

Training Needs of Dairy Farmers

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out in Valsad and Surat districts of Gujarat State in 1997, to find out training needs of dairy farmers in different areas viz., breeding, feeding, fodder production, management and health and care practices. The areas in which the dairy farmers needed training 'most essential' category and which ranked first was 'animal health and care practice (2.69 overall mean score)' as they lacked knowledge and skills in these areas. Dairy farmers also opined that interval between two successive training programmes should be of one year and it should be conducted during winter season of December and January through demonstrations and group discussions at agricultural colleges/schools of their locality.

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INTRODUCTION

The utilization of human resources for effective management and development of dairy farming is sine quanon. The success of this strategy therefore depends to a great extent on the ability to involve a large number of dairy farmers and to impart the knowledge and sophisticated inputs in a judicious manner. One of the ways to impart new knowledge and skills to the dairy farmers is to have a continuous training programme for them. Training is vital and essential to enhance motivation, create confidence and inoculate efficiency in an individual. Training is effective and purposeful if it is based on and synchronised with the local needs and requirements. An attempt therefore, has been made to assess the training for dairy farmers in main areas of dairy farming.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Valsad district of Gujarat State. In order to ascertain the training needs of dairy farmers an index of five main areas/aspects of dairy farming was prepared in consultation with dairy experts and a few innovative local farmers. A three point rating scale containing most essential, essential and not essential with scores of 3, 2 and 1, respectively was used to assess the needs of the dairy farmers against each item of the index as perceived by them. After calculating the total scores of each item of the index, the rank values were assigned and for preference of training in particular area below mentioned scale was adopted :

Most Essential : Greater then 2.665 score
Essential : 1.935 to 2.665 score
Not Essential : Less then 1.935 score

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TABLE 1

Training needs of dairy farmers in different practices.

Sr. No.	Training Practices/Area	Level of Training needs			Total score	Mean score	Rank	Overall mean score	Overall Rank
		Most Essential	Essential	Not Essential					
(I) Breeding Practices									
1.	Selection of breed	70	26	04	266	2.66	II		
2.	Selection of adult cow and heifers	61	34	05	256	2.56	III		
3.	Artificial insemination	77	20	03	274	2.74	I		
4.	Pregnacy diagnosis	51	39	10	241	2.41	IV	2.45	III
5.	Heat detection	29	30	41	188	1.88	V		
(II) Feeding Practices									
1.	Selection of concentrate	40	57	03	237	2.37	IV		
2.	Feeding of young calves and heifers	49	49	02	247	2.47	II		
3.	Feeding of pregnant cow	48	50	02	246	2.46	III	2.48	II
4.	Feeding of milch cow	76	23	01	275	2.75	I		
5.	Time and frequency of feeding	39	56	05	234	2.34	V		
(III) Fodder Production									
1.	Selection of fodder crop	15	60	25	190	1.90	II		
2.	Selection of varieties fodder crops	06	69	25	181	1.81	III		
3.	Cultivation of fodder crops	09	51	40	169	1.69	V	1.82	V
4.	Preservation of fodder (silage making)	15	63	22	193	1.93	I		
5.	Storage of dry fodder	17	44	39	178	1.78	IV		

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(IV) Management Practices

1. Housing management	24	52	24	200	2.00	IV	
2. Milking management	28	15	57	171	1.71	V	
3. Management of calving	33	57	10	223	2.23	I	IV
4. Calf management	25	61	14	211	2.11	III	
5. Hygienic measures of routing	25	64	11	214	2.14	II	

(V) Animal Health and Care Practices

1. Precaution against contagious diseases	81	17	02	279	2.79	I	
2. Precaution against parasitic diseases	56	40	04	252	2.52	V	
3. Vaccination schedule	68	29	03	265	2.65	IV	I
4. Treatment against common diseases	77	20	03	274	2.74	II	
5. Prevention of infertility	75	23	02	273	2.73	III	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

(A) Training areas

The major areas and their respective sub-areas of training needs in skill alongwith the total score, mean score, rank, overall mean score and overall rank are presented in Table 1.

As the table 1 reveals, the area in which the dairy farmers needed training 'Most Essential' and which ranked first was 'animal health and care practices (2.69 overall mean score)' as they lacked knowledge and skills in these areas. Other areas in which training was perceived as 'Essential' by the dairy farmers were (i) feeding practices, (ii) breeding practices and (iii) management practices with overall mean scores of 2.48, 2.45 and 2.04 respectively. In case of fodder production the overall mean score was found to be 1.82 which is less than 1.935 score which is categorised under the category of 'not essential' as indicated in the methodology. Hence it can be said that the dairy farmers do not feel essential training related to fodder production.

(i) Animal health and care practices

Dairy farmers appeared to be aware of the fact that animal health is very important area of training from milk production point of view and management of health including protection of animals from different sorts of diseases and deficiency of nutrients. So dairy farmers need training regarding precautions against common parasitic and contagious diseases, prevention of infertility and vaccination schedule.

(ii) Feeding practices

Animal health is mainly related with feed quality and time schedule. And if the health is in good condition, definately milch

cow give milk production in terms of quality and quantity. Proper selection of feed materials, proper proportion of green and dry fodder, feed requirement of pregnant cow, milch cow, young cows and heifers are important aspects in which training is essential for dairy farmers and that will help in improving quality and quantity of milk.

(iii) Breeding practices

High calf mortality, delayed age of puberty, long calving intervals, difficulties in freezing of semen, lower selection intensity and genetic erosion are problems in livestock breeding programme. The knowledge and skills in artificial insemination, selection of breed, adult cow and heifers pregnancy, diagnosis and heat detection will help the dairy farmers to minimise the genetic erosion. In addition, this will help them in increasing intensity of selection and achieving higher rate of genetic progress with sustained use of available livestock germplasm. It is time that the national livestock genetic resource conservation alongwith use of modern genetic engineering techniques should be taken seriously, by the experts in the field.

(iv) Management practices

Proper guidance and training regarding calving management, hygienic measures, housing management, calf and milking management is advisable in rearing the animals efficiently and economically. It was observed during the visits of dairy farmers that they were not aware regarding latest management concepts for which they need a skillful training for such aspects.

(B) Interval, Season, Month, Venue and Method of Training

For making the training programme successful, it is essential to know, the interval

TABLE 2

Distribution of dairy farmers according to their opinion about Interval, Season, Month, Method and Venue of Training period. (N=100)

Sr. No.	Variables	Number	Per cent
I.	Interval		
(a)	Six month	48	48.00
(b)	One year	52	52.00
	Total	100	100.00
II.	Season		
(a)	Kharif season	36	36.00
(b)	Winter season	58	58.00
(c)	Summer season	06	06.00
	Total	100	100.00
III.	Month		
(a)	January	33	33.00
(b)	March	04	04.00
(c)	May	09	09.00
(d)	June	27	27.00
(e)	August	20	20.00
(f)	November	11	11.00
(g)	December	39	39.00
(h)	In any month	03	03.00
IV.	Method of training		
(a)	Method demonstration	45	45.00
(b)	Lecture	03	03.00
(c)	Lecture and field trip	12	12.00
(d)	Group discussion	33	33.00
(e)	Study tour	05	05.00
(f)	Exhibition	02	02.00
	Total	100	100.00
V.	Training venue		
(a)	Farmers training centre	30	30.00
(b)	Agricultural colleges/schools	60	60.00
(c)	District/Taluka head quarters	10	10.00
	Total	100	100.00

to be kept between two successive training programmes, training season and month for organizing the training. Keeping this in mind, dairy farmers' opinion regarding the interval, the season and month of training class were asked and are presented in Table 2. This table also shows the venue and method of training.

Table shows that majority of the dairy farmers opined that, interval between two successive training programme should be of one year. Winter season was supposed to be the season for conducting the training

programme. It could also be observed that all the dairy farmers required training during the month of December and January as they did not have much agriculture work during that period. Most of the dairy farmers expressed the need for using different extension training methods especially demonstrations, group discussion, lecture and field trips to learn skill in animal health and care practices, feeding practice, breeding practices and management practices. All the dairy farmers desired to attend training classes at agricultural colleges/schools as they wanted to perfectly learn the practices with all the facilities.

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