

PROFILE ANALYSIS OF OWNERS OF INFERTILE COWS IN MANNUTHY AREA OF THRISSUR DISTRICT, KERALA*

G. Ajitkumar¹, and D. Sreekumar

Dept. of Livestock production & Management,
Rajiv Gandhi College of Veterinary & Animal Sciences,
Pondicherry

Next to land and irrigation, livestock is the largest productive asset in rural India. The reproductive performance of crossbred cows under rural management conditions are far behind the optimum. Although non-specific infections due to opportunist pathogens are still important, by far the greatest cause of infertility is poor management. This might be due to the lack of scientific knowledge in livestock management coupled with non-availability of required facilities. The present study was undertaken to gather information regarding rural management and selected socio-economic factors of owners of infertile crossbred cows in and around Mannuthy area of Thrissur District, Kerala.

Materials and Methods

Places in and around Mannuthy were selected for the study, considering the following points:

(a) Proximity to Veterinary College and thereby more possibility of adoption of scientific practices. (b) Assured co-operation

from animal owners. (c) Availability of well maintained data about infertile animals from Veterinary College for perusal. At first, the records maintained at the Artificial Insemination Centre ancillary to College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Mannuthy were scrutinized over "one year period" for animals which have not conceived even after three inseminations. From the owners of the above animals fifty were selected at random using table of random digits for the present study. A survey schedule was prepared in consultation with animal reproduction and extension experts of Kerala Agricultural University with emphasis on socio-economic conditions of farmers. Using the survey schedule, the data on age, educational status, occupation, land holding, family size, annual income and herd size of the respondents were taken by personal interview method. Details of their contact with extension agencies, availability of professional help at their premises, involvement in the management of infertile animals as well as practice of fodder cultivation were also collected. The collected data after compilation were analysed using standard statistical methods.

* Part of the dissertation submitted by the first author to Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi for Diploma in Rural Development

1. Present address : Veterinary Surgeon, Veterinary Dispensary, Uzhavoor, Kottayam district.

Results and Discussion

Majority of dairy farmers (50%) interviewed were in the middle age group (36 to 55y) with school level education. Similar observations were made by George *et al.* (1990) and Anil (1992) that lower literacy level helped the farmers to own cattle, but at higher levels of education, there was slight tendency to move away from cattle keeping. When 48 per cent of the farmers were involved in agriculture and allied activities, 38 per cent were agricultural and other labourers. Dairy farmers who were employed constituted only 14 per cent. The core of the dairy farmers (58%) had land holding of 10 cents to one hectare. The average family size of the respondents was five, the range being two to eleven. Forty eight per cent of the farmers were with an annual income above Rs. 5,000/-. The average herd size of cattle was 2.3. Anil (1992) also reported that 85 per cent of the dairy farmers in selected areas of Kerala were having medium herd size of two to four. Data regarding experience in dairying showed that 66 per cent of the respondents had more than 10 years of experience and they contacted technical staff of Kerala Agricultural University as and when required for expert advice. Ninety eight per cent of the dairy farmers got professional help of veterinary doctors and the rest got the help of livestock inspectors at their premises. Availability of large number of professionally qualified veterinary practitioners in the study area has facilitated this. Majority of the dairy farmers (52%) were utilising family labour to look after the animals. When 38 per cent of the farmers themselves were involved in the management of infertile

animals, 10 per cent managed through hired labourers. As scarcity of land and non-availability of irrigation facilities throughout the year made fodder cultivation difficult, none of the farmers were involved in fodder cultivation.

Summary

A study was conducted to gather information regarding rural management and selected socio-economic factors of owners of infertile crossbred cows in and around Mannuthy area of Thrissur District, Kerala. It was found that majority of dairy farmers interviewed were in middle age group, with school level education and involved in agriculture and allied activities. Most of them had land holding of 10 cents to one hectare with average family size and herd size of 5 and 2.3 respectively. Majority of the dairy farmers utilised family labour to look after the animals and contacted qualified veterinarians for technical help. Though many of them were interested in fodder cultivation, scarcity of land and irrigation made it difficult.

References

- Anil, S.S. (1992). Relative involvement of Men and Women in dairying. *M.V.Sc. Thesis*. Department of Extension, Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Kerala Agricultural University, Mannuthy, Thrissur
- George P.S., Nair K.N., Strehel B., Unnithan, N.R. and Walty, S. (1990). *Policy options for cattle development in Kerala*. Kerala Livestock Development Board, Thiruvananthapuram pp. 44-46