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Field level farm practices for calf rearing by dairy farmers in Palus tahsil of Sangli district of Maharashtra state (India)

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ABSTRACT : The present study was carried out in 10 selected villages of Palus tahsil of Sangli district of Maharashtra state. A total of 100 farmers were selected for this study. Out of which 50 farmers owning less than 5 numbers of farm animals and 50 farmers owning more than 5 farm animals were selected for the present study by using proportionate random sampling method. Data were collected through personal interview schedule. Data were analyzed employing simple statistical techniques. It was observed that there was lack of adequate scientific knowledge in overall all calf rearing managemental practices, only few of the farmers were adopted scientific managemental practices. It is concluded that effective calf rearing programme definitely makes dairy farming more profitable, but there is need of percolation of scientific knowledge and package of practices regarding calf rearing upto farmers doorstep for further development of dairy farming.

KEY WORDS : Dairy farmers, Field level, Calf rearing

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Dairy farming is the main enterprise with agriculture in Palus Tahsil of Sangli district of Maharashtra state. Calf rearing as a future cow or buffalo is most important aspect of profitable dairy farming. The success of the dairy industry depends on the appropriate calf management. Calf care is not only essential for sustainance of the dairy industry but is also essential in the wake of preserving and maintaining our good quality germ plasm. Hence the present study was undertaken to know the knowledge and what are the field level farm practices regarding calf rearing and information needs of calf owners.

The present study was carried out in 10 selected villages of Palus tahsil of Sangli district of Maharashtra state. A total of 100 farmers were selected for this study. Out of which 50 farmers owning less than 5 numbers of farm animals and 50 farmers owning more than 5 farm animals were selected for the present study by using proportionate random sampling method. Data were collected through personal interview schedule. Data were analyzed employing simple statistical techniques.

All of the respondents were kept calves in the large animal shed without making any separate arrangement for keeping the calves. Only 6 per cent farmers kept calves loose for 24 hours and 94 per cent farmers kept calves tied in shed for 24 hours.

99 per cent farmers not taking proper care of calves immediate after birth, only 1 per cent farmers followed the standard farm practices like removal of discharge from nostrils of calf, cutting of umbilical cord and applying of antiseptic etc. immediate after birth of calf.

Only 18 per cent farmers fed colostrums in required quantity to calves within 2 hours of birth, 82 per cent farmers had not just primary knowledge regarding time and quantity of colostrums feeding to calves and fed colostrums after expulsion of placenta (Ahmad *et al.,* 2009). Majority of cow calves fed with enough milk but, buffalo calves not supplied with enough milk as per requirement. Regarding frequency of feeding milk to calves, majority of respondents (85 %) fed twice a day and only 15 per cent respondents fed milk to calves thrice a day. Regarding quantity of milk majority farmers fed 3-5 liters/day

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of milk to cow calves and 1-2 liters milk/day to buffalo calves. Regarding period of milk feeding 90 per cent farmers have sufficient knowledge, also practiced milk feeding to calves upto 3-6 months of age. Only 7 per cent respondents had knowledge regarding feeding of milk replacer/calf starter to calves and also adopted the same practice. 93 per cent respondents not practiced/adopted calf starter feeding to calves. 56 per cent respondents adopted weaning practice for cow calves and 44 per cent respondents not adopted weaning practice, adopted suckling practice (Vasseur *et al.*, 2010). Regarding weaning of buffalo calves no one respondents adopted weaning practice.

The deworming of calves was practiced by 76 per cent of farmers, 24 per cent farmers not practiced the deworming at all. Only 29 per cent farmers maintained record regarding vaccination, deworming, body weight gain in calves, 71 per cent farmers not maintained any type of record.

Regarding calf mortality, 97 per cent respondents were suffered with calf mortality problem. 3 per cent respondents had not noted single calf mortality. Calf mortality was observed more in buffalo calves than cow calves, it may be due to insufficient feeding of milk to buffalo calves, not adopting the calf starter feeding practice and more worm infestation in buffalo calves. Similar observations were reported by Tiwari *et al.*, 2007. 85 per cent respondents had not sufficient or no knowledge regarding reasons of calf mortality.

99 per cent respondents had knowledge regarding age of puberty and age of pregnancy.

Only 17 per cent respondents knows the importance/need of calf rearing in profitable dairy farming, 83 per cent respondents were unaware of importance/ need of calf rearing.

It is concluded that effective calf rearing programme definitely makes dairy farming more profitable, but there is need of percolation of scientific knowledge and package of practices regarding calf rearing upto farmers doorstep for further development of dairy farming.

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