

## **CONSTRAINTS FACED BY DAIRY FARMERS IN KAMRUP DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A study was carried out to analyze the constraints experienced by the rural dairy farmers in Kamrup district of Assam. The study was conducted in 10 villages under 2 development blocks of Kamrup district by personally interviewing 200 dairy farmers. The respondents stated their constraint as high cost of feed, medicine and labour (72%); non-availability of skilled labour (47%); lack of financial assistance (34%); small land holdings (22%); inadequate marketing channel (17%); high calf mortality (9%) and involvement of middlemen in marketing (7%).

**Key words :** Constraints, Dairy farmers, Kamrup District, Animal Management Practices.

Milk production in India is predominantly the domain of small holders in mixed farming system. The average dairying assumes great significance in providing employment to rural people as well as a stable source of income to augment to their earnings from the main enterprise they follow, i.e. crop husbandry. It provides income and employment not only to the worker sections of the society but also to the farming community of the country in general. The return from small holdings can be maximized by the proper combination of

dairy enterprise with crop production. India succeeded in producing 127.3million tones of milk to become world's largest milk producer. The milk production of Assam was recorded as 0.79 million tons (NDDB, 2010) with a per capita availability of 83g (AHVD, 2013) milk as against 290g at national level.

Educated unemployed youth are now coming forward to undertake dairy farming as a means of livelihood in Assam. But, the dairy farmers are encountering with numerous constraints in their ventures. So, an investigation was planned to study the constraints as experienced by the rural dairy farmers in Kamrup district of Assam.

The investigation was carried out in Kamrup district of Assam from March, 2009 to April, 2010. The study was conducted in rural areas of Kamrup district under two Development Blocks namely Bezera Development Block and Chayani-Barduwar

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Development Block. From each Block, five villages were selected randomly and twenty farmers from each village having at least two milch cows were selected randomly for collection of data. The required informations were collected with the help of an interview schedule designed for the purpose through personal contact with the dairy unit owners and personal observations.

The constraints encountered by the rural dairy farmers in Kamrup district of Assam were listed below:

(a) *High cost of feed, medicine and labour*

The cost of feed ingredients, medicine, feed supplements like mineral mixture and cost of labour were found to be very much high and not easily available in the study area. This was reported by 72 per cent of the total dairy farmers selected for the study. Similar result was reported by earlier workers <sup>1, 2, 3, 6</sup> who reported that high cost of feed was one of the major constraints faced by the dairy farmers.

(b) *Non-availability of skilled labour*

There was scarcity of skilled labour to look after the dairy animals in a scientific manner. This was reported by 47 per cent of the total dairy farmers selected for the study. The majority of inhabitants in the study area were found to be more opted for working in different Govt. schemes where they could easily earn their livelihood without doing the hard labours as in dairy farms.

(c) *Lack of financial assistance*

Another constraint encountered by the dairy farmers was lack of finance for improving their herd as financial institutes required collateral mortgages to generate loan. It was reported by 34 per cent of the total dairy farmers selected for the study. Similar result was found by earlier worker <sup>6</sup>.

(d) *Small land holding*

Small land holding was one of the major constraints for cultivation of fodder. Further, there

was no community grazing land or suitable land for cultivation of green fodder. This was reported by 22 per cent of the total dairy farmers selected for the study. Similar result was found by other worker<sup>5</sup>.

(e) *Inadequate marketing channel*

Marketing channel was not organized either through Govt. sector or private sector. This was reported by 17 per cent of the total dairy farmers selected for the study. No uniform milk selling price prevailed throughout the year. As such, dairy farmers were deprived of remunerative milk selling prices as well as better margin of profits. Similar result was observed by various workers <sup>3</sup>.

(f) *High calf mortality*

Another constraint recorded was higher rate of calf mortality. It was revealed by 9 per cent of the total dairy farmers selected for the study. It might be due to heavy worm infestation and also lack of proper scientific care and management. Similar result was reported by other worker <sup>3</sup>. Inadequate knowledge of diseases, their prevention and control, and non-availability of veterinary services led to high calf mortality.

(g) *Involvement of middlemen*

Due to involvement of middlemen in the market, animal owners sometimes could not earn a better margin of profits. It was reported by 7 per cent of the total dairy farmers selected for the study. Similar result was found by earlier worker <sup>6</sup>.

The high cost of feed, medicine and labour were the major constraints experienced by the dairy farmers in Kamrup district of Assam while adopting animal management practices, followed by non-availability of skilled labour, financial assistance, suitable land, and suitable marketing channel. Calf mortality and involvement of middlemen in marketing were other constraints encountered by the dairy farmers in Kamrup (rural) district of Assam.

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