary** – *n.* a place where people or animals are given protection and shelter

**trauma** – *n.* a very difficult or unpleasant experience that causes mental or emotional problems

**digest** – *v.* to change food in the stomach into substances the body can use

**cash** – *n.* money in the form of coins or paper