Dairy intensification and grassland access for livestock: A comparative study of India and Bangladesh

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Introduction

- Dairying is one of the most important sources for rural livelihood security and more than 60 per cent of population depends on it.
- The milk production is concentrated both in rain-fed and irrigated crop-livestock farming system in India.
- More than 80 per cent of milk is produced by small and marginal farmers.
- Grazing and stall feeding is the main source of feed for dairy animals among small and marginal farmers as commercial feed is not economical for them.
- However, access to grass land is declining over the years due to urbanisation, construction of roads and railways.
- Dependency on grazing varies by farming system, market intensification and agro-ecology.

Objective of this paper is examine the level of access to grassland for livestock feed by level of market intensification.

Materials and methods

- Three sites were selected (Karnal, Udaipur and Dinajpur) from two countries with response to diverse mixed farming system.
- Karnal (IND-1) is considered as high intensification (both agriculture and livestock), while Dinajpur is considered as medium and Udaipur as low intensification level.
- From each site, eight villages were selected randomly bases on GPS method.
- Twenty households (HHs) were selected from each village, resulting 160 HHs from each site and total 480 HHs.
- HHs were divided into four wealth categories which were created for each village based on land and livestock ownership.
- Simple tabulation method were followed to analyse the survey data.

Results

- The results show that in high intensity zone, farmers have less access to grazing land; though there is an increase in milk yield but the cost of production also goes up.

Research into use

- Buffalos are the major livestock breed in high intensity zone while it is the local cattle both in low and medium intensity zone.
- High dairy intensity zone farmers have less access to any grazing land.
- Community land contributes major share of grazing for livestock in low intensity zone while it is grass along road/river sides.
- In low intensity zone, farmers don’t have better access to market and as a result more pressure on grazing land.
- Milk yield is found to be lower in low intensity zone as they only depend on grazing.
- Focus should be on low and medium intensity zones to increase the total biomass production.

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