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“Resilience of agricultural systems against crises”

Livestock Bio-diversity *vis-à-vis* Food and Nutritional Security: Pertinent Issues in Livestock Development in Nepal

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Abstract

Agriculture is the mainstay of about 65 % people of Nepal. Livestock is the integral part of Nepalese agricultural system which contributes about 28 % share to agricultural gross domestic production (AGDP). Cattle, buffalo, Yak and Chauries are the most important livestock species that contribute more than 73 % share to the livestock sector. There are 3 (Lime, Parkote and Gaddai) and 7 (Lulu, Achhami, Siri, Pahadi, Terai, Khaila and Chauri) different indigenous breeds of buffalo and cattle, respectively in Nepal. The average milk production of local buffalo and cattle is about 850 and 450 liters per animal per lactation, respectively. Though average production is very low, indigenous breeds of buffalo and cattle can survive in harsh environmental conditions, lower profile of nutritional regimes and are very hardy against disease and parasites. Because of the environmental diversity where Nepal enjoys from sub-tropical to the alpine climate, conservation of the indigenous species, which would be very important assets in the future, must get high priority in one side but more importantly, keeping the fact in mind that the food and nutritional security is still prevailing in more than 30, among 75, districts of Nepal, cross breeding, especially upgrading of these indigenous breeds is utmost necessary for the food and nutritional security in Nepal.

Ministry of Agriculture Development has given the high priority for the food and nutritional security and has launched the Food Security Promotion Project (FSPP) jointly supported by the Government of Nepal and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The results obtained so far are very promising. The average milk production of the dairy cattle in the project sites has been found around 3,000 liters where as that of the highest was 8,263 liters per animal per lactation. The results are also encouraging in the case of buffaloes as well. These results have proved that there is a great scope to increase the production and productivity of cattle and buffaloes which help to increase the income level of the farmers and would be the milestone in food and nutritional security in Nepal.

Keywords: Food and nutritional security, indigenous breeds, livestock, Nepal, upgrading