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Research Paper

Assessing the Training Need of Dairy Farmers on Scientific Cattle Management Practices

Sociology

KEYWORDS : Training need assessment, scientific cattle management

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ABSTRACT

Multi stage random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Palakkad district being the highest milk producing district of Kerala state was selected purposively. The vandazhy gram panchayat was selected randomly from the district. Sixty dairy farmer members of Mangalam Dam milk co-operative society were selected randomly for the focus group discussion which was organised at the APCOS to suggest the topics of training modules regarding the modern dairy farming practices.

Training is an organized activity aimed at imparting knowledge, skills, and competencies to a person for improving his/her performance or to help him or her to arrive at a required level of knowledge or skill. Training need was operationalised as the expressed level of training needed by the respondent in each of the training areas pertaining to scientific dairy farming. It was assessed by personal interview method using a semi structured interview schedule. Schedule developed by Rani (2004) was suitably modified and adopted for measuring the training needs of dairy farmers. The domains included in the schedule were housing of cattle, breeding, feeding, clean milk production (CMP) practices health care and marketing. Training Need Indices (TNI) were calculated regarding each item of the major domains. The major domains which contained items having good TNI were identified to be included in the training curriculum. Out of the six domains, housing of cattle was thrown as there was nobody to point out it as an important area (TNI=0). All the other domains found their place in the list of training needs.

Introduction

Need refers to the positive driving force that impel a person towards certain objectives or conditions (Sah et al, 2002). An assessment of needs and using them as the base for planning the strategy is important for the success of any development intervention and this is equally applicable to the dairy development.

According to Webster's dictionary, training is an organized activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the recipient's performance or to help him or her attain a required level of knowledge or skill. Hence training is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that relate to specific useful competencies.

Training need is the expressed level of training needed by the respondent in each of the training areas pertaining to the scientific dairy farming practices. Appropriate training programmes are to be implemented, giving due consideration to the needs of the dairy farmers, regarding improved dairy farming practices.

Review of literature

Prabhu (2012) had studied the information needs of Veterinary Surgeons of Kerala regarding the common diseases of cattle and reported the needed areas as infectious diseases such as brucellosis, mastitis and rabies; parasitic diseases such as anaplasmosis, babesiosis, coccidiosis and ecto parasitic conditions, general conditions such as acidosis, bloat, ketosis, hypocalcaemia and Poly Encephalo Malacia; reproductive diseases such as anoestrous, cystic ovary and endometritis and poisoning cases such as fungal poisoning, HCN poisoning, Organo chlorine and Organophosphate poisoning and snake bite envenomation.

Sreehari et al (2012) had analysed the information needs of dairy farmers for developing a media protocol in selected districts of Haryana in Animal Husbandry practices.

Rani and Subhadra (2009) had assessed the training needs of dairy farmers of Thrissur taluk and reported that 75.97 per cent of the respondents had needs on housing of milch animal and 64.72 per cent had needs on feeding and management of milch animal. Above half of the respondents had expressed needs on health care of dairy animals (58.38%) and marketing and finance (57.50%). Just half of the respondents were having needs on breeding of milch animal.

Methodology

Multi stage random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Palakkad district being the highest milk producing district of Kerala state was selected purposively. The Vandazhy gram panchayat was selected randomly from the district. Sixty dairy farmer members of Mangalam Dam milk co-operative society were selected randomly for the focus group discussion which was organised at the APCOS to suggest the topics of training modules regarding the modern dairy farming practices.

Training need was operationalised as the expressed level of training needed by the respondent in each of the training areas pertaining to scientific dairy farming. It was assessed by personal interview method using a semi structured interview schedule. Schedule developed by Rani (2004) was suitably modified and adopted for measuring the training needs of dairy farmers.

Development of the test

The domains originally there in the schedule were housing of cattle, breeding, feeding, health care and marketing. In the modified schedule, additionally one domain was included such as clean milk production (CMP) practices. For that, all statements under the dimension CMP were prepared after reviewing the literatures and consulting experts in the field. The items were subjected to relevancy rating .The judges were asked to respond in a three point continuum as relevant, somewhat relevant and not relevant with scores 3, 2 and 1. Mean percentage scores were calculated. The items having percentage score above the mean were included in the test. Hence the modified schedule consisted of six major domains.

Training Need Index was calculated by dividing the total score obtained on an item by the maximum obtainable score of that item and multiplying the result with 100.

$$\text{TNI} = \frac{\text{Obtained score of the item}}{\text{Maximum possible score}} \times 100$$

The major domains which contained items having good TNI were identified to be included in the training curriculum.

Results and discussion

The findings of the study are presented in Table1.

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1. Training Need Indices of dairy farming practices

Sl No	Dairy farming practice	Frequency	TNI
I	**Housing of cattle**		
	Construction of shed	0	0
	Proper design/structure	0	0
II	**Breeding dairy animals**		
	Selection of breed	18	30
	Heat detection	20	33.33
	Time of insemination	36	60
	Maintenance of records	06	10
	Time of post partum AI	04	6.67
III	**Feeding of dairy cattle**		
	Balanced feeding	54	90
	Compounding balance feeds using	56	93.33
	locally available feed items	08	13.33
	Fodder cultivation	04	6.67
	Feeding of different age groups		
IV	**Clean Milk Production practices**		
	Animal hygiene	50	83.33
	Milking hygiene	06	10
	Equipment hygiene	36	60
	Processing hygiene	60	100
V	Health care of cattle		
	Deworming	46	76.67
	Vaccination	44	73.33
	Control of ectoparasites	52	86.67
	Identification and isolation of sick	38	63.33
	animals	56	93.33
	Symptoms of common diseases		
VI	**Marketing and finance**		
	Banking	58	96.67
	Insurance	44	73.33
	Marketing of products	38	63.33
	Marketing livestock	14	23.33

I.Training needs of dairy farmers on housing of dairy cattle
Construction of shed and proper design/structure were not pointed out as needed by any of the respondents and accordingly did not find their entry in the list of perceived training needs. May be due to the high cost of construction, they are not giving importance to the construction of cattle shed. But nowadays proper housing of cattle is a very important matter in the background of climate change and its harmful effects on health and productivity of dairy animals. Contradictory findings were reported by Rani and Subhadra (2009) where, housing of milch animal was the most important domain in the list of training needs of women dairy farmers in their study area.

II.Training needs of dairy farmers on breeding dairy cattle
Selection of breed was indicated as needed by 18 respondents (TNI=30), heat detection by 20 (TNI=33.33) and time of insemination by 36 respondents (TNI=60). Maintenance of records was pointed out by six farmers (TNI=10) and only four (TNI=6.67) indicated the time of post partum AI. Keeping records is a key operation in a dairy. Without proper records, one cannot know how the dairy enterprise is going on. Also the time of post partum AI and conception determines the profitability of a dairy enterprise. Unless the farmer is not getting one calf per year he will not be able to thrive well.

III.Training needs of dairy farmers on feeding dairy animals
Balanced feeding and compounding balance feeds using locally available feed items were the most needed items in the schedule which were indicated by 54(TNI=90) and 28 respondents (TNI=93.33) respectively. Fodder cultivation was asked by 8 (TNI=13.33) and feeding of different age groups by four dairy farmers (TNI= 6.67). In a dairy business, feed cost was coming as the major expenditure earlier. But now as the inclusion of locally available unconventional feed items in the ration, the feed cost had been dropping. So it would be a pressing area in any animal husbandry trainings.

IV.Training needs of dairy farmers on CMP practices
In the era of GATT and WTO, production of clean milk production is the need of the hour. Also the improved awareness of consumers regarding the food borne diseases makes it more important. Processing hygiene was perceived by all the respondents as the most important training need in CMP practices (TNI=100) followed by animal hygiene which was perceived as important by 50 respondents (TNI=83.33). Then came equipment hygiene (TNI=60) and milking hygiene (TNI=10) in the descending order of importance.

V.Training needs of dairy farmers on health care of dairy cattle
Symptoms of common diseases was the most needed training area according to majority of the respondents (TNI=93.33) followed by control of ectoparasites (TNI=86.67), deworming (TNI=76.67), vaccination (TNI=73.33), identification and isolation of sick animals (TNI=63.33). The necessity of timely treatment and the resulting financial burden make the farmers think more about disease prevention and control. Also unavailability of trained professionals in the odd hours of the night makes them dreadful about the serious diseases of their animals.

VI.Training needs of dairy farmers on marketing and finance
Nowadays all the government transactions are through banks and the unawareness of rural livestock farmers will create some benefits go unattainable. Hence banking was indicated as the most important need (TNI=96.67) followed by insurance (73.33), marketing of products (63.33) and marketing of livestock (23.33). Procedures of insuring cattle also are making them fooled if unknown due to the interfering middle men. The dairy farmers think that the value added products would fetch more income to them, hence should be trained.

Conclusion
For better managing the dairy animals, the owners should be made access to right information and expertise at the right time in the needy areas. The skill required will differ between owners according to the prevailing situation. Identifying the information needs of the owners will enable the extension system to serve them better with right information and skill. Hence, suitable training programmes are to be implemented, giving due concern to the training needs of the dairy farmers on scientific management of cattle.

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