

Promoting Fodder Based Dairy Production to Decrease the Cost of Production of Smallholder Farmers

Context

Better feeding practices with the use of adequate nutritious green forage for dairy animals have been recommended by experts as a solution to the poor productivity of the dairy farming businesses in Nepal. As part of Dairy project's *"Increase Access to Forage Inputs"* intervention, Samarth-NMDP supported training on **Forage Seed Production and Fodder Based Dairy Production**. The aim of the training was to enhance skills and knowledge on forage cultivation, seed production and forage based feeding management to the seed producers from different districts of Nepal.

ToT on Forage Seed Production and Fodder Based Dairy Production

Samarth-NMDP in collaboration with Nepal Agriculture Research Council (NARC) and Department of Livestock (DLS) organized a five-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on **Forage Seed Production and Fodder Based Dairy Production** from 29th February 2016 to 4th March 2016 at the premises of NARC – Pasture and Fodder Division, Khumaltar, Lalitpur, Nepal. The courses of the ToT were designed to fulfil the need of seed producers on forage crops and feeding management of dairy animals. The courses covered topics like forage cultivation and seed production/processing, understanding of ruminant diet and forage based feeding management of dairy animals, legalities of certified forage seed production and process of seed registration, dairy animals' ration preparation, and comparative cost analysis between concentrated versus forage based feeding practices.

The 25 participants that have been trained as trainers are: seed producers of the Forage Resource Centers (FRCs) identified during this intervention; private seed producers; and field technicians from NARC and DLS. The participants represented a total of 15 districts - Banke, Bardiya, Chitwan, Dang, Dhading, Dolkha, Kanchanpur, Kavre, Lalitpur, Mahotari, Morang, Nawalparasi, Palpa, Sarlahi and Sunsari. The training was conducted by resource persons from NARC, DLS and Seed Quality Control Center (SQCC) and other forage/livelihood experts.

What next

Samarth-NMDP will support the trainers to conduct further trainings and awareness programs regarding forage/fodder feeding starting April 2016. The trainers will create linkages with dairy cooperatives in their respective districts and nearby districts to promote forage based feeding systems to dairy cooperatives and smallholder dairy farmers. They will market forage seeds along with the knowledge they acquired during the training. They will receive technical mentoring and backstopping from the field technicians from DLS and NARC, also trained during the ToT.

Development impact

Nutrition levels of smallholder dairy herd remain sub-optimal due to the use of poor quality feeding materials for their livestock. Overuse of concentrate - including commercial concentrate; and heavy

reliance on rice straw with almost no nutritious value and locally available household bi-products has not only resulted in the high cost of production but also various health complications including infertility. Lack of forage planting materials (seed/saplings/sets) and poor knowledge on the nutrition management practices has resulted in the aforementioned problems. Promotion of forage based feeding through easy availability of forage and awareness on proper feeding methods will lead to sustainable and economic production of milk which in turn will decrease the cost of production of smallholder farmers.

Pictures



Figure 1: Participants at the ToT



Figure 2: Mr. Kishore Shrestha, Division Chief of NARC, Pasture and Fodder Division, handing out certificates to the participants.



Figure 3: Ms. Binita Pokharel of NARC sharing her views about the training



Figure 4: Participants and scientists from NARC posing for the picture after the training