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## Rearing cost of buffalo heifers in India

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### ABSTRACT

The cost of rearing buffalo heifers to the age of first calving comes to Rs22, 590.60. The major expenditure of rearing was on green fodder (34.57 per cent) followed by interest on 50 % of cost days of rearing *i.e.* 18.37 per cent. About 2/3 of cost of rearing was observed on feeding cost alone. It was suggested that efforts should be done to reduce the age at first calving to reduce cost of rearing of buffalo heifers.

**Key words :** Buffalo, Heifer, Rearing Cost, Economics

### INTRODUCTION

Replacement of buffalo by own reared heifers is considered better over replacement by purchase of new buffaloes because un pedigreed of buffalo will result into unidentified problems in the herd. Therefore, rearing of heifers up to puberty is to be done at reasonably cheaper rate. Since major population of buffaloes is from rural India where cost of rearing of heifers by farmers is not taken seriously. But at organized farms, various cost of input goes into rearing cost of heifers, which is usually ignored during period of rearing. As days at first calving increase, the cost of heifers increases. Therefore, efforts are made to reduce the rearing cost with optimal body weight so that return from buffalo is obtained at early life. Thus, an effort has been made to estimate cost of rearing of buffalo heifers maintained at organized farms where animals are reared under group feeding practice.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data on various inputs were collected from six military dairy farms (Agra, Ambala, Bareilly, Ferozpur, Lacknow and Meerut (all northern India ) on 1753 buffalo heifers of Murrah, Niliravi and graded Murrah breeds. Some of inputs, which go into rearing of heifers, become difficult to calculate under organized dairy farms where animals were reared under group feeding and management. Under the study all the buffalo calves were weaned at the time of birth and were hand fed per schedule of feeding. They were reared under loose housing system.

The amount of feed required for the heifers were estimated as per their nutritional requirement at various age groups and body weight. Green and dry fodder were usually produced at the farms where adequate land for growing fodder was available. The expense on each heifer comprised of cost of day old female calf, feeding labour charges, depreciation on building and equipments, interest on fixed assets and miscellaneous cost. Cost on supervisory staff could not be estimated for want information. The unit price considered in the present study was as per Table 1.

**Table 1 : Unit price of different items**

Item	Rates (Rs)
Variable cost	
Concentrate	350.0 per quintal
Green fodder with 20%dry matter	40.0 per quintal
Dry fodder (wheat straw)	120.0 per quintal
Fixed Cost	
Milk price fed to calves	10.0 per liter
Cost of 1 day old calf	200.0 each
Labour cost (one labour per 40 heifers)	50.0 per head
Veterinary (deworming and vaccination)	66.0 per head/year
cost	
Electricity and water charges	46.70 per heifer per year
Depreciation and interest cost on building and equipments*	65.50 per heifer per year
Miscellaneous cost*	19.96 per heifer per year
Interest on expenditure	15%

\* As per Rao(1997)

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