



Extension activities of Animal Husbandry Department

N. N. Sasi

The major activities of the Animal husbandry department can be summarised as follows:-

Veterinary services and Animal Health Care, Disease Eradication Programmes, Cattle, Goat, Pig, and Poultry Development programmes, Control of Zoonotic diseases, Extension, Training programmes for Farmers and Veterinarians and Production of Biologicals are the major activities of Animal Husbandry Department.

Dr. N. N. Sasi,
Director of Animal
Husbandry,
Government of Kerala

The majority of livestock population in the state are concentrated in villages. Mostly peasants and agricultural laborers are engaged in cattle rearing and allied activities. Hence any development in the Animal Husbandry sector will strengthen the rural economy. About 10% of the Gross Domestic Product of the state is contributed by this sector.

Milk, egg and meat are the principal primary products of Animal Husbandry in Kerala. This sector can also contribute its share to the industrial Development of the state by way of supplying of inputs to various industries like leather industry, pharmaceutical industry by way of supply of industrial

products like bacon, hides, skins, gelatin, caesin etc. Animal health has been well taken care of by the department by establishing a network of veterinary institutions at different levels to provide veterinary aid in the state.

Almost all the Panchayats in the state has a Veterinary Hospital manned by registered Veterinary Practitioner. This may be a unique achievement in India. Currently, after 45 years of formation of Kerala State about 2638 institutions are functioning in the Animal Husbandry Department. Protective and promotional activities of the Animal Husbandry Department are being conducted through various institutions such as, Veterinary Dispensaries, Veterinary Hospitals, Veterinary Poly Clinics, District Veterinary Centres, Intensive Cattle Development Projects, and ICDP Sub Centres etc.

Extension activities under Department of Animal Husbandry have been taken up as the part of the effort made to achieve a balanced social and economic development in rural areas. Assistance to farmers engaged in Animal husbandry activities, to help them to identify and analyze their problems and to become aware of the opportunities for improvement. High literacy rate among the farmers in Kerala helps in easy adoption of technology. Extension activities are carried out through various institutions under the department.

Main contributors to the extension activities are given below:

1. Livestock Management Training Centre
2. Calf Feed subsidy Scheme
3. Vijana Vyapana Kendra
4. Farm Information Bureau
5. Intensive Cattle Development programmes

Livestock Management Training Centre

With a view to imparting technical knowledge and scientific training in Animal Husbandry Disciplines, Livestock Management Training Centres were established in the state. There are 5 LMTCs in Kerala. The major activities are:





1. These centres impart training on scientific management of production units to enhance production and training to farmers to prepare themselves, to take up small domestic units. The training also helps the unemployed youth to gain self employment.

2. The trainees include farmers, social workers, ex-servicemen, school students, housewives, extension workers, Veterinary and Para Veterinary staff of the department and Vocational Higher Secondary Course certificate holders. LMTCs conduct both in campus and off campus trainings to farmers. Department has also taken initiative to train technical and non technical officers in information technology and all sections of technical officers in current laboratory technology to ensure total capacity development.

Calf Feed Subsidy Scheme

Extension activity is also rendered through the prestigious scheme of the department - Special Livestock Breeding Programme (Calf Feed Subsidy Programme) This scheme is implemented by Animal Husbandry Department since 1976. From 1997 onwards it is being implemented through the local bodies.

The objectives of the scheme is to provide extension support, adequate health and Insurance coverage and good quality feed at subsidized price to the growing Cross Bred Female Calves of below poverty line farmers for a period of 28 months or till its first calving whichever is earlier. Farmers are properly advised on the scientific calf rearing practices for achieving optimum age at maturity and desired age at first calving. This programme helped to develop a one to one communication between farmers and veterinary officers in the area of production and local economic development. Thus Veterinary doctors became an integral part of social development and economic reforms.

Vijana Vyapana Kendras (VVK)

VVK has been established at most of the Veterinary Institutions with an aim to provide farmers access to various publications relating to Agriculture and Animal Husbandry which will help them to enhance their knowledge. This helped to attract people to the veterinary institutions and made technology and information transparent and easily accessible.

Farm Information Bureau

A major contributor to the extension activity in the

state for both Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. There are 3 Veterinarians in FIB dealing with extension activity. A monthly publication is being published for the benefit of farmers which contains useful information's/new opportunities and current developments. FIB also conducts exhibitions and seminars for the benefit of the farmers. There are a lot of scientific and practically adapted technology being documented by many of the veterinary officers which led to release of many books during the past 2 years and the department is promoting this trend.

Kamadhenu Insurance Scheme

A comprehensive insurance programme for the Livestock as well as their owner and dependant, is being successfully implemented throughout the state by the department. Now, cattle population in the state is mostly cross-bred and these animals are highly prone to diseases. This scheme is implemented jointly with United India Insurance Company at a lesser premium rate of 6.6% as against the normal 15% for 3 years. The livestock owners also are insured for accident death, provision for reimbursement of Medical expenses due to illness, disease or injury to the farmer and dependant thereby helping the farmers in distress.

Intensive Cattle Development Programme

The project is an integrated scheme with the specified objective of enhancing the milk production in the state to a targeted level in a specific period by improving the quality of cattle through cross breeding. The project cover a population of about 12 lakh breedable cow and attends to all aspects of cattle development such as controlled breeding, balanced feeding and effective disease control duly supported by extension activities. There are nine Integrated Cattle Development Projects in operation in the State supported by 38 Regional Artificial Insemination Centres and 1259 ICDP subcentres.

Its objectives are

1. Helping farmers to increase production and improve living standards.
2. Acting as a bridge and middleman between department professionals and farm families.
3. Identifying farmers problems and finds out solutions.





Other Extension Activities

Livestock production service centre

Selected Veterinary centres will be designated as livestock production service centres or livestock business centres with a view to provide all the required services in animal Husbandry sector for the farmer in tune with their developing needs and problems in production and even to act as a mediator. Livestock Business Centres will be started in Veterinary Institutions in potential areas with the help of Local Self-Government to meet the required inputs of farmers and to provide marketing facilities. The Veterinarians must be able to act as a facilitator between farmers and the backward and forward linkages.

Infertility Camps

Conducted through Cattle sterility Scheme and ICDPs. The main objectives of the camps are screening of Cross bred cow, heifers, buffalo to assess the fertility status by identifying infertility problems, investigate the causes leading to infertility and rectify the causes, publish data on investigations made, results achieved and suggest ways to modify the breeding and management practices. A well equipped laboratory has been established at Cattle sterility office, Aluwa to probe the problems associated with hormones and mineral deficiencies.

Veterinary Public Health

Conducts various awareness camps for School children especially for Rabies. Awareness programmes on other important Zoonotic diseases are also undertaken. Vaccination camps are being organized at various locations with the help of local bodies and other NGOs. Seminars/Workshops are conducted on diseases of Zoonotic importance.

Prevention of cruelty to animals

Awareness to public regarding prevention of cruelty to animals through print and electronic media is being undertaken by the department. Importance is being given for strengthening of check post with a view to reduce cruelty to animals during their transportation. Actions are being taken at slaughter houses through the veterinarians of the department to ensure humane slaughter and allow only sale of quality meat to save the public from dreadful meat borne diseases.

Farms

Cattle Management, Feeding Practices etc. The farms impart farm training to Livestock Inspectors and Vocation Higher Secondary Certificate holders. Milk production, Egg Production and Fodder Production are the other fields of activity. We have to put our effort to make the farm profitable and sustainable by adopting professional management & disease control activities to enhance production.

Production Oriented Disease control programmes

Prevention of diseases includes control of contagious diseases by systematic vaccination for which there are so many schemes such as RP Eradication Programme, Rabies Eradication Programme, and Disease Free Zone Scheme etc. To facilitate accurate diagnosis of diseases and for production of preventive vaccines the department maintains prestigious institutions viz. the Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals, Chief Disease Investigation Laboratory, Avian Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Marine Products Inspection cum certification lab etc. In addition to this, District Veterinary Centres with all facilities in all the fourteen districts has been established for attention of disease problems. But if we want to diagnose a disease we are approaching other state labs for speedy and accurate diagnosis. We must acquire the level of confidence to say that the death is due to a specific disease or diseases.

It is said that extension work must be undertaken because we know that we are living in a changing world. It will require much patient and concerted effort to show that the resources can be increased to everybody's advantage. Extension educational work is aimed at change, but not just any change. It is with our dedicated risky effort mainly through production oriented extension activities that we could achieve the goals of converting 82.37% of desi cattle in to crossbreds thereby enhancing the milk production from 2 lakh MT to 25 lakh MT within a short span of time. So extension activity must be able to draw the people for a change. Change alone leads you to success and happiness. Initiatives of veterinarians for extension by utilizing electronic media, print media and publishing books is a positive trend. I congratulate and appreciate all these Veterinarians who come forward to contribute to the profession and society.

