

Better cow health and more milk at dairies in Punjab, Pakistan

A big dairy processor and important players in the Pakistan dairy market means there is a market for fresh and high quality milk. Many investors in Punjab opt for the dairy sector. In turn, existing dairy farms are expanding their herd or switching from the traditional buffalo to a pure milk breed cow in order to achieve a higher milk production per animal and a higher farm income.

Specialist skills required

Capacity building of extension services is only one step in developing the milk supply chain. Many animals are imported from other countries and it is a challenge to keep those animals healthy and productive under the stressful climate conditions experienced in Punjab.

To enable these cows to produce milk at the expected level, specialised technical knowledge and practical skills are required and farmers need support in this learning process in order to meet the growing demands of the market.

Dutch animal production consultancy VetEffect is running a project to train 50 Dairy Development Executives (DDEs) in the specific skills that are required to make dairy farming more successful.

The DDEs are trained in groups and on several selected 'model' farms. Training is done in three sessions of three days each, spread over a period of about one year. For



Expert Dairy Development Executives (DDEs).

each farm training, two local experts and two international experts are involved. By using the actual situation at the model farms and implementing a farm scan tool, strengths and weaknesses in the farms' production and management processes can be identified. The DDEs are trained in analysing the points of improvement and deciding on the best course of action for improvement. The time between the training sessions is used to implement the advised actions. DDEs are given the same assignments to do on selected pilot farms in their own region. At some model farms significant progress was seen after the first

session on, for instance, young stock growth rates. This is an important aspect of sustainable dairy farming, because young stock represents the future milking cow on the farm.

As an expert in animal husbandry and milking techniques, Willem van der Bent of VetEffect was often impressed with the theoretical knowledge level of the DDEs. However, the skills to translate knowledge into effective advice to the farmer and the farm workers needed improvement. Also business planning was important to train DDEs in guiding farmers with potential to invest and expand their farms.

Milk handling.



Traditional buffalo farming.





DDEs training farmers.



Visual inspection of the milk pipeline.

Therefore it is essential for improvement of extension services to teach practical skills (experience), train on actual farms and use specific farm information in the training sessions. It is also important to work on staff self-confidence and the will to work on the farms with the animals.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for several farm actions have been introduced in order to standardise processes executed by different workers.

More milk of a better quality

The overall objective of the project is to produce more milk of a better quality. Buying cattle from abroad is a short-term method, but not sustainable. During training

therefore, a lot of attention is paid to the design of a five year business plan. The design process involves the identification of the effects of good technical results on the economic performance of the farm. Planning of investments, development of the herd after imports as well as feed requirements and the running costs are indicated in order to investigate the feasibility of the farmers' plans.

Awareness of influencing factors on the milk quality is key and SOPs help the workers know how to implement effective on-farm change. It is no surprise that a SOP for bedding maintenance has a great influence on milk quality or udder health.

Integrated competences in the total milk production chain is what will help forward Pakistan in its challenge. May the experts' contribution and possible follow-up be valuable in that process.



Checking feed.

Good hygienic storage of milk equipment.



Listening attentively to instruction.

