# english black

# Package 88, Script 3

July 2009

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**Adventures of Neddy: A community animal health worker helps a village manage Newcastle disease**

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### Notes to broadcaster

Chickens are a type of livestock that are very easy to keep because they can feed by grazing freely on foods that are readily available. In other words, they are free range. Also, chickens reproduce easily. But they are susceptible to a major disease which has no cure: Newcastle disease. Though it does not have a cure, there is a vaccine for the disease. Farmers fail to regularly vaccinate their chickens because of lack of knowledge or because the vaccine is expensive. Often, the drug is sold in large bottles which can treat several hundred chickens. This is very expensive for farmers who have only a few chickens. And that is why community vaccination for chickens by community animal health workers is a great idea.

In many areas, there is a shortage of veterinary doctors. Paraveterarians, also called community animal health workers or veterinary volunteers, help to provide services where there is no veterinarian. They are volunteers who do not receive any salary, but earn a living by charging small labour fees for their services. They are trained to diagnose and treat many livestock diseases, and to refer other diseases to veterinarians. Farmers often buy livestock medicines and provide transport for the community animal health worker to and from their farm.

In this script, the community animal health worker tells the villagers that the vaccine for Newcastle disease is available only in doses for large numbers of chickens, such as 300 or more. In some African countries, vaccines with smaller numbers of doses can be purchased. Also, in some African countries such as Zambia, Mozambique and Ghana, vaccines are available which do not have to be kept in the freezer. Research the situation in your country.

This script is a mini-drama which highlights the need to vaccinate chickens against Newcastle disease and the benefits of having a community animal health worker in your community. Two ways to use this script are by simply adapting this drama for your audience or using it as inspiration to produce your own mini-drama on livestock diseases in your area.

**Narrator:** In many African countries, including Malawi, the majority of farmers have at least one chicken. These chickens are local breeds which graze freely. In other words, they are free range chickens. An outbreak of Newcastle disease can easily kill all the chickens in the village. Newcastle is preventable with vaccination. So why are many farmers not buying the vaccine for their chickens? Stand by to find out.

**FX:** *Sound of hitting metal with a small hammer.*

**Wife:** My husband Neddy, why are you mending the bicycle at this late hour? Where do you want to go this late?

**Neddy:** Oh! My wife… I am going nowhere today. I am just preparing for tomorrow. You know summer is approaching….

**Wife:** (*With a smile*) I thought it was another sick cow. Since you became a community animal health worker, you are always on the go.

**Neddy:** Are you happy now, my wife?

**Wife:** Oh yes. Why not?

**Neddy:** That is what being a community animal health worker is all about. Don’t we earn a living with it, my wife?

**Wife:** I know. But people need to give you some rest time. They call you all the time. Even in the middle of night! Come here! A cow did this, a pig has that problem…. There’s no time to rest.

**Neddy:** So you care for me that much?

**Wife:** Yes I do, my dear.

*They both laugh.*

**Wife:** But Neddy, I heard you saying something about summer approaching. What is the connection between the approaching summer and you going to town tomorrow?

**Neddy:** You know that summer is the dry season. Butdo you also know that it’s during summer when we lose those chickens which have multiplied during the rainy season to Newcastle disease?

**Wife:** Yes, I know.

**Neddy:** Right now is a good time to vaccinate our chickens – before Newcastle comes. It is close to three months since we vaccinated the chickens in this village and the surrounding ones.

**Wife:** Okay. So you want to buy vaccine for our chickens?

**Neddy:** No! Not for our chickens only, but…

**Wife:** (*Angrily interrupts him*) But what? Do you want to face the same embarrassment as before? Have you forgotten how people said that you were vaccinating village chickens only for the money?

**Neddy:** I do remember that very well my wife, but you know…

**Wife:** (*Interrupting*) Know what? Do not argue further. Tomorrow when you go to town, buy vaccine for our ten chickens. That’s all!

**Neddy:** No. You know there are no small bottles for 10 chickens. One store sells vaccine for 1000 chickens at MK850 and another store sells vaccine for 300 chickens at MK600. So...

**Wife:** (*Interrupting)*Sobuy the one for 300 chickens, use it for our 10 chickens and throw away the rest.

**Neddy:** We will lose money. It means we will be vaccinating our chickens for MK60 each instead of MK10, which I can charge and make a profit.

**Wife:** So it’s true what people are saying – that you are doing it for business?

**Neddy:** My wife, remember what encouraged me to volunteer to learn veterinary skills. Was it not to end animal health problems in this village? I thought our dream was to save our village from livestock diseases and problems which are preventable?

**Wife:** Yes, I remember and for that reason I allow you to do it as you planned.

**Neddy:** That is my wife now speaking.

*They both laugh.*

*Scene transition. Music in, then hold under below.*

**Narrator:** Neddy knows very well that to buy a large bottle of vaccine for just a few chickens is to lose money. Have you ever tried to involve your neighbour in vaccinating your chickens? It is complicated! What about trying to involve the whole village for a small fee? Did you ever try to involve the whole community in preventing Newcastle disease?

*Scene music up and crossfade into below.*

**Narrator:** Neddy knows that since he vaccinated the chickens three months ago there has been no news of Newcastle disease, not even in the villages which did not vaccinate their chickens. Will the villagers allow him to vaccinate their chickens this time? The people have been called to the chief’s court and are waiting to hear why they have been called.

**FX:** *The crowd at the chief’s court*

**Village head:** People. Silence, please. Silence, please.

**Mwale:** (*He is drunk and slowly sings and dances as he approaches the court off mic*) Ayo! Ayo! Ayo! Give a full glass of beer!

**FX:** *People laugh*

**Wife:** (*Whispering*)My brother Mwale shames me. Always drunk. How much more does he shame his wife?

**Mrs. Kwenda:** Yes, your brother is always drunk. But on the other hand, your brother Mwale is hard working. If only he could reduce his alcohol intake, then he would prosper.

**Wife:** You are right.

**Village head:** Mr. Mwale! Mr. Mwale!

**Mwale:** Chief!

**Village head:** I am saying silence, please!

**Mwale:** (*Softly*)Ok chief, ok. I will sit close to my in-law Neddy. But first tell us why you have called us.... We want to go home. We have other…important things to do…we are drinking.

*Some people laugh. Some murmur in support and others against Mwale.*

**Village head:** Mwale! Silence. Remember you must pay if you misbehave in my court.

**Mwale:** Sorry, chief. Sorry, chief.

**Village head:** (*Breathes a sigh of relief and* *changes subject*) This meeting was called by our local veterinary volunteer, our own son, the man who has enabled many of us to have wonderful cross breed dairy cows through artificial insemination with his magic hands. Let’s welcome Mr. Neddy.

**People:** (*Chanting and whistling*)Neddy! Neddy!

**Neddy:** (*Speaks while people are still making noise*) Thank you, chief, for that honour.

**Mwale:** Get straight to the point and don’t delay us any longer.

**Mrs. Kwenda:** (*At the top of her voice*) Quiet! Quiet! (*Total silence*) Let us hear what our community animal health worker has brought us. (*Silence*)

**Neddy:** (*Clearing his throat*) As you know, three months have passed since we vaccinated our chickens, and the dangerous summer is approaching when Newcastle disease can again infect our chickens.

**All:** Yes.

**Neddy:** It’s time to vaccinate our chickens again.

**Mr. Kwenda:** When do you intend to vaccinate our chickens?

**Neddy:** Mmm…Today is Saturday. To give you time to collect money, when do you think we should do this, Mr. Kwenda?

**Mr. Kwenda:** Tuesday morning next week.

**Neddy:** Agreed everybody? Tuesday next week!

**All:** Yes.

**Neddy:** Do not let your chickens go free on Tuesday until they are vaccinated.

**All:** Yes

**Mwale:** How much per chicken this time?

**Neddy:** Because many people have chickens in this village, I have reduced the fee from K10 each to K5 just to serve you, my people. That is a 50% discount.

**FX:** (*Everyone is happy and shouts*) Neddy! Neddy!

**Mwale:** (*Protests*) That’s too much, that’s too much.

**Neddy:** K5 is on the low side. How much do you spend on beer? The normal charge in all the surrounding villages is K10 per chicken.

**Mrs. Kwenda:** Why do you charge differently? Why less for many chickens?

**Neddy:** Thank you, Mrs. Kwenda, for that question. Remember when I told you that I buy that vaccine with my own money and that I charge you just enough to recover that money and my labour? If there are only a very few chickens, then I have to raise the price per chicken to recover my money.

**Mwale:** You are lying. Can’t you keep the remaining medicine to vaccinate another village?

**Neddy:** No! Once the bottle is opened, I have to use the contents within two to four hours or it expires and becomes useless.

**Mwale:** Do not come to my home.

**Neddy:** I always repeat this to you: you can buy an expensive bottle of vaccine for 300 chickens if you have that much money. Like Mr. Mwale – I think he wants to buy his own.

**Mrs. Kwenda:** We have understood you. Come Tuesday, leave those who do not want the vaccine. We have a few chickens. Why spend a lot of money for two chickens instead of K10 for the same number?

**Neddy:** So it’s Tuesday, everybody.

**All:** Yes.

**Mwale:** My in-law Neddy, I have said that I don’t want you to come to my house. I will chase you away with dogs if you come.

**Village head:** (*Shouting*)You can go back to your homes. But remember Tuesday morning. K5 per chicken.

**All:** (*Off mic*)Yes.

**Mwale:** Neddy, Neddy, don’t come to my house. I repeat. At my house do not come.

**Neddy:** Do not embarrass me, Mr. Mwale. Let’s discuss that as we go. (*To the village headman*) Thank you, chief. I will see you on Tuesday morning.

**Village head:** (*Off mic*)Don’t forget my chickens, Neddy. I will be away at a seminar but please come. You will find everything in order. Your cousins and their mother will help you.

**Neddy:** Don’t worry, chief. I will take care of that. (*Silence, then to Mwale*) So you, Mwale. Why is it that it’s you, my in-law, who always gives me problems?

**Mwale:** You cheat us.

**Neddy:** You think so? Have you ever seen Newcastle disease in this village since the vaccination project started?

**Mwale:** Neither have I seen it in all the villages where I have gone to drink beer for the past eight months. Even in the villages where they did not allow you to vaccinate their chickens.

**Neddy:** This time they have asked me to vaccinate their chickens too.

**Mwale:** (*Laughing*) Ha ha! Ha! My in-law, you have managed to cheat them too?

**Neddy:** Mwale, please hear me. This is the most important time to vaccinate our chickens, because summer is approaching.

**Mwale:** Cheat only those who do not have any better use for their money. Not me.

**Neddy:** (*Angry and tired*) Ok! You think everyone is ignorant but you are clever. Agreed! I will not come to your house to vaccinate your chickens. Bye.

**Mwale:** (*Off mic*) That’s my in-law. Don’t come please, Neddy.

*Music. Hold under below.*

**Narrator:** Tuesday came. Neddy vaccinated everyone’s chicken except for those belonging to Mr. Mwale. Some people in neighbouring villages allowed him to vaccinate their chickens, but some did not. One month passed without any rumour of Newcastle disease. Does this mean that those people who did not vaccinate their chickens were right?

*Music. Fade out as FX fade in.*

**FX:** *Rooster in the morning.*

**FX:** *Heavy knocking. Hold under below*

**Wife:** (*Waking up her husband*) Neddy! Neddy! Wake up. Someone is knocking at the door.

**Neddy:** (*Waking up and shouting*) Who is there so early?

**Mwale:** It’s me, your in-law. Please open. (*Sound of a sick hen*.)

**Neddy:** What do you want with your chickens?

**Wife:** Neddy. Just wake up. Can’t you hear it’s my brother? (*To Mwale*) Wait, brother, he is coming.

*Opening and closing of the door.*

**Neddy:** (*Angry*)What are you doing with your sick chickens at my house at this time in the morning? Do you want to infect my chickens?

**Mwale:** Oh, in-law – just by the sound you knew my chickens were sick?

**Neddy:** Look at the greenish yellow diarrhea. The heads are swollen. This is Newcastle disease.

**Mwale:** They are dying. Please, my in-law, help me. Give them medicine.

**Neddy:** What?

**Mwale:** Neddy, I am sorry, but my chickens are all sick and dying.

**Neddy:** I am sorry too, my in-law. But I cannot help you.

**Mwale**: (*Apologetic*) Why brother, why…?

**Neddy:** Have you forgotten how you embarrassed me in front of the whole village?

**Mwale:** (*Kneeling down and pleading***)** I am sorry, I am sorry, father. *(Editor’s note: Mwale is calling Neddy “father” because he is trying to give him all kinds of respect to get what he wants)* Sister, help me. Tell your husband I am sorry**.** Should I kneel down?

**Neddy:** No! No! Do not kneel down. I just can’t help you.

**Mwale:** (*Almost crying*)No? Neddy, please help me. This is the only investment that I have. Help me, please.

**Neddy:** Why didn’t you think like this when I was vaccinating the chickens?

**Mwale:** I do not know what bewitched me.

**Neddy:** (*Laughs in sorrow*)Honestly, Mr. Mwale, if only Newcastle disease had a cure, I would help you. But there is no cure, only a vaccine.

**Mwale:** Then just vaccinate them please.

**Neddy:** It’s too late – we do not vaccinate sick chickens. And I do not keep any vaccine because I do not have a freezer to keep it.

**Mwale:** You are lying. We know you do not have a freezer in your house, but… How do you keep the vaccine that you gave to people’s chickens?

**Neddy:** Remember I always book people in advance before the vaccination day?

**Mwale:** Yes, why?

**Neddy:** I get the vaccine a day before the vaccination day. I borrow a cooler box in which we put ice blocks.

**Mwale:** Why do you keep the vaccine in a cool place?

**Neddy:** If you keep the vaccine warm, it expires. That is why we throw away whatever is left over.

**Mwale:** I think I have learned it the hard way. I shall never repeat this mistake again.

**Neddy:** You better not repeat it, my in-law.

**Mwale:** From today onwards I shall always vaccinate my chickens in season or not in season.

**Neddy:** That’s my in-law. Imagine how much you will have to spend to buy new chickens.

**Mwale:** You are right. I will be forced to spend money buying other chickens.

**Neddy:** Ok. Now that you know the goodness of the vaccine, give me the K750 you wanted to spend on one chicken, and I will give you three six-week-old chicks for K250 each from my Mikolongwe. *(Editor’s note: This breed, also known as Black Australorp, is very good for both meat and eggs, and has better resistance to disease than other exotic breeds. Broadcasters can substitute a breed known to have these advantages in their area.)*

**Mwale:** The children of those big hybrid cocks of yours?

**Neddy:** Yes.

**Mwale:** Thank you for the offer. I do not have money at the moment. I will do some piece work in people’s gardens. I will stop drinking beer until I purchase those chicks.

**Neddy:** (*Laughing*) Ha! Ha! Just don’t kill those chickens again, my in-law.

**Mwale:** (*Off mic*) I know. I will not kill them again, my good in-law. Come and marry a second sister as a sign of your good behavior. (*Editor’s note: This is a joke. In Malawi, people used to give their son in-laws a second daughter to marry if they showed good behaviour and prosperity. These days, people just make fun of that old custom*.)

**Neddy:** (*Laughing*) Ha! Ha!

**Narrator:** You have been listening to the adventures of Neddy the community animal health worker. Remember that if you have just a few chickens, you and your friends can share the cost of vaccinating your chickens against Newcastle disease. Another point to remember is that the vaccine is always kept in a freezing place. Once the bottle is opened, you can not use it again on another day. Lastly, do not forget that Newcastle disease has no cure. You can only vaccinate the chickens before they catch the disease.

On behalf of the Story Workshop, who are the producers of this program, I am Gladson Makowa. Let’s meet again next week at the same time.

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