

Animal health information needs of livestock owners: A Kisan Call Centre analysis

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India is in top position in world in terms of milk production (104.8 million tonnes), second in egg production (51 billion eggs) and is one of the top ten broiler producers of the world (Sharma *et al.* 2009). In spite of all these alluring figures, scientific livestock rearing in our country is yet to gain momentum. The major problem faced in livestock rearing is the lack of awareness among farmers about the various scientific technologies for health, reproduction, feeding and management of livestock. Keeping these points in view the present study was taken up to analyze information needs of the livestock owners of the northern India especially Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. For the present study four years data of the Kisan Call centre at Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar, were analyzed.

A total of 3763 queries were asked from the level II node of Kisan Call Centre from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand (2004–2007). The rate of calls received over the 4 years period showed an increasing trend from 2004 to 2007. The total calls received in 2004 were just 281, which rose to 729 in 2005, 1,284 in 2006 and 1,469 in 2007. Majority of the information sought by the livestock owners was related to buffalo (45.09%) followed by cattle (39.04%), goat (3.50%), poultry (3.22%), pig (2.37%), dog (2.13%), dairy farming (1.03%), fish (0.58%), horse (0.39%), bee keeping (0.35%), sheep (0.19%), rabbit (0.18%) and miscellaneous subjects (0.64%). This revealed that cattle and buffaloes are the most preferred livestock in these 2 states. Overall trend of the queries during the period 2004–2007 revealed that more than 60% of the calls were on health/diseases followed by reproduction/breeding (21.58%), production, management and nutrition (9.02) and trainings/extension (8.83).

Among the specific health related aspects majority of the queries were related to infectious diseases (39.06%), followed by GIT disorders (37.73%), wounds (7.25%), respiratory and surgical problems (3.28% and 3.20% respectively), skin diseases (3.03%), deficiency diseases (1.86%) and others (4.59%). Our results are in line with the findings of various

other researchers (Acharya 1991, Singh and Jain 1998, Mandape 1999 and Tiwari *et al.* 2007, Sharma *et al.* 2009) who have also reported that major problems in the livestock farms are occurrence of infectious diseases such as FMD, HS, anthrax, mastitis, brucellosis, which lead to low milk productivity and often death of animals. Researchers have also reported ignorance and lack of knowledge among the buffalo owners about the proper disease management practices such as vaccination, hygiene and sanitation in sheds and disinfection of sheds (Rath 1977, Kunzru *et al.* 1987, Begum 1999, Das 2001, and Singh *et al.* 2003, Bujarbaruh and Sharma 2009). Majority of the queries on the other health related aspects include 34% queries on first aid, 17% on urinary problems and 12% on care of new born calves. Others include queries on the care of pregnant animals, postmortem, opacity, bite of honeybee and medicinal herbs. Among the queries asked by the farmers on infectious diseases majority (35.83%) of the queries were on mastitis, indicating that this disease is a serious problem and needs to be taken care of. Other problem reported were fever (11.15%) which could be due to a number of diseases, as internal parasite infestation (9.21%), conjunctivitis (7.05%), external parasites (5.24%), FMD and HS (5.13%). Around 3.76% of the farmers queried about antirabies vaccination (3.29%), babesiosis (3.18%), ear infection and dysentery (3.07% each). Few farmers also queried about PPR, Surra, Ranikhet disease of poultry, fowl pox and bird flu. Out of the total queries on GIT disorders, majority (48.29%) were on anorexia, which could be the sign of many diseases. This was followed by queries on diarrhoea (30.63%), bloat (8.24%), debility (7.30%) and impaction and indigestion (2.23 and 2.95% respectively). Among the reproduction related queries majority of the queries were on problem of repeat breeding (32.42%), followed by anoestrus (21.31%), prolapse of uterus (12.97%), metritis and endometritis (8.6%), retained placenta (7.49%), abortion (6.62%), artificial insemination (2.75%) and pregnancy diagnosis (1.69%).

Among the management/production/nutrition related aspects majority of the calls were on low production in cattle and buffaloes (79.40%), followed by queries on feeding of

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balanced diet (8.35%), mineral mixture (5.37%), concentrates and fodder enrichment (1.20% respectively). Few queries (1.78%) were on drying lactating animals. Rest of the queries were on other aspects, viz. fodder conservation, urea treated straw, oil cake, salt feeding and fodder poisoning as revealed from the analysis of the KCC queries. Low milk yield of cattle and buffaloes was also reported by many other researchers (Singh *et al.* 1985, Arya *et al.* 1996, Mandape *et al.* 1999 and Tiwari *et al.* 2007) as one of the major problems of the small-holder animal production system.

Among the queries related to training and extension, majority were on training aspects (74.70%). Among the queries on training more number of queries was on pig farming (24.90%), poultry (21.23%) and goat farming (20.40%). Around 11.85% of the queries were on training for dairy farming, followed by cattle rearing, bee keeping, fish farming, buffalo rearing, rabbit farming and sheep rearing. Apart from training, a large number of queries were related to purchase and sale of animals and products (13.10%) wherein, most of the queries were on cattle (30.24%) followed by pig (20.93%), dairy farms (18.61%). Rest of the queries on this aspect include varied topics such as enterprise set up, credit related, insurance related, registration of cooperative society, purchase of literature, making of pesticide from cow urine, vermicompost, availability of prawn, helpline of IVRI, improving fat in milk, AI training, quail farming, integrated farming (duck/pig/fish) etc.

SUMMARY

Present study is based on the analysis of the Kisan Call centres (KCC) to identify the areas wherein the farmers/livestock owners need information. Four years data of the Kisan Call centre, situated at IVRI, Izatnagar, were analysed. Results revealed that livestock owners required information with regards to scientific health care of the livestock. The analysis of the queries received at the Kisan Call Centre in other parts of the country can act as an effective tool to gather and prioritize the information needs of the farmers and livestock owners and for developing specific information packages for them.

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