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.

Lime   Parkote   Gaddi   Murrah   Murrah-cross

→Main indigenous buffaloes in Nepal→   **→Improved buffaloes in Nepal→**
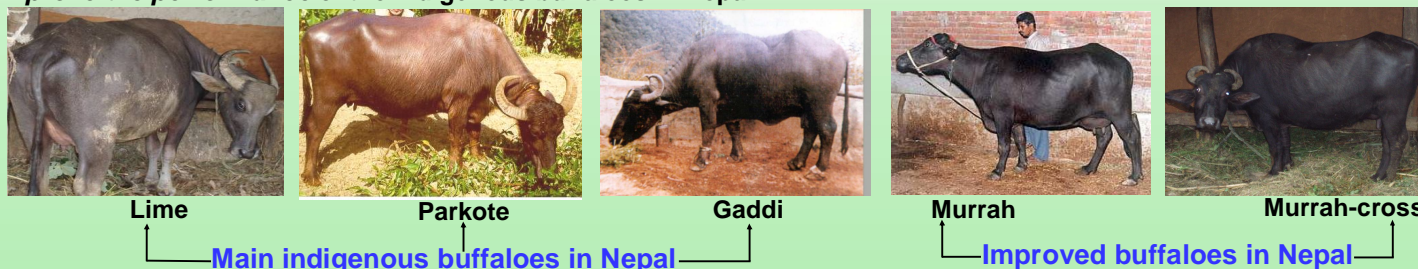
Materials and Methods

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

Recently imported Murrahs

Green forage for Murrahs

Table 1: Suggested measures* Ranks Crosstabulation

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

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

After one year of import !

Poor hay for local buffaloes!

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.

Breeding bull in a village

Year round green forage

Gender mainstreaming