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Constraints perceived by the livestock owners of district Mandi in Indigenous dairy farming

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Abstract

Raising livestock is an essential component of rural communities since it helps agricultural people supplement their income. In Himachal Pradesh, the livestock industry provides a living for 19 out of every 20 families (Economic survey 2022-23). The indigenous dairy farming in the state is growing and demand-driven. The purpose of the current study was to identify the main obstacles that dairy producers of district Mandi confront while raising indigenous cattle breeds. The findings showed that the majority of respondents lacked understanding of more advanced indigenous dairy production practices. The main obstacles to indigenous cattle farming were the lack of marketing facilities for local milk and its products. These findings demonstrated the urgent requirement for developing specialized policies and strategies to maximize the potential of local breeds and address farmer concerns in order to secure the sustainability of agriculture in the area.

Keywords: Cattle, constraints, dairy, indigenous

Introduction

Livestock production is a significant sub-sector under agriculture and related activities. As per 20th livestock census the total indigenous cattle population in Himachal Pradesh is 759082. Majority of farmer's income and livelihood security depend heavily on indigenous cattle. Breeds like Himachali Pahari, Sahiwal, Red Sindhi, Gir, Rathi are spread across the state. Although the indigenous cattle produce less milk, they are well adapted to inclement weather conditions. Indigenous cattle play an important role in relation to general principles of natural farming. In this context, the current study was planned to recognize the main challenges dairy farmers in District Mandi confront when raising indigenous cattle.

Objectives

The main objective of the current study was to identify the main constraints faced by the indigenous (breed) cattle owners of District Mandi.

Methodology

The present investigation was conducted in Sunder Nagar, Balh, Balichowki, Churag and Dhanotu blocks of District Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. They were selected purposively for data collection from indigenous cattle farming community. The main challenges faced by farmers in indigenous cattle dairy production were elicited by contacting a total of 60 respondents. To get pertinent information, the chosen respondents were personally questioned using a semi-structured interview schedule. Henry Garrett's (1969) [3] ranking technique was applied to tabulate the collected data and determine the most important element that affects the respondent. According to this method, respondents were asked to rank each element, and the results of those rankings were then transformed into score values using the following formula:-

$$\text{Percent position} = \frac{100 (R_i - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where, R_{ij} - Rank given for the i^{th} variable by j^{th} respondents
 N_j - Number of variable ranked by j^{th} respondents
 The percent position estimated is translated into scores using Garrett's table. After adding up each person's scores for each factor, the total value of scores & mean scores are determined. The most significant factor is thought to be the one with the highest mean value. The Garrett ranking technique was employed to prioritize the element. Following the use of the Garret (1981)^[4] approach, the order of merit was transmuted after computing the percent position of rankings of the already considered factors. The factor's mean score served as the basis for the final ranking, which fixed the factor's relative priority.

Results

Figure 1 depicts the major constraints on indigenous dairy farming that district Mandi cattle owners perceive. The present study found that farmers' lack of information about scientific indigenous dairy farming practices was identified as one of their biggest challenges. A substantial majority of the respondents viewed the poor conception rate as second significant limitation followed by the low milk production of indigenous cattle as a third constraint because it directly affects the financial gains from cattle farming. Poor conception rate in indigenous cattle was attributable due to lack of knowledge about feed supplements such as use of mineral mixture or urea molasses bricks in animal diet. Indigenous cattle produce fetches higher price than the cross bred cattle thereby increasing the earning of livestock owners. However, the non availability of exclusive market for indigenous cattle produce be it milk or other processed products was another hurdle faced by the dairy owners of the

district. Due to the widely dispersed nature of the area and lack of transportation resources, respondents were unable to sell native milk and its products at a profit in the market. A significant barrier cited by the respondents, according to Kumar *et al.* (2017a)^[5] & Shinde *et al.* (2011)^[6], was the absence of unique marketing facilities for domestic milk and milk products. 50.27 percent respondents felt that late maturity of indigenous cattle was a major constraint and was ranked fifth in the order. For rearing of cattle, pasture land is critical in satisfying feed requirements through intensive grazing. Because the amount of pasture land in farmers' communities for cow grazing is constantly decreasing, 50.05 percent of respondents regarded insufficient pasture land for indigenous cattle grazing as a key limitation, ranking sixth in order. According to the findings of a study conducted on Sahiwal by Narwaria *et al.* (2015)^[7], the short lactation problem may be concerning for the indigenous herd. Short lactation time indicates a longer dry period in cattle. Thus, respondents in the current study identified long dry periods as the seventh constraint and breeding constraints ranking eighth. Breeding limitation such as insufficient indigenous straw supply, repeat breeding, and a higher age at the time of initial artificial insemination are just a few of the issues that livestock owners in District Mandi encounter. Livestock owners often lack proper technical know-how along with skills to maximize their benefits and is directly linked to the ninth constraint which is lack of training and certification facilities. Inadequacy with respect to development programmes, policy support, and incentives for raising indigenous livestock was ranked last in the constraints faced by the livestock owners of the District. Similar finding was reported by Kumar *et al.* (2017b)^[8].

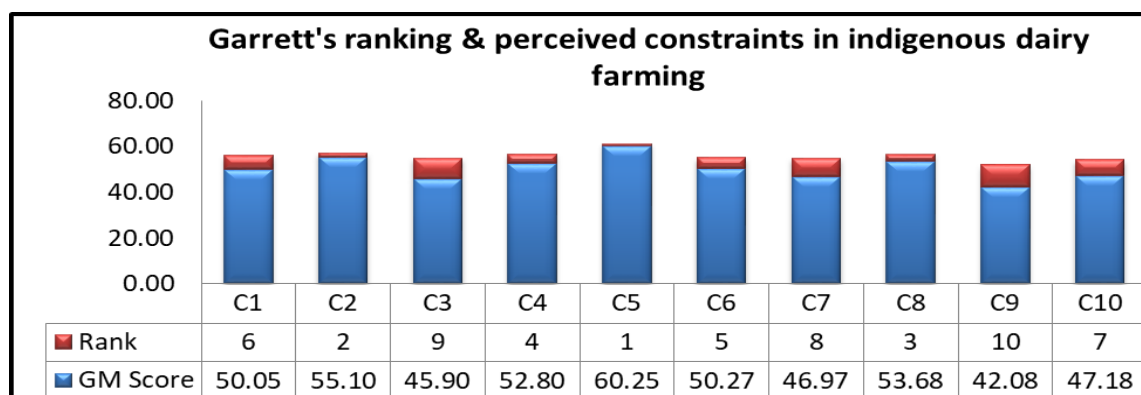


Fig 1: Garrett's ranking and perceived constraints by indigenous cattle owners of district Mandi

Where, C1:- Non-availability of pasture and green fodder, C2:- Low rate of conception, C3:- Lack of training and certification facilities, C4:-Non-availability of exclusive marketing facilities, C5:- Inadequate knowledge, C6:- Late maturity, C7:- Breeding constraints, C8:- Low milk productivity, C9:- Lack of development programmes, C10:- Long dry period

Conclusion

The current study revealed that indigenous cattle were well-suited to the agro-climatic conditions and agricultural practices of the region, with the main obstacles to the production of indigenous cattle being inadequate knowledge about improved rearing, poor conception rate, low milk productivity were the major constraints for adoption of indigenous dairy farming. Efforts should be made to make veterinary extension services more functional, exclusive

marketing and initiate a specific-policy & programmes to encourage the indigenous cattle farming.

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