



Gir cattle management by Kathewari

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ABSTRACT

A detail study was carried out on Gir cattle management by Kathewari in Akola district (Maharashtra). During the study, 37 Gir cow herds were studied for herd size, feeding, breeding and management practices adopted by Kathewaries (Maldharies) and their family status. From the study, it was revealed that, majority of the herds (59.50 per cent) were having herd size in the range of 21 to 40 animals, 54.05 per cent herd owners adopted practice of feeding dry fodder and concentrate along with grazing, 62.16 per cent herd owners fed 2 to 3 kg concentrate to the milking cows. All the herd owners adopted natural service for breeding their cows. Their wives and children in management and milking of animals assisted herd owners. Majority of Kathewaries were uneducated and awareness about education was very low in Kathewaries.

KEY WORDS : Kathewari, Natural service, Family status, Gir cattle

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INTRODUCTION

The Gir is a famous milk producing cattle breed of India. The original home tract of Gir breed is the Gir forest of Gujarat. In Maharashtra, there are approximately 40 lakh migrated Gir animals found settled in Vidarbha, Khandesh and Marathwada regions (Anonymous, 2005)

Gir herds are maintained by Kathewaries (Maldharies). They adopt their own traditional practices for rearing, feeding, breeding and disposal of milk and manure. Therefore the study was undertaken to investigate, how Gir herds are reared by the Kathewaries.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During the period of investigation, 37 migrated Gir cattle herds covering 1110 Gir animals in Akola district of Maharashtra were studied.

The data related to the study were collected by personal

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contacts and interviews in the form of questionnaire with individual herd owners. The data were collected on herd size, feeding practices, management practices, breeding procedure, involvement of family members in herd rearing and family status of Kathewaries. The data were tabulated and analyzed by simple tabular technique.

The data collected were grouped in various groups and percentages were drawn for each group to work out majority values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected on herd size was grouped in three groups as indicated in Table 1. Most of the herds were having size in the range of 21 to 40 animals (59.5 per cent).

Table 1: Gir cattle herd distribution according to herd size

Herd size (No. of animals)	Number of herds	Percentage
Upto 20	07	18.92
21 to 40	22	59.5
Above 40	08	21.5

The collected data on feeding practices (Table 2) revealed that most of the Kathewari herd owners followed the practice of feeding dry fodder, concentrate along with regular grazing. Dry fodder fed consisted of jowar kadbi, sunflower husk, dry grasses, wheat straw etc, whereas