

ADOPTION LEVEL OF CALF REARING PRACTICES

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Healthy cattle and buffaloes are the basic factors involved in success of dairying. Calf rearing is one of the most neglected aspects in dairying (Thomas and Sastry,1991).Young calves reared scientifically will help to improve the socio-economic status of farmers through better growth rate and they could become potential milk yielders in future. Adoption of scientific practices could effectively control calf mortality. Non adoption of proven practices could be due to either unawareness or complexity of the technology. Unless the recommended practices are fully adopted by the farming community, getting fruitful results will be difficult. Hence this research study was taken up with the objective to find out the adoption level of calf rearing practices among dairy farmers.

Methodology

Oruvandharpudur village of Mohanur block of Namakkal district constituted the study area. Fifty dairy farmers were selected by using simple random sampling procedure and the data were collected through a well-structured interview schedule. The overall adoption level on calf rearing practices were categorised as low, medium and high based on Mean – 1 SD, Mean \pm 1SD and Mean +1 SD respectively and also item wise adoption level in each domain was calculated using percentage analysis.

Results and discussion

The profile of dairy farmers, their overall and item wise adoption level of calf rearing practices are presented as under:

i. Profile of the dairy farmers

An overwhelming majority of the respondents were males (84.00 per cent), belonged to backward community and possessed livestock of economic value between Rs.20,000 to Rs.50,000/- (78.00 per cent each), followed nuclear family type (70.00 per cent), and carried out Agriculture + Animal Husbandry as the primary occupation (68.00 per cent). About 62.00 per cent of the respondents were from medium annual income group and 56.00 per cent had high experience in dairy farming.

Over two-fifths (44.00 per cent and 42.00 per cent) of them belonged to middle age and small farmer categories. One-third of the respondents were educated up to middle school level.

ii. Overall adoption level of calf rearing practices among dairy farmers

Adoption of recommended scientific practices is a prerequisite for improved production and returns in farming.

Table. 1
Overall adoption level of calf rearing practices among dairy farmers

S. No.	Category	No. of dairy farmers	Percentage of dairy farmers
1	Low	05	10
2	Medium	43	86
3	High	02	04
	Total	50	100

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The results presented in Table 1 indicate that majority (86.00 per cent) of the respondents adopted calf rearing practices at medium level followed by low (10.00 per cent) and high levels (4.00 per cent) respectively. This is in accordance with the finding of Sah and Ranchand (2002) who reported that 75.56 per cent of dairy farmers were medium adopters of dairy innovations.

It is inferred that still majority of the respondents adopted scientific calf rearing practices under medium category only which could be due to practical difficulties encountered by dairy farmers in weaning, providing salt licks, and following schedule of measures for controlling calf mortality etc. Hence further researches' on the difficulties faced by dairy farmers are warranted in future.

iii. Item wise adoption level of calf rearing practices among dairy farmers

It is observed from the Table 2 that all the respondents (100 per cent) adopted colostrum feeding and allowing the cow/buffalo to lick the newborn calf followed by an overwhelming majority on cleaning the mucus coat spread on the new born calf (98.00 per cent), following traditional practices (98.00 per cent), feeding of good quantity (1.5 - 2 litres per day) of milk to young calf (92.00 per cent), feeding of milk to newborn calf (90.00 per cent), deworming of calf (90.00 per cent), providing green grass (88.00 per cent), protecting calf from extreme climate (86.00 per cent) and concentrate feeding (84.00 per cent).

Poor adoption (2.00 per cent -10 per cent) was noticed in case of weaning of calf at one month, cleaning the calf's mouth after feeding milk, providing clean drinking water, providing salt lick, following any fixed time schedule for feeding, application of mouth hood and ligature of navel cord and application of Tincture iodine.

Absolutely none of the respondents adopted the

practices like feeding of milk replacer if colostrum is not available, weighing the calf every month, following schedule of activities to prevent calf mortality and record maintenance. Probably, the farmers could have been pre-occupied with agricultural operations; hence they could not be able to pay much attention on these aspects in calf rearing.

On the other hand an overwhelming majority (98.00 per cent) of the respondents followed various traditional practices in calf rearing like applying turmeric powder on the navel, covering the navel with a cloth, tying the calf's neck in such a way that it does not eat soil instead of applying mouth hood, allowing the calf to suckle one teat for milk, giving preference to female calves. This might have led to poor adoption of some of the scientific practices in calf rearing.

It could be concluded that majority of the respondents adopted scientific calf rearing practices at medium level only. Hence it is stressed that the dairy farmers are to be inspired to adopt at least some of the essential practices like following schedule of activity to control calf mortality, so that calf rearing could become a viable farming activity for farmers.

REFERENCES

- Sah, A.K. and Ranchand (2002). Adoption of dairy innovations and their socio- economic correlates. *J. Extn. Edu.* 13 (4): 3413-3417.
- Thomas, C.K. and N.S.R. Sastry. (1991). *Dairy Bovine Production*, First Edition, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi. pp310.

Table 2.

S. No.	Item wise adoption level of calf rearing practices among dairy farmers		
	Practices	No. of respondents adopted	Per cent of respondents adopted
1	Feeding of colostrum	50	100
2	Feeding of milk replacer if colostrum is not available	0	0
3	Cleaning the mucus coat spread on the newborn calf	49	98
4	Ligation of navel cord and applying tincture iodine	5	10
5	Allowing the cow to lick its new born calf	50	100
6	Weaning of calf at one month	1	2
7	Feeding of milk to newborn calf	45	90
8	Weighing of the calf every month	0	0
9	Application of mouth hood to calf	4	8
10	Protecting the calf from extreme hot /cold climate	43	86
11	Cleaning the calf's mouth after feeding milk	1	2
12	Following schedule of activities for preventing calf mortality	0	0
13	Maintenance of record on calf rearing	0	0
14	Providing clean drinking water	2	4
15	Feeding of good quantity (1.5 -2 litres) of milk during 2-5 months of age	46	92
16	Providing green grass to a calf	44	88
17	Concentrate feeding to calf	42	84
18	Providing salt licks in the calf shed	2	4
19	Following time schedule for feeding of calves	2	4
20	Deworming the new born calf	45	90
21	Eradication of ticks in calves	7	14
22	Vaccination of calf	24	48
23	Isolation of sick animals	37	74