

# Chapter 9

## District Livestock Service Planning: the Case of Kabhre District, Nepal

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Kabhre is situated in the central part of Nepal; the headquarters, Dhulikhel, lies 30 km east of Kathmandu. Eighty per cent of the district is mountainous and the rest is lowland. It has sub-tropical, sub-temperate, and temperate, climatic zones. Of the district's 65,154 households, 83% are engaged in agriculture.

### Existing planning process for livestock development in Kabhre

For the last few years, planning has started from the bottom. The District Livestock Services Office (DLSO) solicits the opinion of farmers, local leaders, farmers' groups, and Livestock Services Sub Centres before planning livestock activities. The mandate for activities, norms, and budget ceilings is provided by government departments. All information collected is sent to the District Agricultural Body (a body of line agencies) for further discussion. It is then sent to a District Development Committee general meeting and on to the District Development Committee council.

### Weakness in planning process

- Lack of sufficient manpower in the district
- Poor selection of appropriate farmers
- Lack of appropriate planning time
- Budgetary insufficiency
- Lack of norms and directions in time
- Lack of proper training for staff concerned
- Lack of incentives and facilities for staff

### Successes of the DLSO in Kabhre

#### *Training*

During the last 30 years, 260 Village Animal Health Workers have been trained of whom 100 are currently employed. Most deal with veterinary medicine (agro-vet). They are involved in primary treatment, vaccination, drenching, castration, and other extension activities at the village level. They have been encouraged to keep veterinary medical shops with the help of a revolving fund, other government subsidies, and banking loans.

#### *Cross-breeding programmes*

Murrah buffalo bulls were distributed from 1975 for crossbreeding with local buffalo cows. Murrah she-buffaloes were also bought with government subsidies. This has

resulted in many pocket areas for dairy purposes. At present, there are 25,438 milch Murrah and Murrah-cross buffaloes in the district. They produce 170,000 l of milk daily; 100,000 l is sent to the Kathmandu Valley.

### *Insurance*

The Participatory District Development Programme, an integrated project funded by the government and UNDP, has launched livestock insurance in 12 milk-producing pockets over the last four years. This programme helps dairy farmers to sustain their occupation. There are 1459 insured buffaloes.

### *Oat cultivation*

Farmers used to be discouraged from keeping dairy animals because of the lack of green grass in the winter. For the last 20 years, farmers have been cultivating oats. They have realised the value of this fodder and have adopted it widely. As a result of sufficient green feed in the winter, milk production has been maintained year-round.

## **Constraints for dairy farmers in Kabhre**

### *High cost of production*

Distribution of leguminous and non-leguminous fodder trees was undertaken to fulfil forage demand. However, farmers are accustomed to feeding concentrates rather than forage, especially in milk pocket areas. This results in a high cost of milk production.

### *Import of milking buffaloes*

Instead of rearing calves of buffaloes from the Terai and India, farmers sell buffaloes when they become dry. This results in increasing costs for milk production.

### *Milk holidays*

The milk holidays enforced by the Dairy Development Corporation discourages farmers from producing as much milk as they would like.

## **Solution to constraints**

### *Fodder and forage production*

- To decrease the cost of milk, dairy farmers should minimise their use of cereal-based rations (concentrate) and maximise their use of roughage rations. For this purpose, farmers should be aware of fodder and forage cultivation
- Forage production on cultivated land
- Oat and vetch cultivation on (dry) irrigable and non-irrigated land during the winter season
- Cultivation of Napier grass on terrace boundaries during the rainy season.
- Cultivation of teosinte grass during the summer
- Forage cultivation on unproductive land

Land that is not suitable for crop production, such as community forest, leasehold forest, eroded land, banks of rivers and canals, pasture land, and sloping land, may be used for forage cultivation. Below 1700 m, such land can grow stylo, molasses, and broom grass.

**Import milking buffaloes**

Every year, the district imports more than 2000 milking buffaloes from India. To check this flow of buffaloes, there should be a special package for rearing buffalo calves in every milk pocket area.

The package should include the following activities.

- Murrah buffalo breeding bull distribution
- AI services
- Animal insurance programme
- Pasture and fodder production
- Farmers' training on buffalo-keeping
- Regular drenching and vaccination programme
- Inter-farmer competition for buffalo calf-rearing
- Scheduled animal health checks

**Milk holidays**

To overcome the milk holidays, there should be training on milk product diversification for dairy farmers and dairy entrepreneurs, and a public awareness programme on consumption of milk and milk products.

**District Kottli**

Kottli is one of the districts in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and has a population of 1.5 million. Almost 80% of the population is Muslim. It is mostly hilly and mountainous with valleys and plains in some places. The major crops are maize, wheat, millet, berseem, and oil-seeds intercropped with pulses and pulses intercropped with maize. There is a wide gap between availability and requirements. The rangeland is almost unprotected, overgrazing in the spring, summer, and autumn. Grain is harvested for use or haymaking to supply animal fodder.

**Current situation**

Livestock rearing is an important activity in Kottli. Although cattle, sheep, goats and buffaloes are seen in Kottli, the most common are local breeds. The local cattle are all varieties of size and colour. Average adults weigh 200-300 kg, and local rammah weigh 350-400 kg. They mature usually at a late age (4-5 years). They calve every 12-13 months; males and females run together all their lives. Daily milk production ranges from 1.7-3 l (Burr, 1980). Sheep and goats are of many sizes. They mature sexually at 1-2 years and start calving at 2-3 or 4 years.