



Fodder for Thought

Nitya Sambamurti Ghotge and Sagari R. Ramdas

Although the issue of exotic and cross bred livestock in our country versus indigenous breeds has been debated from many angles eg. health , productive levels , biodiversity, social , the one which is emerging by far as the most significant seems to be the fodder angle. The situation in Kerala may serve to illustrate the point .

In the Draft of the National livestock Policy 1995 , Kerala is often stated as the model state especially in the dairying sector. Yet Kerala often imports milk from Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra . This in a state where the local population some years back would associate the word milk with coconut milk.

*Nitya Sambamurti Ghotge
and
Sagari R. Ramdas
ANTHRA*

Kerala opted for an aggressive policy in the upgrading of local breeds in an attempt to increase their milk production about 25 years back . This policy continues and Kerala has perhaps the largest percentage in any state of Cross bred Cattle in the country . However , while the policy for Cattle has remained constant many other policies in the state have changed. Today , extremely high wage rates among other reasons has led to the reduction of paddy production in the state and there has been a major shift to cash crops . Kerala imports paddy from other states like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu to meet the requirements of its human population . Paddy straw used to be the staple which was fed to animals .With rice fields slowly disappearing the straw is no more available for feeding unless it is imported from other states. Cash crops cannot feed animals and with policy promoting the export of concentrates like oil seeds and oil seed cakes , farmers do not have the means to feed their animals from their own land but are forced to import and buy food for their animals from outside.

Farmers who are forced to import fodder have two options , either they feed their animals less whereby the animals produce less .When animals begin to produce less the price of milk goes up which makes consumers unhappy and milk has to be imported from other states to keep the price constant .

The other option is, farmers spend more money on buying fodder . Milk prices again are forced to go up and consumers continue to be unhappy .

If the consumers are to be kept satisfied and the price of milk is kept constant farmers are forced to resort to hormone injections and other methods to extract the last drop from their cows.

Dairying then becomes unviable and while everybody begins to look for alternatives to artificially keep the system propped up they fail to see the facts laid out clearly on the ground.

The first question therefore before us is dairying the only solution for the entire country . Are there not other suitable proteins animal or plant based which pass WHO recommendations .

If dairying is necessary cannot the wealth of local breeds which have amazing feed conversion ratios be carefully selected and introduced in a systematic way . If Scientists in Scotland can get excited about the genetic potential of the Vechur , why cant people in its home state show a little more interest in the breed

Cannot the fodder requirements be more carefully planned . One cannot have agricultural policies , forest policies , waste land greening policies and Animal Husbandry policies at variance with each other .

Even in Kerala where peoples participation is supposed to be at its best we found as far as animal husbandry was concerned people were asking for exotic cross bred in one breath , cheaper veterinary care in the next and not really worrying about how they are going to raise the resources to feed these extremely demanding animals. Can peoples planning be effective if the people who plan are not capable of making an informed choice .An informed choice necessarily means having different alternatives mapped out in some detail with consequences and costs . Therefore a genuine selection between contending options.

The strength of India's milk production comes from millions of small farmers who more often than not buy fodder as they do not have the land to grow fodder. Unfortunately while our food grain production may have gone up the fodder availability remains unequally distributed , Crop residues are only available in the areas where green revolution has been promoted and where large scale irrigation has been developed. In the other regions fodder availability has gone down enormously with the shift to mono culture , cash crops , and the depletion of forests and grass lands. So while our experts may burp with satisfaction that India has hit the record of being the worlds largest milk producer , it may leave a bad taste in the mouth if they were only to stop and ruminate about how long this feeling will last . Not very long ...there isn't much cud to chew on .





continued from page 16

ivermectin was administered @ 1 ml/5 kg body weight. (Itin 0.1% solution)

A number of drugs have been tried with varying efficacies against acarodermatitis in domestic animals. These include mainly external applications such as benzyl benzoate, amitraz, deltamethrin, fenvalerate, coumaphos etc. The method of application of these drugs is to be observed very carefully and the attendant toxicity in sensitive animals thwarts their routine use. Oral ivermectin solution (Itin - M/S Vet Chen Medicare, Chennai) is comparatively new formulation and hence a clinical trial was undertaken to study efficacy of the same against mange in bovines. Further the drug is as effective as parenteral ivermectin and comparatively economical.

The clinical signs in affected animals were - rough, thickened skin, wrinkles, alopecia and intense pruritis. Examination of skin scrapings revealed the presence of Sarcoptic or Demodectic mites. Following oral administration of ivermectin solution, there was a gradual disappearance of skin lesions and the ectoparasites. Those animals that had severe infection required second dose after a period of one week. All the treated animals recovered after 14 days of oral ivermectin therapy indicating its high efficiency. This is in accordance with the observation of Bhikane et al., (2001) who utilised parenteral ivermectin in treatment of caprine sarcoptic mange.

References

* A. U. Bhikane, G.U. Yadav, B.S. Khillare, L.G. Ananthwar and N.M. Markandeya (2002) "Sarcoptic mange and its treatment with Neomec in goats" *Intas Polivet* 3:1:115.

* Radostits, O.M. Blood, D.C., and Gay, c.c. (1994) *Veterinary Medicine, ELBS, London.*



**Centenary Celebrations of
Veterinary Hospital, Kokkalai
Thrissur will be inaugurated on 24th
September 2003. Worshipful
Thrissur Mayor
Sri. Jose Kattookkaran will
inaugurate the function.**

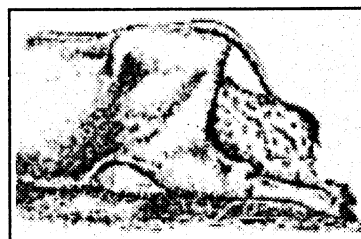


continued from page 43

and technique of insemination at the ideal site will invariably augment fertility in buffaloes.

Surprisingly the buffalo wealth of our State has drastically declined over the past two decades. This can be attributed to various factors such as high incidence of calthood mortality, delayed onset of puberty and maturity, prolonged inter-calving interval, high incidence of anoestrus and suboestrus etc. In these circumstances, the Government agencies should be encouraged to take up research activities on areas pertaining to buffalo husbandry including reproduction. Further, governmental and non-governmental organisations should take up new projects to encourage the farmers to involve in buffalo keeping in order to increase the buffalo wealth of the State.

NEW ZEALAND method of positioning



Positioning of the cow / buffalo suffering from uterine prolapse is best done by New Zealand method. In this method, the animal is placed in sternal recumbency with her hind legs

pulled out behind her. Two or three assistants are required for this. If the cow is standing, she must be cast on her side and the uppermost hind limb pulled out behind her. She is then rolled on to her other side so that the other hind limb may be secured and extended.

Reproductive parameters of buffalo

Age at puberty	: 21/2 - 3 years
Length of oestrous cycle	: 21 days
Duration of oestrus	: 18-24 hours
Time of ovulation	: 15-18 hours after the end of heat
Gestation length	: 310±10 days
Sex ratio	: 1:1
Twinning rate	: 1: 1000

White side test

Mix 1 ml of the uterine discharge with 1 ml of 5-10% Sodium hydroxide solution and boil. Development of an yellow colour is suggestive of sub-clinical endometritis.

