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SUPPORT AND FACILITIES PROVIDED BY ASSAM AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS PROJECT TO THE DAIRY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Kamrup district of Assam. Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project (AACP) organized the dispersed dairy farmers into Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS). Fifteen DCS were selected for the study. The facilities obtained by these DCS were elicited through a structured questionnaire. Study indicated that 46.6% DCS received medium level input followed by 26.6 % DCS who got both high and low level of input facilities through AACP. Study also revealed that 100% DCS have connection with dairy development department followed by 80% DCS having free vaccination facility, only 13.3% have the facility of A.I. Study revealed that 86.6 % DCS got training facility followed by 73.3% who got fodder seed and milking instrument. Again 66.7% DCS got constant advice from various department followed by 46.7% who got concentrated feed. Moreover 3.3% DCS got the facility of cycle, 6.7% got furniture facility followed by 20% DCS who got computer facility. The study also revealed that AACP gave monetary, milk selling and transportation facility to 53.3%, 33.3% and 6.5% DCS respectively.

Key words: input facility, Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project, Dairy Cooperative Society.

Dairying has become an important source of income for millions of rural families. Most milk is produced in rural areas, while the profitable market for milk and its products is largely urban. Operation Flood (OF), launched in 1970 introduced cooperatives into the dairy sector with the objective of increasing milk production, augmenting rural income and providing fair prices to the producers. The co-operative movement began at Amul Dairy in Gujarat and is now replicated in 70,000 villages in about 200 districts of India. Operation Flood witnessed a white revolution of dairy farmers in various states of India. But in Assam such implementation was virtually absent. Despite the fact that the animal-man ratio is higher in Assam as compared to the national figure. There are 50.2 cattle, 3.9 buffaloes per 100 persons in Assam as against the national average of 46.4 and 3.7 respectively[1]. In the year 2007-08 the total milk production in Assam was 79,000 tonnes and per capita availability was 70 gm/day and there was a huge gap between demand and supply. As per 2003 livestock census the total milking bovine population of the state was 2808 thousands[4]. The Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project (AACP) funded by World Bank for Dairy Development has been initiated to narrow down this demand and supply gap. Majority of the dairy farmers of Assam are dispersed and AACP tried to organize such dairy farmers into Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS).

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AACP provide various kinds of training facility, awareness programme on clean milk production, provision of milk can, milking kit, startup capital to the organized DCS. Assam has witnessed a significant change in institutional setup of the milk producers in some milk shed areas of some districts.[5] It is therefore an important requirement to provide basic dairy extension services such as cattle feed, fodder seed, animal health service, artificial insemination to increase the milk production amongst the members of dairy cooperative society through which rapid development of dairy cooperative society is possible. The present study was carried out to assess the extent of facilities received by the DCS through AACP.

The study was conducted in Kamrup district of Assam where the West Assam Milk Union Limited is situated. As most of the DCS are in defunct state, so snowball sampling had to be done to find out the existing DCS. Out of the total 14 blocks in Kamrup district, snowball sampling revealed that Hajo, Rangia, Sualkuchi, Chayani Borduar and Chaygaon are the 5 blocks where most of the DCS organized under AACP are active. From each five blocks 3 DCS were randomly selected thus considering 15 DCS for the study. Data were collected between July and December 2013 by personally interviewing the president and secretary of the selected DCS and the data was analyzed using statistical tools.

To get an overview of the level of facility, DCS were grouped into three categories viz. low, medium and high facility acquired levels. These categories were made on the basis of the calculated mean of the obtained scores on facility provided by AACP to the DCS. The data presented in Table 1 revealed that 46.6% of the DCS received input facilities to the medium level while 26.6% of the DCS received both high and low level input facilities.

Extent of facilities received by DCS through AACP: In the study facilities provided by AACP are studied under three categories i.e. Veterinary facility, extension facility and marketing facility.

Veterinary facility: Results revealed that 100% of the selected DCS had connection with dairy development and veterinary department followed by 66.66% of the respondent received free vaccines for their animals and only 13.3% of them created artificial insemination (AI) facility for their members. However, 86.66 % DCS availed the AI facility individually at their own cost.

Extension facility: Eighty six per cent DCS (86.6%) reported that AACP made the provision of training through dairy development department to their members followed by 73.3% DCS could get the facility of fodder seed from Dairy development department under AACP and 73.3% DCS to get the facility of milking implements like milking can, lactometers etc which were then distributed to their members. A total of 66.7% DCS got constant advice on expansion of dairy cooperative society; dairy management practices through AACP followed by 46.7% DCS got the facility of concentrate feed from the dairy development department. Again, 33.3%, 26.7% and 20% DCS reported to have the facility of bicycle, furniture (like chair, table, desk, and bench) and computer respectively. Further, the study revealed that 53.3% DCS got monetary assistance instead of getting extension facilities like, furniture, bicycle, computer and milking implements etc.

Marketing Facilities:

Sale of milk to different buyers: The study revealed that 33.3% DCS got the facility to sale their milk to milk processing plants (like central dairy, Purabi Dairy). While 66.66% DCS reported to sale their milk to different restaurants, hotels and directly to consumers through retail sale.

The above findings are in agreement with the findings[2] who reported that cooperatives in Rwanda where some assets like cycle, motorbike, cooler, milk can are owned by them and some of which were given to them by the Government. He further reported that the staff and members of the Dairy

cooperative society got training on quality and handling of milk and on dairy cattle management practices. He also revealed that local sector helped the dairy cooperatives and their members to vaccinate their animals and get artificial insemination services. Majority of the members of the Dairy Cooperative Societies participated in training programmes organized by animal husbandry and dairy development programme". Majority of the dairy farmers received medium level of input facilities which corroborated to the findings of certain workers.[8]

Though dairy development department takes initiatives to form dairy cooperative societies under AACP, the support or facility provided by them are not adequate to the functioning of Dairy cooperative societies as majority of the DCS received medium level of facilities. This factor leads

Table: 1 Distribution of Dairy Cooperative Society on the basis of different level of overall facilities received from AACP

Sl. No.	Level of facilities	Range	F	%
1	Low level	<1.5	4	26.6%
2	Medium level	1.5 to 4.5	7	46.6%
3	High level	>4.5	4	26.6%

department[7]. Officials and members of Dairy cooperatives located at Western Province, Kenya received training and extension services[3]. Some workers[6] reported that almost all the members attended Dairy cattle management practices under the aegis of "support to training and employment

to the assumption that because of facilities not up to the mark of the Dairy cooperative societies, most of the societies in Kamrup district were dysfunctional. This study can be expanded to whole of Assam. Further study is required to beneficiary level by including member beneficiary under AACP and non member of Dairy cooperative Societies.

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