

CONSTRAINTS FACED BY DAIRY FARM WOMEN IN RELATION TO FARM OPERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken to understand the problems in dairy farming perceived by the farm women in Thrissur taluk of Thrissur district. It was found that inadequate knowledge about scientific housing, repeat breeding in crossbreds, high cost of concentrates, reduction in milk yield due to diseases and low price of milk and milk products were the most serious problems perceived by the farm women in dairy farming.

INTRODUCTION

Dairying is one of the important enterprise, which supports the rural households by providing gainful employment and steady income. The importance of milk and milk products for the physical development and well being of human beings is universally recognized.

In India, women's involvement in livestock management is a longstanding tradition and dairy farming has been an integral part of homestead farming system. Although much of the work related to livestock farming is carried out by women, their problems and difficulties are not taken into consideration while designing development, training and extension programmes. Hence the studies on accessing the problems of farm women engaged in dairy farming are of paramount importance to the policy makers and extension agencies involved in rural development. So, the study has been undertaken with an objective to understand the problems perceived by farm women engaged in dairy farming.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Thrissur taluk of Thrissur district of Kerala state. Out of the 43 milk co-operative societies in two randomly selected blocks of Thrissur taluk, namely Cherpu and Ollukkara 12 milk co-operative societies were randomly selected. Further, a total of 120 members were drawn from the 12 milk co-operative societies by stratified random sampling procedure using proportional allocation. The women actively involved in dairy farming in the household of 120 selected members constituted respondents of the study. Data were collected by personal interviews using a pre-tested structured schedule. Ranking of problems was done based on mean score

FINDINGS

The data collected through structured interview schedule were tabulated, analysed and presented in the following tables. The data in table 1 reveals that problems in health care ranked first followed by those in feeding and management, housing, marketing and finance and breeding

Table 1 : Problems perceived by farm women pertaining to major farm operations in dairy farming

n = 120

Sr. No.	Major farm operations	Mean Score	Rank
1	Health care	2.28	I
2	Feeding and management	2.07	II
3	Housing	2.00	III
4	Marketing and finance	1.72	IV
5	Breeding	1.49	V

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Further, an attempt was made to understand the problems perceived by farm women pertaining to minor farm operations in dairy farming

Table 2 : Problems perceived by farm women pertaining to minor farm operations in dairy farming n = 120

Sr. No.	Farm operations	M.S.	Rank
I	Health care		
1	Reduction in milk yield due to diseases	2.62	I
2	Inadequate supply of medicines from hospitals	2.35	II
3	Inadequate knowledge of vaccination.	2.16	III
4	High cost of medicines	2.15	IV
5	Low disease resistance of crossbred animals	2.11	V
II	Feeding and management		
1	High cost of concentrate	2.35	I
2	Non-availability of green fodder throughout the year	2.24	II
3	Scarcity of land for fodder cultivation	2.21	III
4	Non-availability of adequate fodder.	2.04	IV
5	Inadequate knowledge of balanced feeding	2.00	V
6	Scarcity of water	1.59	VI
III	Housing		
1	Inadequate knowledge of scientific housing	2.03	I
2	Lack of facilities like funds, land, construction material etc for construction of cattle shed	1.97	II
IV	Marketing and finance		
1	Low price of milk and milk products	2.57	I
2	Financial difficulties	2.12	II
3	Problem of spoilage	1.13	III
4	Irregular payment by the milk societies	1.07	IV
V	Breeding		
1	Repeat breeding problems in cross breeds	2.38	I
2	Failure to diagnose pregnancy at correct time	1.67	II
3	Distant location of AI centers	1.17	III
4	Inability to take animals in accordance with the timing of AI centers	1.13	IV
5	Lack of knowledge of proper heat detection.	1.09	V

From the data in table 2, it could be observed that under the problems in healthcare, reduction in milk yield due to diseases was perceived as the most serious one followed by inadequate supply of medicines from hospitals. Diseases among dairy animals would in turn result in reduced production, mortality and heavy losses. These might be the reasons why the farm women might have perceived healthcare problems in their animals as the most serious one. Inadequate supply of medicines from the veterinary hospitals was pointed out as serious problem by the farm women. This observation was in agreement with that of Thirunavukkarasu and

Prabaharan (1992). Podikunju *et al.* (2001) reported higher susceptibility to disease as the important constraint encountered by the farm women.

As for feeding and management, high cost of concentrate was perceived as the most serious problem followed by non-availability of green fodder throughout the year. This finding is in agreement with that of Podikunju *et al.* (2001) who reported that high price of concentrate was an important constraint encountered by farm women. Since crossbred animals require more concentrate feed, the farm women might have found it difficult to afford the cost of concentrates.

Inadequate knowledge of scientific housing was perceived as the most serious problem under housing. This points out to the need of imparting training in this area. This finding is in consonance with that of Bairathi *et al.* (1997) who reported that lack of technical guidance was expressed as a very serious constraint faced by the respondents. Considering the escalated production cost, milk production was not perceived economical by the farm women. To be economical, milk price need to be commensurate with production cost. This is why farm women perceived price of milk and milk products to be not satisfactory. The observations of Balaji (1990), Bairathi *et al.* (1997) Chinnadurai *et al.* (2002) and Dabas *et al.* (2004) agree with that of present study.

Among the minor operations in breeding, repeat breeding in crossbreds was perceived as the most serious problem followed by failure to diagnose pregnancy at correct time. Probably, this could be due to the fact that these are two major problems which affect the profitability in dairy farming. This finding is in agreement with those of Dabas *et al.* (2004) who reported that repeat breeding was a major problem and Podikunju *et al.* (2001) who reported poor results of AI as most important constraint.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded on the basis of the results of this study that problems in health care ranked first followed by those in feeding and management, housing, marketing and finance and breeding. Under the problems in healthcare, reduction in milkyield due to diseases was perceived as the most serious one followed by inadequate supply of medicines from hospitals. As for feeding and management, high cost of concentrate was perceived as the most serious problem followed by non-availability of green fodder throughout the year. Inadequate knowledge of scientific housing was perceived as the most serious problem under

housing. Among the minor operations in breeding, repeat breeding in crossbreds was perceived as the most serious problem followed by failure to diagnose pregnancy at correct time. So, all the necessary technical inputs such as vaccines, medicines, fodder seeds and concentrate feed in adequate quantity and acceptable quality need to be made available to the farm women. Adequate supply of medicines from veterinary hospitals should be ensured. Extension organizations and local institutions should take adequate steps to impart information regarding credit facilities to procure the necessary inputs for dairy farming. Also farm women should be made aware of insurance facilities available.

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