



Globalisation – challenges of veterinary profession

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The objective of embarking on globalisation was to improve the productivity and efficiency of production. It was assumed that globalisation will lead to efficient farming system, increased food production, food security and increased income to the farmer. In short it should result in abundance of food and prosperity to the farmer.

In India the Gross domestic product from livestock has increased in a steady manner and it accounts for about 8 per cent. By the beginning of the new millennium India has become the largest producer of milk. Broiler industry has come up in a big way during the last two decades. We are, therefore, no doubt marching ahead in production. However, we cannot be complacent and we have to work hard.

The task ahead is tremendous. The globalisation has brought in liberalisation on imports and foreign countries have started dumping their products and they are now available at a cheap rate in Indian market. What have we to do? We have to produce more at lower cost of production. If the farmer has to sustain and if his products have to find a good market the cost of production has to come down and

the quality of the products has to be improved so that it can capture the competitive market. It means that cost-effective farming system has to be adopted and efficiency of production has to go up. In this context the Veterinarian has a significant role to play. The new innovations in technology should be brought to the farmer's doorsteps. Techniques that will reduce cost of production and enhance production per animal should be developed and it should be viable and sustainable. Can we think of mass production system? We have to compete with countries whose production is already industrialized with large livestock holdings. The cost of production in those countries is much less due to mechanization and high-tech production system. Our production system is labour intensive with little scope for mechanization. Therefore, we should develop strategies to achieve cost effective production in the prevailing situation. The increased cost of inputs and labour pushes the cost of production high. The production per animal should increase at any cost if we have to sustain.

What can we do to improve the production? Genetic improvement must be achieved at the same time maintaining the genetic diversity. Selection of breeds adaptable to the existing agro-climatic conditions that can thrive on unconventional feeds and fodder should be given priority. Biotechnology tools should be effectively utilized to harvest maximum output with less extensive inputs. Genes should be selected for manipulation to achieve highest productivity. Investigation should be undertaken on the gene expression and their interaction. At the same time conservation of locally available germplasm that has lot of good traits should be attempted.

The production system that would optimise farmers' return through judicious use of farm wastes should be developed. Integrated farming with pig, duck, and

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fish has been shown to be very rewarding. Massive intensive production is not practical or acceptable in the existing situation prevalent in our country particularly in our state. Our efforts to produce more should not result in drastic change in the farming system and displacement of farmers. The small farmers should sustain; they should not be thrown out of jobs. The enhancement of production should be centered on small farmers.

The use of growth hormone has been attempted to increase growth and production in livestock. Is it advisable? Is there any alternative? We have to examine. Reducing the calving interval and a targeted minimum calving interval should ensure maximum return to the farmer.

Effective utilization of feed and crop residue and other agricultural products should be given paramount importance. Improving the availability of nutrients in feed for the animal using enzymes, growth promoters, use of chelated minerals etc. should be thought of. Feed is an important constraint for livestock production in India and Kerala in particular. Green fodder is a scarce commodity and paddy straw has also become dear. Effective planning should be made for collection, processing, storage and distribution of paddy straw at the same time enriching its quality. Seasonal surpluses should be exploited and effort should be made for uniform availability throughout the country. The change in the agricultural policy with hybrid varieties of paddy has seriously affected the production and availability of straw. Besides this, the decrease in paddy cultivation has also seriously affected the availability of straw- the important input the cattle. Concerted effort should be made to make use of the available land for fodder production. Effective utilization of available crop residues, industrial wastes and unconventional fodder should be made. Most of the farmers have no idea of these concepts, as they do not know the nutritional requirements of animals. Farmers have to be educated in a big way in livestock rearing. The Veterinary associations should come forward to organise seminars and group discus-

sions to educate them.

There is good scope to develop meat industry and its export potential is very good. Livestock for meat should be identified, male animals should be specially reared for meat purpose and veal production should be augmented.

Utmost care should be taken to ensure the quality of the products. We cannot think of export of the dairy or meat products without assuring quality. Strict hygienic measures at the site of production, during transport and storage should be maintained. Quality assurance laboratories should be established for meat, milk, feed and other products.

We should have real surpluses of livestock products. Value added products should be developed to capture the market. The gap between the have and have nots has to be reduced. The WTO agreement forces countries to liberalise exports and imports and allow global corporations to take control of domestic production.

Disease diagnosis laboratories and vaccine production centres should be established and service should be made available at the farmer's place. Good nutrition and hygienic management should ensure better production per animal. The low input costs should fetch more profits for the farmer.

The farmers have to be motivated and made technically competent. Systematic vaccination against contagious diseases should be carried out and oral and aerosol vaccines, which are simple and cheap, should be developed. Well-organized marketing system should be developed to ensure good price for the producer. There should be an agency to collect, transport, store and market the farmers produce. This can be organized under the co-operative sector.

The veterinary hospitals should be centres of technical inputs for production and not merely places of treatment of sick animals. Technical experts in important disciplines should be available at the hospitals. Mobile service should be encouraged. Hospitals should be livestock centres.

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