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Constraints of Dairy Entrepreneurs in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The constraint analysis of milk producers revealed that feed and fodder shortage, unremunerative price for milk were the most severe problems faced by all the three categories of farmers viz., small, medium and large. Small and medium farmers also reported that high cost and non-availability of concentrate mixture was equally a frustrating problem. Regarding other problems, the selected farmers had different perception.

Key words : Cross bred cows, Constraints, Dairy entrepreneur.

Dairying an allied activity of agriculture is emerging as one of the fast growing sectors of the country. India also ranks first in the milk production in the world, also in bovine population. Milk production accounts four per cent of the gross domestic product of India. Since 2001 India is the world leader in milk production closely followed by US. (Jiaqi and Lambert, 2002). For the large majority of the small farmers, cattle is perhaps the mainstay for their socio-economic security. Dairy farming helps directly in increasing crop production, by making available the draught power, manure and cash income on day to day basis. It is crucial in proving employment and supplementary income to the bulk of rural families. Such a sector is not without its share of constraints. This necessitates an enquiry into the nature and extent of constraints that plague the dairy farmers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh was purposively selected for the present study, since it is one of the leading districts known for dairy development activities like cross breeding, milk production and fodder development. The ultimate sample of 240 milk producers representing 86 small (one milch cattle) 94 medium (2 milch cattle) and 60 large farmers (3 or more milk cattle) from 16 villages from 4 Animal Husbandry divisions was selected employing proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The relevant data for the study were collected using pre-tested schedules designed for the purpose by survey method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The constraints as perceived by the selected milk producers were identified, ranked and presented in Table. It could be seen from Table, that the most pressing problem for all the categories of milk producers was the low and unremunerative price that the farmers received for the milk produced. Feed and fodder shortage and high cost and non-availability of concentrate mixtures were the other pressing constraints (Acharya, 1984). The farmers exhibited a strong feeling that the price which was received per litre of milk was not remunerative by any stretch of imagination (Rao 1986). This was a cause of great concern for all the milk producers. Unfortunately in Chittoor district hitherto, there was the coexistence of private and public sector cooperative societies, and now with the defunct of cooperatives, private sector has a greater say in milk pricing. Restoration of cooperatives will be the likely solution. Feed and fodder shortage arose as a result of drought which occurs more often than not in this area. However, the Government did respond to tide over the situation in terms of establishing temporary cattle camps, where the cattle were offered fodder till the situation improved. Since few centres were only organized, all the farmers could not avail the facility.

Every year the prices of feed and feed ingredients had been on the rise without corresponding increase in milk price. This was a top ranked problem for small and medium milk producers, while it occupied second position for large and pooled farmers. Hitherto the co-operative societies used to supply concentrate mixture at subsidized prices for its members. This was a service which the farmers sorely missed.

The defunct of dairy cooperatives was the next critical problem. With the promulgation of Milk and Milk Products Order (MMOP) 1992, private entrepreneurs entered the field of milk procurement, processing and marketing. This jeopardized the strength of cooperatives. This amply demonstrated that the milk producers could not afford to miss the services rendered by the cooperative societies over the years.

The fee collected for A.I. @ Rs. 20.00 per dose turned out to be the next constraint for small milk producers. Till few years ago the fee that was charged for A.I. was just Rs. 2.00 for the first dose and free for subsequent doses, if necessary. A phenomenal increase by 10 fold was one thing that the farmers found it hard to digest. Moreover, there were no free subsequent doses in case, the first dose failed. The farmers plea was to reduce the price to a reasonable level and restoring the facility of free service for II and III doses. However, the point that needs to be underlined is that the Government feels, the present fee collected is reasonable as they have to maintain breeding bull stations, processing cost of semen, cost of liquid nitrogen, establishment expenses, etc. To overcome this problem some balance may be struck out by fixing the price at a level which is acceptable to both the parties.

With regard to institutional credit, probably with the winding up of IRDP, SC action plan and other rural development schemes, the bankers are particular in insisting up on the security and are selective regarding advances. A solution in the offing is that formation into self-help groups like DWCRA, etc., would certainly solve the problems by providing group guarantee. This was a IV ranked problem for medium and large farmers and VI for pooled farmers.

The next problem reported by the selected farmers which ranked V, VI, V and VIII positions respectively for small, medium, large and pooled respondents was lack of sufficient land for fodder cultivation.

The soaring prices of veterinary medicines and vaccines was yet another problem to the milk producers. Since the high yielding crossbreds were comparatively more susceptible to diseases than local cattle, the need for treating these animals arose more frequently. With the rising prices of medicines, the farmers felt that the expenditure which was imminent was on a higher side. This constraint was ranked as IV for small milk producers, III for medium and large milk producers and V for pooled respondents.

Easy access to veterinary institutions was a factor which the dairy farmers looked for, to provide timely treatment (Venkata Subramanian and Fulzele 1996). The above constraint in turn led to another problem i.e., lack of A.I. facilities, because A.I. facilities were available in veterinary institutions. For small and medium milk producers it was ranked as VIII, whereas for large and pooled milk producers it was ranked as X. However, One should not loose sight of a scheme which was very recently introduced by the State Government in collaboration with Raymonds Company by name 'Gopala mithra'. Under this scheme the A.I. facilities were provided at door step of the farmers with a fee of Rs. 35/- per dose.

Non-availability of fodder seed in time was yet another problem faced by the milk producers. The ranks that were given by selected farmers were VIII, V, IV and VII respectively.

Anoestrum and poor conception were found to be common problems in buffaloes. Venkata Subramanian and Fulzele (1996) reported similar findings. This was one of the reasons for the farmers in the district to opt for crossbred cows. However, better feed management and prompt treatment for low conception would reduce the problem. The order of the rank, that was given for this constraint was IX by small, XII by medium, XI by large and XII by pooled milk producers.

Repeat breeding in crossbred cows was also reported as a common problem for all the categories of farmers and ranked as X by small, VII by marginal, VI by large and pooled milk producers. This appeared to be an inevitable problem with the increase in exotic inheritance as well as faulty feeding and mineral deficiency according to field veterinarians. In general exotic breeds have low genetic resistance for diseases more particularly with regard to gynaecological problems. Prompt treatment for the above would be the possible remedy.

Non-availability of medicines and vaccines in time was reported by the respondents and was ranked XI, XIII, IX and XIV by small, medium, large and pooled respondents respectively. The reason that can be attributed was budgetary constraints. Lion's share of budget allotted to veterinary hospitals was consumed in the form of salaries and establishment expenditure.

Non-availability of good crossbred cows and buffaloes was found to be a problem which according to small, medium, large and pooled farmers were placed in XII, XI, VII and XII ranks respectively.

Many farmers felt that the available extension activities were inadequate. Some of the farmers expressed their feeling that extension

Table 1. Constraints perceived by the milk producers in Chittoor district.

Sl. No.	Constraint	Milk producers							
		Small (N=86)		Medium (N=94)		Large (N=60)		Total (N=240)	
		Freq-uency	Rank	Freq-uency	Rank	Freq-uency	Rank	Freq-uency	Rank
1	High incidence of repeat breeding in crossbred cows	36 (41.86)	X	41 (43.62)	VII	28 (46.67)	VI	105 (43.75)	IX
2	Anoestrum and poor conception in buffaloes	41 (47.67)	IX	28 (29.78)	XII	12 (20.00)	XI	81 (33.75)	XII
3	Lack of A.I. facilities or good breeder bulls within the reach of the milk producer	47 (54.65)	VIII	38 (40.43)	VIII	14 (33.33)	X	99 (41.25)	X
4	Non-availability of good crossbred cows or buffaloes in the local cattle markets	27 (31.40)	XII	31 (32.98)	XI	23 (38.33)	VII	81 (33.75)	XII
5	Lack of sufficient land for fodder growing	60 (69.77)	V	50 (53.19)	VI	30 (50.00)	V	140 (58.33)	VIII
6	Non-availability of fodder seed in time	47 (54.65)	VIII	63 (67.02)	V	35 (58.33)	IV	145 (60.42)	VII
7	Feed and fodder shortage	86 (100.00)	I	94 (100.00)	I	60 (100.00)	I	240 (100.00)	I
8	High cost and non-availability of concentrate mixture	86 (100.00)	I	94 (100.00)	I	56 (93.33)	II	236 (98.33)	II
9	Non-availability of vaccines and medicines in time	31 (36.05)	XI	27 (28.72)	XIII	19 (31.67)	IX	77 (32.08)	XIV
10	Distant location of veterinary institutions	49 (56.98)	VII	32 (34.02)	X	14 (23.33)	X	95 (39.58)	XI
11	Inadequate extension activities	23 (26.74)	XIII	34 (36.17)	IX	21 (35.00)	VIII	78 (32.50)	XIII
12	Un-remunerative price for milk	86 (100.00)	I	94 (100.00)	I	60 (100.00)	I	240 (100.00)	I
13	Poor credit facilities	64 (74.42)	IV	64 (68.09)	IV	35 (58.33)	IV	163 (67.93)	VI
14	Cost of medicines is too high	59 (68.60)	VI	69 (73.40)	III	39 (65.00)	III	167 (69.58)	V
15	Fee collected for A.I. @ Rs.20/- per dose is too high	67 (77.91)	III	63 (68.09)	V	39 (65.00)	III	169 (70.42)	IV
16	Dairy cooperative societies are defunct	74 (86.05)	II	71 (75.53)	II	39 (65.00)		184 (76.67)	III

(Figures in the Parantheses Indicate Percentage to Respective Totals)

activities need to be strengthened by holding cattle camps, calf rallies, milk yield competitions and awareness programmes, educational films, method demonstrations etc. Many of the farmers were found to be regular in watching 'Annadata' (E.T.V. channel), 'Rythumithra' (Teja T.V. Channel) and also agricultural programmes of D.D-2 channel. Inadequate extension activities constituted XIII ranked constraint for small milk producers, IX ranked for medium milk producers, VIII ranked for large milk producers and XIII ranked for pooled farmers.

The studies on the constraints faced by the milk producers in different parts of the country reflected more or less of similar nature. According to Patil *et al.* (2009) majority of the respondents (72.44 per cent) stated their constraint as low milk production from the local breeds, 45.33 per cent as shortage of green fodder and 41.33 per cent as lack of clean water while 25.33 per cent stated lack of preservation facility as their constraint. Referring to the financial constraints, 78.22 per cent respondents stated their constraint as delay in milk payment, 63.11 per cent as inadequate money and lack of loan facility whereas high cost of concentrates as the constraint by 56.44 per cent of the respondents. As regards technical constraints, majority of the respondents (68.00 per cent) have stated their constraint as inadequate knowledge of diseases, their prevention and control while 56.89 per cent have referred their constraint as non-availability of veterinary services. The study of Sarker and Ghosh (2010) has shown that non-cooperative farms face major constraints and high severity compared with cooperative farms in expanding milk production. Also important was that most of the severe or more severe constraints were infrastructural in nature. During the investigation conducted by Sonpasare *et al.,* (2011), 64.12 per cent dairy farmers found problem of availability of water, 72.23 per cent found problem of getting green fodder round the year, only 14.44 per cent farmers had crossbred animals, 58.89% farmers found the problem of marketing of produced milk, most of the farmers i.e. 57.78 per cent had not house for dairy animals. About 72.22 per cent dairy farmers had land to rear animals. Only 18.88 per cent farmers took advantages of veterinary services and rest of them did not want to take such facility or they did not afford or such facility could not reach up to dairy farmers. As per the study conducted by Kathiravan and Selvam (2011), the constraints faced in rearing crossbred cows in the order of their importance were excessive feed cost, followed by inadequate price for milk and huge investment. Low productivity in desi cows was the major constraint, followed by excessive feed cost, inadequate price for milk. Lack of fodder and grazing facilities was the prime constraint in buffalo farming followed by labour shortage and infertility problem.

To sum up the constraints elaborated above, all the farmers irrespective of size group felt un-remunerative price for milk, shortage of feeds and fodders as the most pressing problems. All the farmers irrespective of size group had expressed all the problems, but the extent of severity varied with the size group. Some of the problems which were relatively more serious for small farmers were found to be less severe for medium and large farmers.

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