



**SUMMARY of E-DISCUSSION (Week 2)**  
**24-30 August 2014**

**ROLE OF PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS IN STRENGTHENING EXTENSION AND ADVISORY PROVISION**  
**THE DAIRY/LIVESTOCK SECTOR IN INDIA**  
**18<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 to 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2014**

- The discussion this week (24-30 August 2014) touched upon Producer Organisations (POs) in different sector of livestock, namely, poultry, goat, sheep, and pig apart from dairy. The discussion also focused on the role of intermediaries or brokers, collaboration among different organizations in the livestock sector and the need for strengthening extension research in livestock sector in general and specifically on the role and contributions of POs in the livestock sector.
- Animal health care and breeding have always been the priority areas in livestock sector. Extension has been always a low priority as implementing extension activities is difficult and the returns are not that direct, immediate and tangible.
- There is a need to prioritize the most strategic extension activities and pursue these based on a transparent and participatory exercise. The research base in this area is virtually missing and the extension research professionals need to contribute to this area quickly.
- Though the Central Sector Scheme “Assistance to cooperative Scheme” was aimed at forming, promoting and handholding POs in India, its implementation has not been very effective everywhere. The reasons behind this mixed performance should be explored for effective policy making. There is a need for a fair mechanism for supporting POs. It was pointed out that while many well-meaning, honest organizations are struggling for financial support, many corrupt NGOs/POs are always getting quick financial support.
- There is a need to strengthen research on areas such as sustainability of para-vet based revenue model, PO-NGO partnerships, POs in small dairy sector and experiences with new generation dairies etc and how these are contributing to strengthening livestock Extension services. How far these new development support ethical sourcing and maintain loyalty between POs and producer members.
- Several organizations, including research, extension, and financial agencies such as NABARD are facilitating livestock POs for better extension and advisory services. Nagaland Pig Farmers Association' (NPFA) and Progressive Pig Farmers Association (PPFA) in Punjab were cited as examples. However, there is a need to clearly understand the role of each collaborating organization and how they are supporting extension and advisory provision.
- In the dairy sector, the Secretary of the cooperative society or the staff at the milk collection center can ideally act as an informal knowledge intermediary to provide

advisory services or act as an information broker in the POs. But their capacities to do so need to be enhanced.

- Though there are about 2,595 poultry co-operatives societies in India, they are performing well only in two states viz. Gujarat and Maharashtra. Even after three decades of intensive poultry development, the poultry co-operatives have not been able to establish themselves on a strong footing. A comparative study of success and failure in different organizations such as the POs and also the private sector is also essential.
- With huge infrastructure, public sector livestock agencies are struggling to educate the farmers on basic practices, whereas, many multi-national companies and the domestic private sector companies are acquiring livestock market in India. Though a healthy competition among different agencies in the private and cooperative sector could be good for producers, there is little information on the experience from this competition.
- Around 5000 societies are functioning under Andhra Pradesh State Sheep and Goat Development Cooperative Federation and they are involved with activities such as heep health camps, insurance, training and exposure visits etc.
- There is a need for continuous support to producers, but in many cases this support is ad-hoc. Moreover, the POs require long term support especially during their initial years to emerge as efficient and sustainable organizations.
- Extension professionals must focus on economics of livestock farming by analysis of productivity and profitability of the farm. This would also help in convincing and encouraging the youth to take-up entrepreneurial activities in animal husbandry.
- The producer cooperatives in the dairy sector had many economic and political interests in India. But over the years, some of them have become corrupt and less transparent about their activities.
- The POs and other organizations have to provide need based and locally relevant information to farmers. There is a need to try different models of extension delivery including use of ICTs (websites, mobiles, expert systems etc).
- If POs focus on increasing income of producers through effective marketing and reduced cost of production, extension and advisory provision will get due priority. There should also be a mechanism to reward farmers who adopt scientific and quality production (eg; financial incentives for quality, awards and other forms of social recognition).
- There is a need to strengthen the capacity of other actors in the Livestock Innovation System to support producer organizations with sound and scientifically tested advice on technologies and other services.
- Extension research should explore the evolving support needs of livestock producers and the POs in the livestock sector and should experiment with ways of meeting these needs.

The education systems must incorporate issues related to improving the livelihoods of our farmers through animal husbandry.

- There are many challenges in livestock/dairy sector as both productivity & production are still low and there are increasing concerns on quality. The POs must effectively address these challenges with the help of other actors in the Livestock Innovation System. While some of these challenges can be effectively met with improved extension services, the POs should develop strategies to do this (on their own and also in collaboration with other agencies).
- The POs must identify & prioritize needed interventions for improving livestock production, productivity and profit in India. This is possible when POs arrange for service providers who could assist their members with appropriate research, extension and education backup.
- At central level, a coordinating unit dealing with livestock extension services through POs is required to support POs who are willing to assist their member producers with extension support. Perhaps this unit could be located within the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries (DAHDF).

**The issues that further need more insights include;**

- Specific extension activities undertaken by dairy/livestock POs in India and South Asian countries.
- Are POs influencing policy (Any evidence/cases)?
- How POs facilitate value chain development and empowering farmers in the value chain?
- Role of Informal Knowledge Intermediaries or brokers in the dairy/livestock sector?
- Quality Input Supply and input related advisory services
- Comparative analysis of POs vis-a-vis other forms of organizations, especially in relation to extension delivery.
- Role of Government in promoting and handholding of POs in India and other South Asian countries.

During this week (24-30 August 2014) we received 24 posts and we thank all the contributors for their participation in this very productive discussion. We are also eager to know about experiences from other South Asian countries too on this topic. May be many issues not addressed yet will form the part of discussion during this third week (last week of this e-discussion).