



SUMMARY of E-DISCUSSION (Week 1) 18-24 August 2014

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

- Though the number of dairy co-operatives and the number of producer members are on the rise, these numbers do not mean that the cooperatives are making effective contribution towards provision of extension and advisory services (EAS) to milk producers.
- The need for dedicated extension staff/para extension staff to provide new knowledge on animal husbandry was raised by many in the discussion. There is an urgent need to highlight the success stories of cooperatives in the provision of knowledge and advisory services on fodder cultivation, balanced feeding, clean milk production, disease management etc to rural milk producers.
- A field study conducted in Western Maharashtra revealed that extension services delivered by Gokul Dairy Union were perceived as satisfactory by 37.33 % farmers. 52.66 % farmers are partly satisfied and 10.0 % of the farmers were not satisfied with the extension services.
- The extension activities by dairy cooperatives are undertaken with the financial support of agencies like NDDDB or Government Organisations in the form of schemes or programmes like NDP-I, STEP etc. There is a need to study the sustainability of extension services by dairy cooperatives once the financial support is withdrawn. Specific budget ear-marked for training of milk producer members on various aspects of dairy cattle rearing is usually missing.
- Dairy Cooperatives are doing well in Gujarat and Maharashtra which may be because of the genesis of cooperative movement in these states. But with liberalization, these cooperatives are finding it difficult to face the stiff competition from private sector which is slowly consolidating its position as the dominant milk marketing channel.
- It is interesting to note that milk producers are not keen on indirect benefits like receiving extension advice. However, they are willing to get breeding and veterinary health care services even on payment as these have direct bearing on milk production.
- In most of the states, the milk unions are running under losses and there is a decreasing trend of dairy farming. PONLAIT (Pondicherry Milk Union) and Salem milk union were

cited as specific instances. This indicates that private agencies are increasingly dominating the sector and dairy cooperatives are losing their command on milk market to the private agencies. However, the Visakha dairy which was previously a milk union has changed its status to a company and is now doing extremely well.

- The cooperatives have been successful in improving the welfare of the producer members including the women dairy farmers through WDCS (Women Dairy Cooperative Societies), but female extension workers are needed to do this effectively in the dairy sector. But, in recent years, the cooperatives are becoming more commercial entities, often lacking their earlier mandate of welfare of dairy farmers through strengthening EAS in the dairy sector. The elected representatives and the dairy professionals should lead the dairy co-operative with the true spirit of a co-operative organization.
- There is a need to change the structure & functioning of cooperatives in the changing market scenario. Since Extension apparently has played a very limited role through POs, there is an urgent need for an exclusive "Extension Wing" at Federation and Milk Union levels. The proposed "Extension wing" should be also mandated to give feedback to central/state Govt. and policy makers about the impacts and constraints being encountered in implementing the schemes. However, the mode and methodology about an exclusive wing must be discussed in detail.
- There is a need to initiate mobile EAS similar to emergency clinical services. The milk unions can have links with the locally available specialists from universities, State Departments etc. to have regular follow-up so that farmer will realize and experience the indirect benefits of EAS.
- Since diffusion and adoption of practices like "Clean Milk Production" are essential at field conditions, farmers have to realize its importance and adopt it on their own. Hence, EAS should play a major role in diffusion and adoption of technologies.
- Livestock or dairy extension education component role of extension services have been neglected in majority of the reports and forums of dairy development. In this regard, effective strategies must be framed to highlight the role of EAS in dairy/livestock sector.

The issues that further need more insights include;

- Role of Informal Knowledge Intermediaries
- Research-extension –POs Linkage
- Quality Input Supply and input related advisory services
- Specific success and failure cases of extension service delivery by dairy cooperatives
- Lessons to be learnt from any Agricultural or allied cooperatives (if any)
- POs in the area of poultry, small ruminant etc (to draw more sector specific lessons)

- Lessons to be learnt from other South Asian Countries for the success of PO's in India.

So far, we have received 33 posts and we thank all the contributors for their participation in this very productive discussion. As you are all aware, e-discussions are not yet very popular in this part of the world. We would like to have more inputs from representatives and officials of POs in the coming days. 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 next week!

