



MOUNTAIN FARMING SYSTEMS

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**LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT IN HIMACHAL PRADESH:
RESTROSPECT AND PROSPECT**

Dr. G. C. Negi

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International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

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ICIMOD's approach to problem oriented research involves both knowledge reviews and field studies. The focused reviews and field studies conducted by the Mountain Farming Systems Division cover various aspects of agricultural development. Since early 1988, a series of 'state of the art' reviews of agricultural policies and programmes were sponsored by ICIMOD in different countries of the HKH Region. The purpose of these studies and the subsequent National Workshops in different countries was to understand some of the constraints and prospects of Mountain area development. These exercises were also aimed at acquiring comparative perspectives of development approaches and strategies in different countries.

Dr. G. C. Negi

This paper was a part of this series of studies, commissioned by ICIMOD, and was also presented at the Workshop on "Agricultural Development Experiences in Himachal Pradesh, India," jointly held by ICIMOD and the Agro-economic Research Centre, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, India, 11-13 April 1989, in Manali. This paper is a comprehensive overview of the status of animal husbandry in Himachal Pradesh.

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G. C. Negi is the Vice-Chancellor of the Himachal Pradesh *Krishi Viswa Vidyalaya*,
Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, India

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International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

Kathmandu, Nepal

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After the reign of King Ashoka in the fifth century B.C., no significant efforts seem to have been made for the improvement of cattle up to the end of the last century. It appears that a village became a unit in the field of animal breeding, and livestock were intensely inbred. Deterioration in the quality seems to have increased the numbers immensely, so that today the livestock population in India has gone up to 378.5 million (FAO 1963) apart from the 161 million poultry.

Even with this huge population, this country is not in a position to meet the requirements for milk and meat. Per capita availability of milk in India is estimated to be 146g against the recommended requirement of 300g per day. Similarly, per capita availability of meat (3.7 g/day) and eggs (18 eggs/annum) is far below the required level. India has 12.8 per cent of the world's milch cows which produce only about 7 per cent of the world's total milk. Production of milk per cow is 511 kg/lactation in India, as against 5510 kg in the U.S.A. and 5164 kg in Holland.

It is estimated that about 90 per cent of the livestock population in India subsists on natural grasslands. Of a total area of 320 million ha of the Indian Union, 8.30 million ha are classified as grazing lands, i.e. permanent pastures and meadows. In addition to this, 43 million ha of cultivable and non-cultivable land also serves as grazing land for Indian livestock.

Importance of Livestock to Himachal Pradesh

Role in the Economy

The State of Himachal Pradesh as indeed the whole of India is principally an agricultural State with 94 per cent of its inhabitants depending for their livelihood on agriculture and allied professions. In fact, the farmer's dependence on livestock has increased so much