

India poised to be top milk producer

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India is on the verge of overtaking the U.S.A. in terms of milk production, according to Mr. Kurshid Alam Khan, the Governor of Karnataka. Inaugurating a week long second Pan Commonwealth Veterinary conference at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, he said the country produced 68 million tonnes of milk and is placed second in the world. The country is poised to overtake the U.S. very soon, he added.

The country had occupied top position so far in the number of cattle, buffalo, and goats while it is in the sixth place in the number of sheep. He also noted that the share of livestock output in the economy had increased between 1981 and 1992 from 8.66 percent to 9.22 percent, though investment by the Government had remained static. This was in sharp contrast to the fall in the agricultural output in GDP from 37.8 to 27.6 during the period of the agricultural output, share of livestock output was 24.35 percent in 1981, but it had grown to 31.27 percent by 1992. Lauding the choice of the theme of the conference – Animal Health and Production in Rural Areas; the Essential Role of Women At All Levels – the Governor hoped that the delegates participating would find remedies to various problems the women are facing.

Dr. Amrita Patel, Managing Director, NDDB, Anand, said an effort should be made to take the research in the area to those

for whom livestock was "central to their life", which is rarely happening. The young men and women (studying animal husbandry) should be enabled to take laboratory experiments to farmers and bring back the field experiences and study them. She also said that most of the research work in the veterinary field was of marginal importance to poor farmers, who depended on livestock for earning their livelihood. Commonwealth Veterinary Association (CVA) President Dr. W.J. Pryor of Australia, said that more and more people are taking up research & studies in this respect. Dr. Abdul Rahman, Dean of Veterinary College Bangalore and the present Secretary General of the Commonwealth Veterinary Association gave a brief report of the activities of Commonwealth Veterinary Association during the inaugural session.

There were eighteen sessions, covering, Women in rural agricultural development, Animal Production, Draft Animal Power, Role of Alternative Medicine in Veterinary Practice, Veterinary Education, Extension Training, Control of Rabies, and FMD, Poultry production, Health and feed technology, Wildlife Medicine, and Animal welfare and Biotechnology in Immunology.

The world renowned parasitologist Prof. Soulsby urged the Veterinarians to involve more in the areas of zoonoses, environmental issues and animal welfare. He also emphasised the need of Continuing Professional Development (CPP) or continuing Veterinary Education (CVE) which has become mandatory in U.S.A. and will become mandatory in U.K. and other European countries. The minimum requirement for CPP/CVE recommended is 5 days or 35 hours per year by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. Dr. C.M. Singh, the President of V.C.I. also emphasised the need of Continuing Education in Veterinary Profession and stated that V.C.I. will be following the British system of Veterinary education and no Animal Sciences colleges will be established in India.



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The research paper presented by Dr. Veena of Bangalore Veterinary college, entitled 'Field oriented Bioassay to Diagnose Pregnancy in Cattle' received much applause as this bioassay is very simple and specific. Using wheat seeds (100 nos) and 1 ml of urine, pregnancy can be detected from 40 days onwards by noting the germination and shoot growth of wheat seeds i.e., urine of pregnant cows suppresses the seed germination and shoot growth of wheat seeds, very much significantly compared to nonpregnant cow's urine.

The session on Foot and Mouth Disease control received much attention as there was a debate on the use of Type C in polyvalent vaccines for FMD although an outbreak by Type C virus was not reported during the last 3 years and the committee suggested it is time to think whether type C must be withdrawn from the polyvalent vaccine thereby saving much money.

Another important research paper was the one given by Dr. Spradbrow from Australia, who discussed the success of a Ranikhet Disease Vaccine which can be mixed in feed. The Vaccine was tried among the local/desi breeds of layers in Thailand and Vietnam where there is difficulty in administering the RD vaccine as they (Fowls) need to be caught from the backyard for administering. This has much relevance in our state as majority of our layers are reared in backyard system and also Ranikhet disease being the most important disease.

About 1200 delegates, from 65 countries took part in the conference, which is held once in six years. A trade exhibition by pharmaceutical firms, state animal husbandry departments and animal sciences universities from different Commonwealth countries was also conducted during this conference.

Cloning....

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developed from a cell derived not only from embryo and foetus but also from adult tissue, thus emphasising the fact that mammalian differentiation is almost all achieved by systematic, sequential changes in gene expression brought about by interaction between the nucleus and the changing cytoplasm environment.

Though much hue & cry is still lingering in the minds of the people regarding this great achievement, one must view the advantages it could impart in the development of human society. It has tremendous implication in propagating

animal species, useful for creating drugs for humans by inserting DNA in animals, cloning of specific organs for surgical and medical implantation etc. etc. Crops and fruit trees could be cloned for improving the agriculture and food production. Sheep (Polly and Molly) producing Factor IX (Coagulation factor) and cows (George and Charlie) producing human serum albumin, through their milk, have all been produced by cloning transgenic animals.

The author had the opportunity to witness this marvellous achievement in person.

(Courtesy to Ian Wilmut)