Indigenous Buffalo Farming and its Improvement: A Potential Drive for Rural Development in Nepal

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Introduction

Eighty-six per cent of the population of Nepal lives in rural areas. Livestock is an integral component of Nepalese farming system that contributes more than one-third of the total agricultural gross domestic production (AGDP). Buffaloes are raised for supply of animal protein, draft power, and manure. Buffalo enterprise contributes 52.9% of the livestock share in the national GDP. However, there are still less than 12% improved buffaloes (Murrah and its crosses) in the country. There have been only limited studies relating to their production potentialities. This study was conducted to explore the possible reasons that have been hindering for improved buffalo farming and to find out the measures to improve the performance of the indigenous buffaloes in Nepal.

Materials and Methods

A total of 107 farmers from 3 districts of Nepal, namely; Arghakhanchi, Baglung and Gulmi, who were keeping at least one buffalo in their farms were randomly selected for this research. Farmers were surveyed by visiting their farms, based on the standard questionnaires. In addition to the survey published materials, official statistics and grey literatures were also reviewed. The information obtained from the farmers were analyzed by using SPSS 15.0.

Results

Main constraints for improved buffalo farming in Nepal:
- Need of more input per unit of output
- More problems during calving
- Late in first calving
- Long calving interval
- More repeat breeding problems
- High sensitive to disease and parasites

Table 1: Suggested measures* Ranks Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested measures</th>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of locally selected elite bulls</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of round the year green forage</td>
<td>12 48</td>
<td>46 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender mainstreaming in buffalo farming</td>
<td>13 39</td>
<td>48 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training on improved buffalo farming</td>
<td>2 5</td>
<td>10 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority to increase the number of Murrah</td>
<td>0 1</td>
<td>0 17 89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ranks: 1 = Most important to 5 = least important
Numbers in the table represent corresponding responses of the farmers under the survey

Conclusion

Suggested measures are to be incorporated in the annual programs of the Department of Livestock Services to make the buffalo farming enterprise more profitable, which could be considered as a potential drive for rural development in Nepal.

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