

# Utilisation of Animal Husbandry Extension Services by Rainfed Farmers

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## Introduction

The State Departments of Animal Husbandry in India are the major agencies responsible for delivery of extension services to the farming community. The department has other important activities like promotion of cattle, buffalo, piggery, poultry, sheep, goat production along with development of fodder, training, implementation of socio-economic programmes etc.

The contribution of livestock sector increased from 14 per cent in 1980-81 to 25 per cent of the total value of agriculture which proves its importance to the Indian economy. It provides employment to about 9.56 million persons in principal status and about 7.86 million persons in subsidiary status in India (Kadirvel 2002; Government of India (GOI) 2002). This clearly indicates a prominent role of Animal Husbandry in the rural economy in supplementing the income of rural households, more so in rainfed areas.

The Department of Animal husbandry has been providing technologies and extension services to the farmers for the last six decades. Hence, there is a need to understand the crucial aspects like the extent of utilization of these technologies and services by the rainfed farming community, which is more complex in nature. Keeping these aspects in view the present study was undertaken with the following objectives.

## Objectives

1. To understand the extent of contact of the rainfed farmers with the department of animal husbandry
2. To know the frequency and place of contact of farmers with officers of the Animal Husbandry department
3. To study the extent of involvement of farmers in extension activities and utilization of support services, and
4. To understand the extent of satisfaction of the rainfed farmers with the services of the department of animal husbandry.

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## Methodology

The study was undertaken in 12 districts each drawn from a state representing rainfed area in the country. Four categories of farmers such as marginal, small, medium and large were involved in the study. The data was collected by using pre tested interview schedule from 40 farmers drawn from two villages of a rainfed block in each district. Thus the sample size of the study was 480 farmers. The data has been analyzed by using percentages.

## Findings

The findings relating to the number of farmers contacted, frequency of contact, place of contact, participation in extension activities etc. are presented below.

### 1. Farmers' Contact with Extension Officials

The results relating to contact with extension officials of the department of animal husbandry among the rainfed farmers are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Farmers' Contact with Extension Officials** (%)

Sl. No	Districts	Category of farmers				Average
		Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	
1	Mahboobnagar	56	45	40	50	47.8
2	Kamrup	62	50	33	50	48.8
3	Rajkot	0	71	75	100	61.5
4	Shimla	42	33	33	0	27.0
5	Gulbarga	20	30	80	90	55.0
6	Indore	57	9	11	0	19.3
7	Aurangabad	0	10	0	40	12.5
8	Bolangir	62	71	60	0	48.3
9	Bhilwara	22	18	22	9	17.8
10	Salem	50	50	64	71	58.8
11	Jhansi	44	33	43	75	48.8
12	24 Paraganas	54	17	31	100	50.5
	Average	39.1	36.4	41.0	48.8	41.3

It was very interesting to note that the overall average percentage of contact of the farmers was found to be 41.3 per cent. Eight districts have indicated more than 40 per cent contact with the extension officials. The range of contact between categories of farmers was found to be 39 per cent among marginal, 36 per cent among small, 41 and 49 per cent among medium and large farmers. The results indicated in the table highlighted a few critical things. Animal husbandry being a family vocation is crucial in the rainfed areas for the survival of the farmers. Hence, the contact with agencies providing support to the farmers to maintain their animals is necessary. Even though the department has no specific extension personnel like the agricultural department, of late, they have introduced para-technicians to provide services to the farming community. As such, the present level of interaction between the extension workers and the farmers has been found to be around 40 percent. Since the future growth of the farming system in rainfed areas hinges on the animal husbandry sector, it is necessary that special effort be made to improve the performance of this sector with provision of a larger number of extension officials for improving contacts with the farming community.

## **2. Frequency of Contact with Extension Officials**

The results relating to frequency of contact of the farmers with the extension officials of the department of animal husbandry are presented in Table 2.

It can be observed from the data that a large number of farmers in Rajkot were found to have weekly contacts. This was mainly due to the intensive efforts put forth by the milk unions for supporting the farmers for promoting animal husbandry in the district. Most of the farmers were found to have differential levels of contact across different districts. The main reasons for these results are limited number of veterinary officials in the area to serve the farming community. Farmers generally tend to get the service from an A.I. centre in times of need, since there is no regular extension service of the animal husbandry department below the block level as in the case of agriculture. As animal husbandry is going to be the key component, in order to improve rainfed farming systems, it would be crucial for providing greater level of contact between the extension workers and the farmers by strengthening the extension systems around A.I. centres.

**Table 2. Frequency of Contact with Extension Officials** (%)

Sl. No	Districts	Type of visit	Category of farmers				Average
			Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	
1.	Mahboobnagar	Half Yearly	56	45	40	50	47.8
2.	Kamrup	Fortnightly	10	10	10	10	10.0
		Casual	52	40	23	40	38.8
3.	Rajkot	Weekly	0	71	75	100	61.5
4.	Shimla	Fortnightly	42	33	33	0	27.0
5.	Gulbarga	Weekly	0	0	20	10	7.5
		Fortnightly	0	10	10	20	10.0
		Monthly	20	20	50	40	32.5
		Quarterly	0	0	0	20	5.0
6.	Indore	Weekly	43	9	11	0	15.8
		Casual	14	0	0	0	3.5
7.	Aurangabad	Weekly	0	10	0	30	10
		Casual	0	0	0	10	2.5
8.	Bolangir	Weekly	12	0	0	0	3.0
		Fortnightly	12	14	40	0	16.5
		Monthly	31	50	20	0	25.3
		Casual	7	7	0	0	3.5
9.	Bhilwara	Quarterly	22	18	22	9	17.8
10.	Salem	Weekly	0	17	36	0	13.3
		Fortnightly	10	8	0	0	4.5
		Monthly	40	25	28	57	37.5
		Half Yearly	0	0	0	14	3.5
11.	Jhansi	Weekly	11	0	0	0	2.8
		Fortnightly	11	11	21	25	17.0
		Monthly	22	11	15	38	21.5
		Half Yearly	0	11	7	12	7.5
12.	24 Paraganas	Monthly	0	8	0	20	7.0
		Quarterly	0	0	0	30	7.5
		Half Yearly	8	9	31	0	12.0
		Casual	46	0	0	50	24.0

### 3. Place of Contact with Extension Officials

Farmers are contacting extension officials at various places in different areas as mentioned below.

**Table 3. Place of Contact with Extension Officials** (%)

Sl. No	Districts	Place of contact	Category of farmers				Average
			Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	
1.	Mahboobnagar	Agril. Market Yard	33	18	30	40	30.3
2.	Kamrup	Office	10	10	10	10	10.0
3.	Rajkot	Panchayat	0	64	62	50	44.0
		Office	0	7	26	50	20.8
4.	Shimla	Panchayat	16	7	11	0	8.5
		Office	17	13	11	0	10.3
		Agril. Market Yard	8	7	0	0	3.8
5.	Gulbarga	Panchayat	20	10	20	0	12.5
		Office	0	10	40	40	22.5
		Agril. Market Yard	0	0	0	30	7.5
6.	Indore	Panchayat	43	9	0	0	13.0
		Office	0	0	11	0	2.75
7.	Aurangabad	Home	0	10	0	30	10.0
		Office	0	0	0	10	2.5
8.	Bolangir	Panchayat	50	71	60	0	45.3
9.	Bhilwara	Panchayat	22	18	22	9	17.8
10.	Salem	Home	20	0	0	0	5.0
		Panchayat	20	42	55	57	43.5
		Office	10	8	9	14	10.3
11.	Jhansi	Field	11	0	0	0	2.8
		Panchayat	11	11	12	12	11.5
		Office	22	11	7	38	19.5
		Agril. Market Yard	0	0	21	0	5.3
12.	24 Paraganas	Panchayat	38	8	8	100	38.5
		Office	0	8	23	0	7.8

The commonly used place seems to be the office of the extension officer where the farmers visit along with their animals for any of the issues. The second place used by extension officials is the panchayat, whenever they visit the villages and organize camps in the villages. It could be observed from the data that the officials have also contacted the farmers in their homes and also in fields apart from the agriculture market yard.

Even though there is no common pattern, various places have been used by the officials for interacting with the farmers on animal husbandry aspects. Since, animal husbandry is a crucial requirement for improving the farming systems, it is necessary to evolve a mechanism of providing specific extension and other services as near to the farming community as possible. Hence, it will be helpful to locate the A.I. centres nearer to the farming community along with the extension personnel in each of the A.I. centres to support the farming community.

#### 4. Participation in Extension Activities

Participation of farmers in extension activities like demonstrations, trainings, inputs etc. is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Participation in Extension Activities** (%)

Sl. No	Districts	Type of activity	Category of farmers				Average
			Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	
1.	Mahboobnagar	Demonstrations	0	0	10	0	2.5
2.	Kamrup	Trainings	0	10	0	10	5.0
3.	Rajkot	Trainings	0	40	50	40	32.5
4.	Shimla	Trainings	8	0	0	0	2.0
5.	Gulbarga	Trainings	10	30	80	70	47.5
6.	Indore	Minikits	14	0	0	0	3.5
		Trainings	14	0	0	0	3.5
		Exposure visits	29	0	0	0	9.5
7.	Aurangabad	Trainings	0	10	0	10	5.0
8.	Bolangir	Demonstrations	50	71	60	0	60.3
9.	Bhilwara	Minikits	22	18	22	9	17.8
		Exposure visits	11	0	0	0	2.8
10.	Salem	Trainings	20	33	64	71	47.0
11.	Jhansi	Demonstrations	0	11	7	0	4.5
		Minikits	11	0	0	0	2.8
		Trainings	11	0	0	0	2.8
12.	24 Paraganas	Exposure visits	11	11	14	38	18.5
		Trainings	10	0	0	30	10.0

It can be observed from the data that the officials of the department of animal husbandry organized demonstrations, training programmes, provided inputs, mini kits apart from exposure visits as activities for the benefit of farmers. It is likely that even

though the department has taken up these activities, the number of activities and the number of farmers involved in each of these activities was possibly limited due to the limited fund allocation. Since animal husbandry is a crucial activity for the farmers in rainfed regions, there is a need to promote a large number of innovative activities to be operationalized with sufficient allocation of funds for involving groups of farmers on a massive scale. The activities have to be promoted on a mission mode to get the benefits to the farmers.

### 5. Utilization of Support Services by the Farmers

The information relating to support services for the farmers from the department of animal husbandry is presented in table 5.

**Table 5. Utilization of Support Services by the Farmers** (%)

Sl. No	Districts	Type of service	Category of farmers				Average
			Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	
1.	Mahboobnagar	A.I., Vaccination	44	18	40	50	38.0
2.	Kamrup	A.I. Vaccination	8	25	11	0	11.0
3.	Rajkot	A.I. Vaccination	0	79	75	100	63.5
4.	Shimla	A.I. Vaccination	42	27	22	0	22.8
5.	Gulbarga	A.I. Vaccination	10	30	60	70	42.5
6.	Indore	A.I. Vaccination	43	82	67	0	48.0
7.	Aurangabad	A.I. Vaccination	0	10	0	30	10.0
8.	Bolangir	A.I. Vaccination	44	50	40	0	33.5
9.	Bhilwara	A.I. Vaccination	33	9	67	73	45.5
10.	Salem	A.I. Vaccination	70	58	82	86	74.0
11.	Jhansi	Subsidy	11	0	0	0	2.8
		Inputs	11	0	0	0	2.8
		A.I. Vaccination	67	44	50	50	52.8
12.	24 Paraganas	Inputs	0	0	8	0	2.0
		A.I. Vaccination	15	17	8	100	35.0

It can be observed from the data that A.I. vaccination subsidy and inputs are the services being provided to the farmers from the department. Most of the farmers have used the A.I. and vaccination services in different districts. Very few farmers have used the inputs and subsidy. To improve the efficiency of animal husbandry extension systems, it would be helpful to increase the number of services being provided by involving local private sector partners in the area.

## 6) Farmers' Satisfaction with services of Animal Husbandry Department

The farmers' response relating to the satisfaction with the services received from the department of animal husbandry is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Farmers' Satisfaction with Services** (%)

Sl. No	Districts	Category of farmers				Average
		Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	
1.	Mahboobnagar	20	10	10	30	17.5
2.	Kamrup	10	30	10	30	20.0
3.	Rajkot	0	71	75	100	61.5
4.	Shimla	33	27	33	0	23.3
5.	Gulbarga	20	30	70	70	47.5
6.	Indore	14	9	11	0	8.5
7.	Aurangabad	0	10	0	10	5.0
8.	Bolangir	12	57	60	0	32.3
9.	Bhilwara	12	16	20	9	14.3
10.	Salem	50	42	55	71	54.5
11.	Jhansi	0	0	7	25	8.0
12.	24 Paraganas	31	8	15	0	13.5
	Average	16.8	25.8	30.5	28.8	25.5

It can be observed from the data that a large number of farmers in Rajkot and Salem were satisfied with the services followed by a moderate percentage from Gulbarga, Bolangir and Shimla. On an average, the level of satisfaction was found to be 26 per cent, which was quite low. The results highlight the need to improve the technical assistance and advisory services provided by the department along with provision of other support services by promoting entrepreneurship among the rural youth in the area.

### Conclusion

It is observed from the study that 41 per cent of the respondents were contacting the officials from the Department of Animal Husbandry. The frequency of contact varied from weekly to half yearly in all the states and among different categories of farmers. This situation demands increase in the number of extension officers at the field level to provide timely health care and artificial insemination activities.

The study indicates that the two major support services utilized by the farmers were artificial insemination and vaccination in animals and poultry birds. It was also found that the farmers were using the agricultural market yard, office, gram panchayath and

farmer's home for contacting the veterinary doctors. Hence there is a need to develop an artificial insemination center, which can provide both treatment and extension services at one place nearer to the farming community.

The data reveals that the participation of farmers in extension activities was very limited. The overall satisfaction of the farmers with the animal husbandry services was only 26 per cent. This situation demands the expansion of extension services in a massive way to reach more number of farmers.

### **References**

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