

## Economics of fodder production in Dharwad district of Karnataka state

P.U. NAYAK, H.S.S. KHAN, M.D. MARTUR AND L.B. KUNNAL

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### ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken to know the cost and returns of fodder production in the Dharwad district of Karnataka. Forage is the main sources of diet for animals and their production is the backbone of livestock industry. The per hectare cost of cultivation in green fodder was Rs. 10,877.70, out of which the share of the chemical fertilizer was the highest (Rs. 2437.75) accounting for 22.41 per cent of the total cost of cultivation. The average total fixed cost, which interest on fixed capital was 2953.60 *i.e.* 27.15 per cent of the total cost of cultivation. Major portion of the fixed costs was towards rental value of land with RS. 2494.90 (22.93%). The average output of green fodder per hectare was 37.5 tonnes while the average gross return per hectare was Rs. 30,000 with net returns of Rs. 19122.30. In dry fodder cultivation, the average output of main product was 32.50 q / ha and by product *i.e.*, dry fodder was 8.2 tonne / ha. The average gross return per ha was Rs. 19540 with net return of Rs. 10952.01, Rs. 8017.37 and Rs. 7685.78 at cost A, cost B and cost C in the order. In addition the benefit cost ratio at cost A, cost B and cost C was 2.26, 1.69 and 1.64, respectively.

**Key words :** Green fodder, Dry fodder, Production, Cost and returns

Forage is the main sources of diet for animals and their production is the backbone of livestock industry. The scarcity of green forage and scarcity of grazing avenues in the country have kept the livestock to suffer continuously with malnutrition resulting in their production potentiality at sub-optimum level as compared to developed nations.

India possesses an enormous livestock population of 495 million, which is about 15 per cent of the world livestock population. Whereas, only two per cent of the world's geographical area is under fodder production. This has put tremendous pressure on the availability of fodder. In India, only 4.4 per cent (8.36 million hectare) of the cultivated area is under forage crops. The annual total fodder production is 907.85 million tonnes (509.01 million tonnes green and 398.84 million tonnes dry). Whereas, the requirement is about 1759 million tonnes (1083 million tonnes green and 676 million tonnes dry) to support the existing livestock population. The present fodder resources of the country can meet only 46.60 per cent of the requirement with a vast deficit of 53 and 41 per cent of

green and dry fodder, respectively.

In India, land utilization for growing fodder is negligible and almost 90 per cent of herbivores subsist on grazing on natural pastures.

The farmers who possess animals with higher milk yield potential are facing the deficit in green and dry fodders availability in the country. To overcome this deficit, dairy farmers resort to increased use of costly concentrate feeds, which increases the cost of milk production. It is pertinent to recall that out of the total cost of milk production, the feed cost alone accounts to 70 per cent.

Karnataka supports 14.95 million cattle, 9.5 million sheep and green podder. The present fodder requirement of livestock in the state worked out to be 122 million tonnes of green fodder and 24 million tonnes of dry fodder. Whereas, the current production is about 85 and 15 million tonnes of green and dry fodder, respectively with a deficit of 46 million tonnes. There is a large gap between availability and requirement in India as well as in Karnataka. Most of the livestock population in the state grazes on pasture lands covering 1.2 million hectare.

Although, the milk production is the highest in the country but productivity per cow per year is far below as compared to the developed countries due to inadequate quantity and quality of fodder. Natural pastures are the major feed resources for livestock rearing in India and these pastures are in the complex ecosystems that are constantly modified by the activities of man and management of domestic animals.

In Karnataka, animals are mainly fed with crop residues of jowar, maize, bajra, ragi and paddy. A few

### Correspondence to:

M.D. MARTUR, Department of Animal Science, University of Agricultural Sciences, DHARWAD (KARNATAKA) INDIA

### Authors' affiliations:

P.U. NAYAK, University of Agricultural Sciences, DHARWAD (KARNATAKA) INDIA

H.S.S. KHAN, Department of Agricultural Marketing and Co-operation, University of Agricultural Sciences, DHARWAD (KARNATAKA) INDIA

L.B. KUNNAL, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Agricultural Sciences, DHARWAD (KARNATAKA) INDIA