



# Exploitation of global market in livestock sector- policies and strategies

K.Udayavarman

**I**ndia has the largest livestock populations in the world. It ranks first in cattle and buffalo population, which account for 57% of the world buffalo population and 16% of cattle population. During 1951 to 1992, livestock population has increased at a rate of 45%. The composition of livestock population has also undergone significant transformation during this period. Bovine population declined from 68% to 61%, Goat population increased from 16 to 24% and Buffalo population increased from 22% to 29%.

*Dr. K. Udayavarman*  
Additional Director  
Animal husbandry  
department, Kerala.

Within cattle there has been a marked shift from work animals to milch animals. The population of male cattle declined and crossbred cattle population increased.

The number of crossbreds doubled from 3 million (1982) to 6.5 million (1992). Kerala has the highest proportion of crossbred cattle population in the country (Around 70%). Milk production increased rapidly, reaching 25 lakh tones in 2000-2001. India is currently the largest producer of milk in the world with 74 million tones of milk.

During nineties the livestock sector as a whole and

milk product in particular registered a higher growth rate as compared to the agriculture sector. Egg production also increased significantly in eighties but registered lower growth rate in nineties.

Livestock is an important component of the agricultural sector throughout the country. In a state like Kerala that derives about 20% of its GDP from agriculture, the sector plays a crucial role. The status of livestock rearing has changed from subsidiary occupation to a main activity. This sector plays an important role in alleviating poverty and providing employment to the rural mass. The distribution of livestock among the rural poor is much more equitable than the land. 60% of rural households own 65% of the total milch animals leading to more equitable distribution of gains from livestock and livestock products. As a sequel to economic liberalisation, significant market lead opportunities have opened up in this sector. The value of livestock output has reached 4.5% and there are expectations of even faster production in demand for livestock product due to increase in income level combined with high-income elasticity of demand.

The ability to capitalise on the new market has many constraints due to prevalence of some diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease, sanitary and zoo sanitary regulations. Many foreign countries deny entry of livestock products from Kerala, despite the "minimum access clause" of the W.T.O.

Apart from milk and milk products, which is abundantly available across the world with much lesser cost, the other livestock products like meat, leather and other by-products got much export potential. The congenial social atmosphere prevailing in Kerala is



unique. There are no religious taboos in slaughtering unproductive animals including cows.

### Disease Free Zone:

Our country is blessed with a healthy stock of animals resistant to many diseases that are reported in other parts of the world e.g.: B.S.E. Rinderpest is almost eradicated from the country except in some areas of the Border States. Foot and Mouth Disease is another important disease, which requires strict control measures to meet the international standards. Concerted effort is required to protect the livestock population from FMD and mastitis.

### Inspecting laboratories

The meat importing international agencies are particularly vigilant for presence of chemicals, antibiotics, hormones etc. in their imported products. The sanitary facilities available in the slaughterhouses are much primitive and questions the quality of meat and meat products. Moreover strict regulations are needed to check the hazardous pathogens/chemicals/antibiotic residues in the foodstuffs.

### Animal welfare

The world population is looking towards ethnic values also. The recent setback in leather exports with the intervention of PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals) is a typical example. So apart from health and sanitary aspects, the human values also accounts to potentiate exports.

### Conservation

The tremendous diversity in the composition of the livestock population of Kerala is another advantage. There is enormous scope for Piggery, Rabbitry, Buffalo and Poultry production in the state. Population of Pig and Rabbit recorded a positive trend. The Malabari, the dual-purpose goat for milk and meat is famous for its high prolificacy. The Attappady black goats and the vechur cows are recognised for their uniqueness. To exploit the tremendous potential in livestock sector

concerted efforts with meticulously planned programmes are necessary. For this we require to build world standards in the following areas.

- 1) Disease Free Zones,
- 2) Hygienic production of meat, milk and other products.
- 3) Welfare of animals with humane touch.
- 4) Referral laboratories with world standards
- 5) Strict regulatory measures.
- 6) Conservation and propaganda of local breeds.

The Department of Animal Husbandry over the years build up sufficient infrastructure to address any longitudinal or lateral expansion and requirements in this sector. There are veterinary Dispensaries/Hospitals in all the Grama Panchayats with qualified Veterinary professionals. Polyclinics with diagnostic infrastructure are available at taluk level. Animal Husbandry and support services are provided through the network of I.C.D.P. sub centres, which are available for every 800 breedable cattle. There is well-equipped vaccine production laboratory, the Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals, Disease Investigation, Epidemiological and Live stock disease control wing and Extension Training Centres. Proper reorientation and strengthening of the existing infrastructures will help in meeting the challenges ahead.

## RBI DROPS INTEREST SURCHARGE ON IMPORT FINANCE

*The interest rate surcharge  
of 50% on import finance, which has been  
in force, was withdrawn, with effect from  
Jan 6th 2001. This means that import fi-  
nance became costlier.*

*- Economic Times*