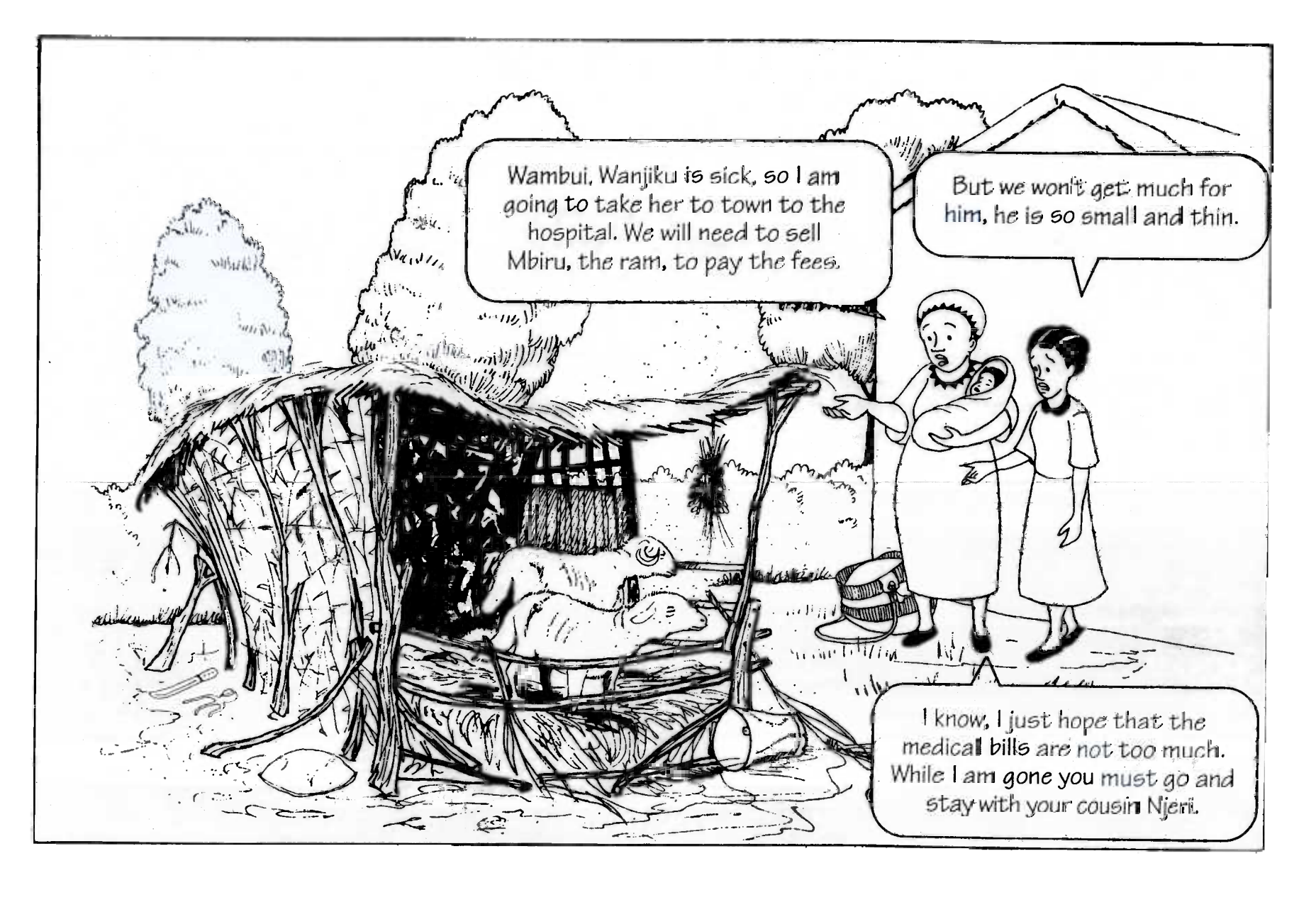


HEALTHY SHEEP PAY THE MEDICAL BILLS



Wambui finds out...





Wambui, Wanjiku is sick, so I am going to take her to town to the hospital. We will need to sell Mbiru, the ram, to pay the fees.

But we won't get much for him, he is so small and thin.

I know, I just hope that the medical bills are not too much. While I am gone you must go and stay with your cousin Njeri.

So Wambui sets off to Njeri's house.



... And with Mbiru gone we have nothing left to sell if Wanjiku doesn't get better.

But your sheep will have lambs soon.

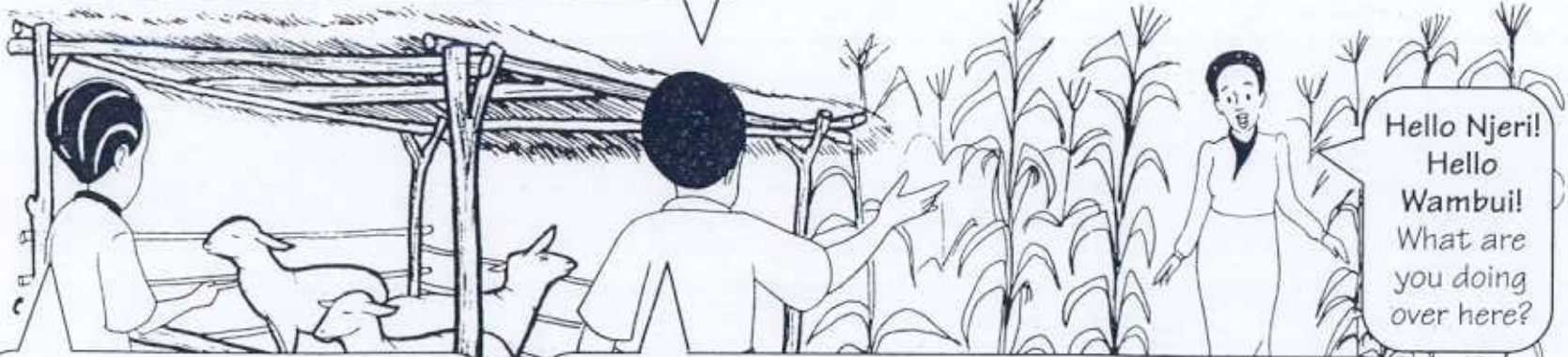


But most of our lambs die and the few that live never grow very big. There must be something wrong with our farm. It is just not a good place to keep sheep.

Mama used to have problems keeping sheep too. But Mwariama, the animal health assistant helped her.



Now we have big fat lambs and no problems paying the medical bills and school fees...



Hello Njeri!
Hello Wambui!
What are you doing over here?

They are amazing. Look at those lambs! What's the secret?

I'm not sure what changes Mama made but look, there is Mwariama let's ask her! ... Mwariama! Mwariama!

Wanjiku is sick so Mother has gone to town to the hospital and I am staying with Njeri for a few days.



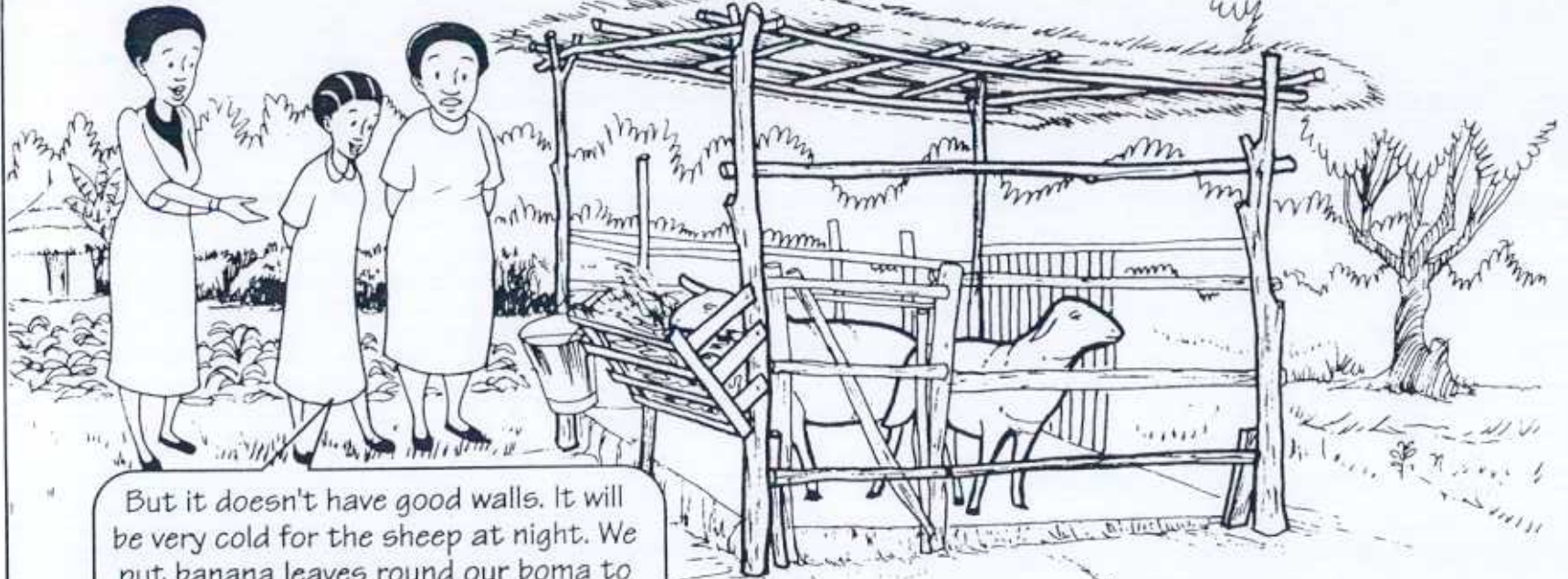
But they are having to sell Wambui's ram and it is so thin they might not have enough to pay the bills. Wambui needs to learn to keep their sheep healthy!



Keeping sheep is actually quite simple but you have to pay attention to their needs. They won't look after themselves. The first thing is to have a good boma...

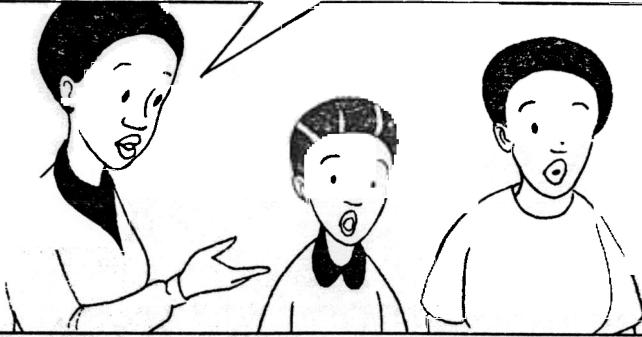
They need somewhere dry to sleep and as much fresh air in the boma as possible.

Look at Njeri's boma. The roof keeps any rain out and although the floor is only earth, it is raised so water runs off easily and it keeps dry.



But it doesn't have good walls. It will be very cold for the sheep at night. We put banana leaves round our boma to keep it nice and warm for the sheep...

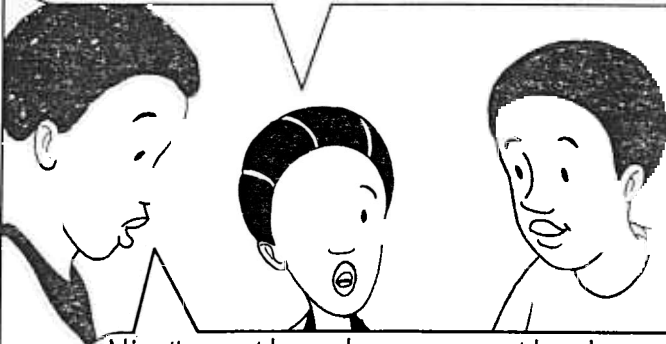
Oh no... you mustn't do that! If you don't allow the air to flow properly through the boma, the sheep will become sick and cough. You must open up the boma to let the wind blow through. That helps to keep it dry.



During the rains, the wind helps the sheep dry overnight - their hair will keep them warm enough as long as they are dry.



Oh dear, we filled the gaps in the wall when the sheep were sick but they only got worse! If only we had taken down the walls instead!



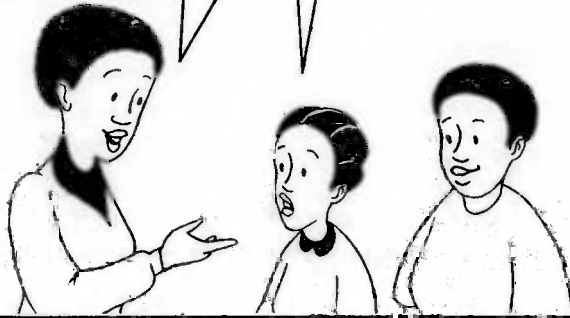
Njeri's mother also sweeps the dung out every morning and uses it in the shamba so that the boma is always clean.



If you don't do that the young sheep will catch a disease which causes them to have diarrhoea.

Our lambs always have diarrhoea! Mother dewormed them but it didn't make any difference.

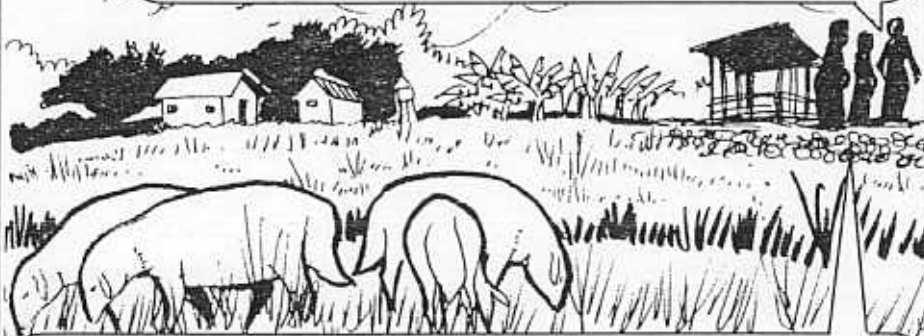
No it wouldn't. Keeping the boma floor clean and dry is the answer.



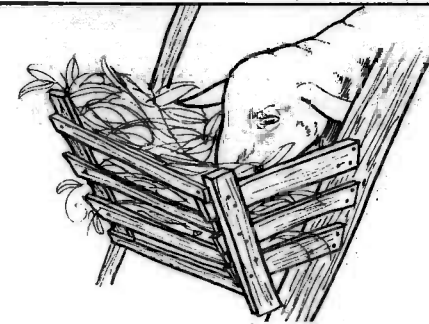
And what about the food?



Mama always ties the sheep out on the roadside before she milks the cows in the morning.

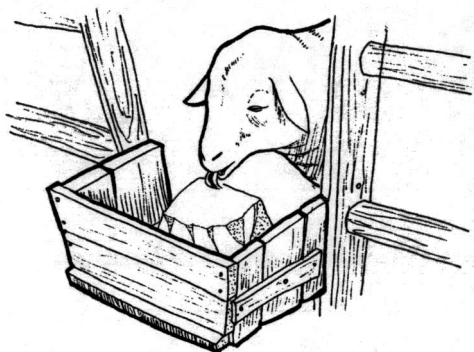


That's right. The longer they have to graze the better they are. The lambs won't grow if they are locked up all day!...

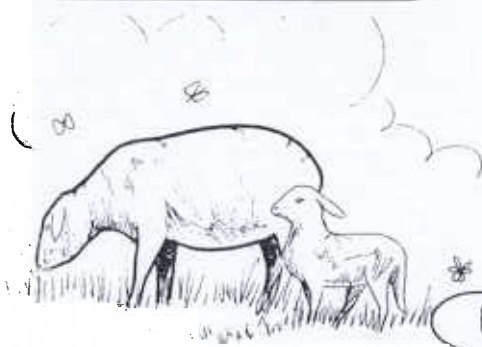


... And you can feed them extra as well if there is any food available. Sweet potato vines are good but you can try any vegetable wastes - anything green from the kitchen or the shamba will do.

And let them get a little of the cow's salt lick as well - they won't take much but it will make them much healthier!



The better the ewe is fed before lambing the bigger and healthier the lamb will be. A good start in life is very important!



But what about worms - our sheep always have worms but deworming them doesn't seem to help.



How do you know that they have worms?

Because we see the worms in the droppings! White squidgy things!

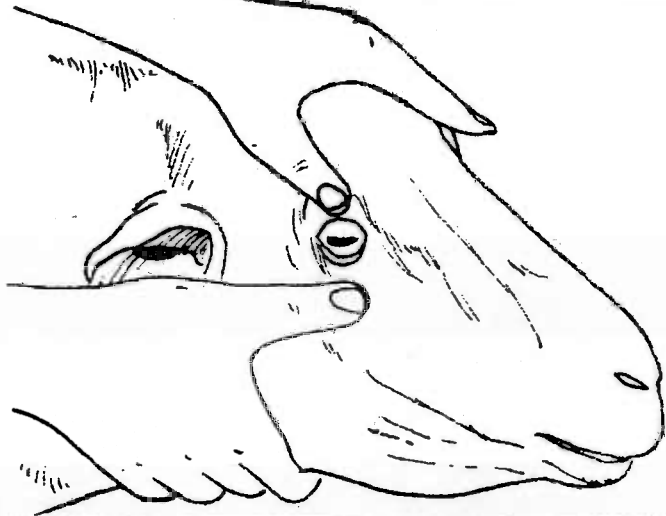


Ah! These are tapeworms.



Not all dewormers will kill tapeworms. But they do not do any harm to the sheep. The worms that you really need to worry about are too small for you to see but they suck the sheep's blood.

See the pink colour there below the eye? If that is very pale then that is a sign that the sheep has worms. If it is a nice red colour then it probably does not need to be dewormed.



And the diarrhoea isn't caused by worms?

Not usually. As I said before, a good dry boma and then get them out to graze.



Don't always have them grazing in the same muddy patch by the house.



I can't wait to get back home and tell Mother what we can do to have healthier sheep!

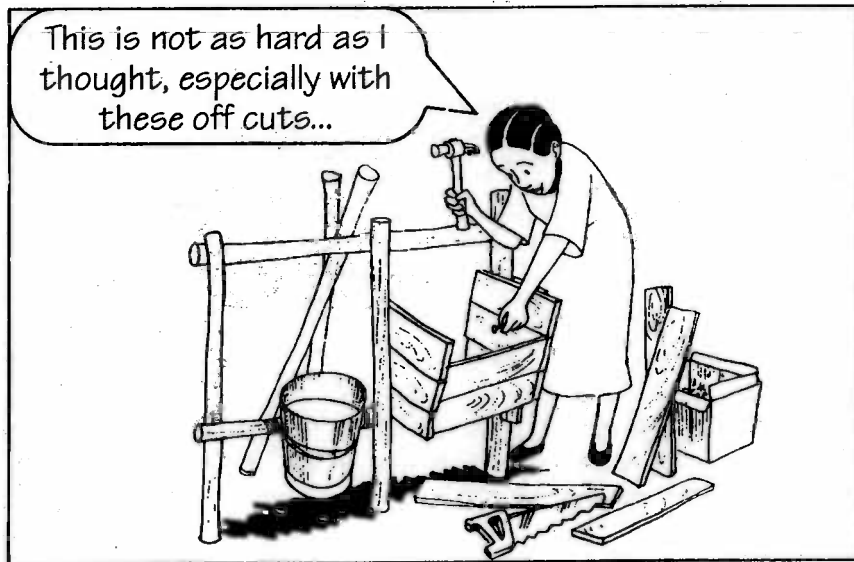
At Wambui's house a few days later...

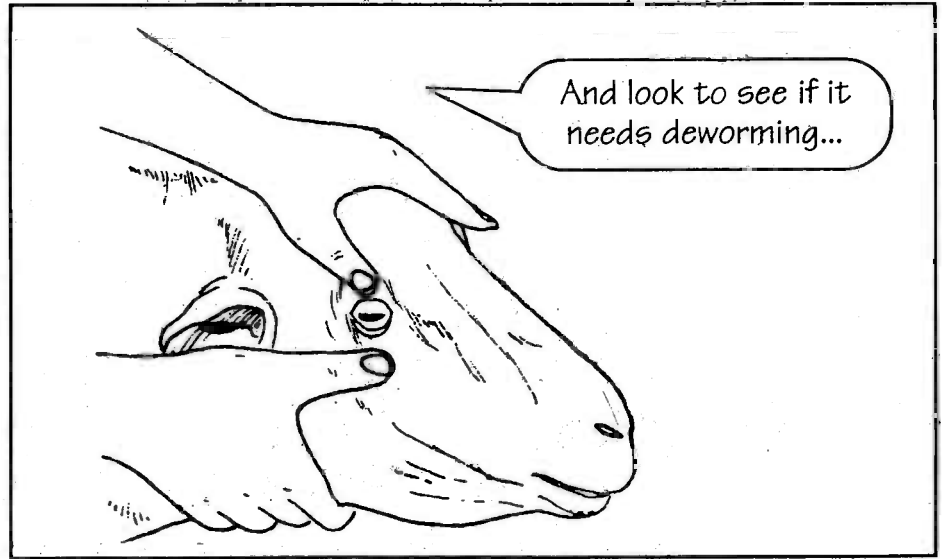
Well that was lucky. Wanjiku's treatment cost a little less than I got for Mbiru. But I don't know what we'll do if she takes ill again...



It's alright, I know how to make our sheep healthier! It is not difficult to do!

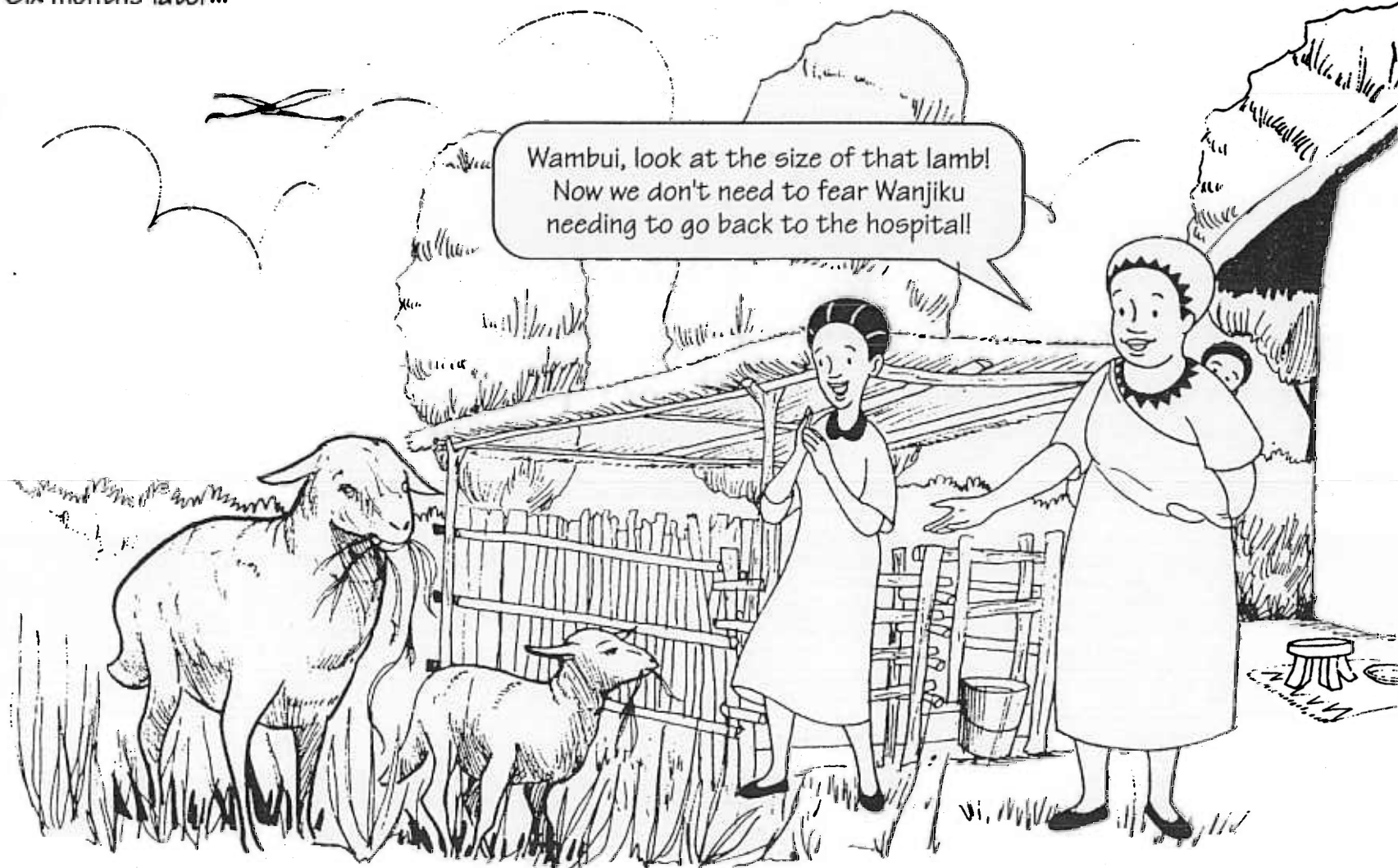






Six months later...

Wambui, look at the size of that lamb!
Now we don't need to fear Wanjiku
needing to go back to the hospital!



Illustrations By: Joseph Kariuki
Storyline By: R. Bain
Design By: Development Communications Ltd.

Produced By: KARI/DFID NARP II Project
c/o KARI, Box 57811, Nairobi, Kenya