



HUSBANDRY AND TRADITIONAL PRACTICES IN FIELD FLOCKS OF MADRAS RED SHEEP

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A survey was conducted on the husbandry and traditional practices currently followed in field flocks of Madras Red sheep. Information on 107 beneficiary flocks of the ICAR-Network Project on Sheep Improvement-Madras Red field unit (NWPSI), Kattupakkam, was utilized for the study. All the flocks were maintained under extensive system of management. The flock size ranged from 25 to 180, with majority having between 30-60 breeding females. Nearly half of the flocks were housed in thatched sheds (52.4%), while others left their animals in open within fences made of chain-link or thorny bushes. It was found that 68.2% of farmers owned agricultural land and they used crop residues like groundnut haulms during lean months of summer. Accordingly, grazing time in most of the flocks (66.4%) was from 12 noon to 6 PM, after agricultural operations. Natural mating was the norm, with rams maintained in the flock throughout. Sex ratio (ram/ewe) ranged from 0.59 to 9.09% with a mean value of 2.64%. Identification of animals was practiced in some flocks using paint (12.1%) or ear notching (1.9%). Disposal of aged ewes was by selling to the butcher (98.1 %), while some farmers (1.9%) maintained them until death. The main source of income was through sale of rani lambs, which was done through middlemen (95.3%) or directly to the butcher (3.7 %). Very few farmers (0.9 %) slaughtered the animals for sale of mutton themselves. In addition to sheep, farmers also reared other livestock such as goats (24.3%), buffaloes (4.7%), cows (1.9%), poultry species (1.9%) and a combination of these (67.2%). Nomadic system of grazing was practiced by some farmers (13.1%) during summer. The water source for the animals included lakes (68.2%), bore wells (29.9%), ponds (0.9%), and wells (0.9%). None of the farmers maintained records, insured their animals or cultivated fodder. Traditional treatment practices like use of kumkum for cataract, hot iron for convulsions, camphor and neem oil for maggot wound, lard for oral lesions of foot and mouth disease, application of hot oil for dog bite wound to name a few, were followed by farmers in general. Scientific management practices like provision of salt licks, mineral mixture supplementation, hoof trimming and spraying of drugs for ectoparasites was followed by all the farmers as the inputs were provided by the NWPSI. Superstitious beliefs among the farmers included selling of twinning and early lambing ewes and maintaining one black coloured animal. Shrinking of grazing area, disease, predation by stray dogs and safety for the women grazers were some of the problems encountered by these sheep farmers.

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IMPACT OF TRAININGS ON KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF GOAT KEEPERS IN KERALA

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The present study was conducted to assess the impact state level vocational training on goat farming during the financial year 2015-16. Data were collected from 243 participants of four on-campus and three off-campus training conducted by All India Co-ordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Goat (Malabari Unit) in Kerala. Parameters such as extent of satisfaction, opinion and suggestion regarding training programme were collected from the





participants. The impact of training was measured in terms of gain in knowledge and data were analyzed using paired t-test. Women participation was more in off-campus trainings (66.39%) compared to on-campus trainings (9.68%). Most of the respondents were fully satisfied with major instructors (74.49%), relevance to the trainee's need (71.60%), programme in general (69.96%). The trainees were not satisfied with lodging facilities (46.91%), availability of reading materials (37.04%) and physical facilities in classroom (25.93%). Study also revealed that 85 per cent of the respondents had medium to high favorable opinion regarding the training. Major suggestion given by trainees includes provision of more off-campus training preferably in their villages during summer season. The t-value ranged from 3.29 to 27.90 for seven trainings. Gain in knowledge on different aspects of goat rearing was found to be highly significant. Study indicates the need to organize more off-campus training for better participation of women and also to upgrade the boarding and lodging facilities for on campus trainings.

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GENETIC IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME IN LIVESTOCK

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Livestock sector plays a critical role in the welfare of India's rural population. It is an integrated component of agricultural activities in the country. Due to rising demand for animal products and changing food preferences of the next generation consumers, the Indian livestock sector has to improve its performance. India has vast livestock population with low productivity and most of them are non-descript type. Department of animal husbandry is implementing centrally sponsored schemes such as – central herd registration scheme, key village scheme, intensive cattle development project, progeny testing programme, most authentic and reliable tool for genetic up-gradation in the progeny. The Network Project on Buffalo Improvement was initiated in 1993 with the aim to produce progeny tested bulls for improvement in buffalo population in the country. Genetic improvement in bovines is a long-term activity and Government initiated a major programme 'National Project for Cattle and Buffalo Breeding' (NPCBB) in October 2000 for a period of ten years, National Kamdhenu Breeding Centre" for development, conservation and preservation of Indigenous Breeds will be set up, as a Centre of Excellence to develop and conserve Indigenous Breeds in a holistic and scientific manner, Rashtriya Gokul Mission has been initiated by the Department with the aim to conserve and develop Indigenous Breeds in a focused and scientific manner and All India Coordinated programme has been initiated for improving the production performance of Indian breeds of goat and sheep through crossbreeding. A cross breeding scheme was initiated in 1997 to introgress the *FecB* gene from India's most valuable germplasm "Garole sheep" of a hot and humid environment into the non-prolific and large size mutton sheep breed "Malpura" best adapted of a semi-arid tropical environment to produce the Garole X Malpura (GM) crossbred carrying *FecB* gene. These schemes need to be strictly implemented so as to have genetic enhancement of livestock to fulfil growing food demand of the country in terms of nutritional security and employment generation.

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IMPROVED BIOGAS PLANTS *V/S A V/S* FUTURISTIC ENERGY ALTERNATIVE FOR RURAL INDIA

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Biogas plant installation programme in Punjab was initiated under the guidance of Late Shri Jash Bhai Patel, then advisor to Khadi Village and Industries Commission (KVIC) Mumbai. The work of construction of biogas plants was taken up through Department of Agriculture, Punjab. People were reluctant to install such plants because of high cost and only affluent farmers showed interest. Thereafter efforts were made to reduce cost of the plant, increase