

Private Sector Important for Uptake of Technologies Embedded by government for Fast Tracking and Commercialization of Forage/Fodder

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 has been working with Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC) - Pasture and Fodder Division (PFD) and six private seed producers to address legal and technical barriers for commercialization and promotion of forage based dairy production. With the closure of activities and partnerships, Samarth supported NARC – PFD to organize a workshop to share the experience and lessons learned during the two year course of the intervention and handing over the technologies with released varieties of six forage seeds and two registered varieties of forage seeds. The main of the workshop was to inform the stakeholders about the activities that were conducted with the NARC – PFD and the private seed producers during the partnership period.

Workshop on Lessons and Experience Sharing of Forage Intervention under Public-Private Partnership Approach

Samarth-NMDP supported NARC-PFD to organize a half day workshop on ***Lessons and Experience Sharing of Forage Intervention under Public-Private Partnership Approach*** on 14th July 2017 at the premises of Nepal Agricultural Research Council, Khumaltar, Lalitpur, Nepal. The main objective of the workshop was to share the experiences and lessons learned during the two year course of the intervention and inform the stakeholders about the registration of two varieties and release of six varieties of forage seeds. The workshop was chaired by Dr. Tek Bahadur Gurung, Director, Livestock and Fisheries Research, NARC with special guest Dr. Banshi Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Livestock Development. The workshop was attended by more than 35 participants from different government agencies, donor agencies and private sector.

The workshop had two paper presentations and two partner seed producers shared their experience. Mr. Kishore Shrestha, Chief, NARC – PFD shared his presentation on ***Legalization of Forage Crops through Public Private Partnership Approach*** which mainly talked about the registration and release of new varieties of forage seeds. Samarth- NMDP in coordination with NARC-PFD, Department of Livestock Services (DLS) - National Pasture and Animal Feed Center Program and Seed Quality Control Center (SQCC) worked together to overcome the legal barriers through facilitation in forage crops registration under public private partnership for quality forage seed production and marketing. This resulted in grand successes of release of six varieties and registration of two varieties of forage seeds which has also been published in Government of Nepal's, National Gazette on June 26, 2017. All the released and registered varieties of seeds were handed over to DLS and Nepal Forage Development Association for further distribution and multiplication. The two varieties of registered seeds are Swan and Mescavi. The six released varieties of forage seeds are Makaichari – 1, Kutil Kosha – 1, Palpa Stylo - 1, Rasuwa Cocksfoot, Hattighans – 1 and Khumal Bansho. It was noted that registration of forage seeds is essential for commercialization of forage and fodder production and private players are equally important for uptake of technologies embedded by government for fast tracking.

Ms. Sunita Sanjyal, Scientist, NARC – PFD shared her presentation on the major activities that were conducted in the last two years and the lessons learned under the public-private partnership approach. The major activities included:

- i. Identification of six forage resource centres
- ii. Capacity building of the forage resource centres
- iii. Testing and trial of imported Australian seeds
- iv. Farm level awareness regarding forage based dairy production and
- v. Registration of six varieties of forage seeds.

During the course of the intervention and with support from Samarth, NARC – PFD selected six private seed producers/groups that were identified as forage resource centres (FRCs). The six FRCs¹ closely worked with NARC – PFD to enhance their capacity to support NARC – PFD for research and trial of forage seeds as well as marketing and promotion of forage seeds. Samarth and NARC – PFD made available essential materials/equipment for quality seed production and marketing with truthful labelling. It is the first time NARC – PFD is working with the private sector for research as trial of forage seeds as well as the first time the FRCs are marketing and promoting forage seeds under their own brand name. The FRCs promoted forage based dairy production at the farm level by creating linkages with dairy cooperatives and its member base. The FRCs made contacts with dairy cooperatives in 13 districts and representatives from over 300 dairy cooperatives were trained between April and August 2016. Over 7,000 small holder farmers have participated in awareness programs conducted by the six FRCs in various districts. Ms. Sanjyal shared that there is still a lack of knowledge and awareness about forage varieties at the farm level and strengthening and addition of FRCs may minimize that gap. The country is still at a deficit of about 29% in terms of forage seed demand and supply and there is a lot of potential for the sector to grow.

Representative from two of the six forage resource centres shared their experiences at the workshop. Mr. Yadap Dhakal, Manager of the Banigama Cooperative – Jaipati Krishi Farm and Ghans Bikas Samuha, Morang, who was recently awarded as one of the best farmer of Morang district by DLS appreciated the training that he received from NARC and Samarth. The training not only helped him build his own capacity but also helped his business grown by conducting awareness raising activities on the benefits of forage based dairy production. Though he is pretty new to forage seed production, he feels that it is a pretty good business to get into as he and his group have sold about NPR 1.1 million worth of forage seeds/sapling during the last year. Mr. Gopal Dulal, Chairman of the Goras Pashu Bikas Farm Tatha Ghans Bikas Kendra, Nawalparasi and also the President of the recently formed Nepal Forage Development Association (NFDA) informed the stakeholders about the association and how they plan to take it forward. The six forage resource centers have taken a leading role in the establishment of NFDA, with joint facilitation from NARC – Pasture and Fodder Division, Department of Livestock Services- National Pasture and Animal Feed Centre and Samarth- NMDP. The major objectives of the NFDA is to catalyze the production and marketing of quality forage seeds and planting materials through FRCs; promotion of forage based feeding to increase productivity; carryout field based research and studies on source seed production; implementation of skill enhancement programmes, provision of extension/technical services and technology dissemination on overall forage related activities.

¹ The six FRCs are:

Sarlahi FRC – Pashu Tatha Ghansabali Utpadak Krishak Samhua

Chitwan FRC – Timilsina Ghansabali Biu Biu Bridhi Krisha Farm

Nawalparasi FRC – Goras Pashu Bikas Farm Tatha Ghans Bikas Kendra

Kavre FRC – KK Enterprises

Dang FRC – Shivashakti Ghansko Biu Utpadak Sangh

Morang FRC – Banigama Cooperative – Jaipati Krishi Farm and Ghans Bikas Samuha

The support that I have received from NARC – PFD and Samarth has been very encouraging and has helped my business grow. During last year, I was able to conduct awareness activities regarding forage based dairy production to more than 1,800 farmers and I was able to do transaction worth of NPR 1.1 million.

Yadap Dhakal

Banigama Dairy Cooperative, Jaipati Krishi Farm and Ghans Bikas Samuha

What next

Following the closure, the activities and partnerships, there is strong commitment from NARC-PFD to continue to work under public-private partnership model for dissemination and uptake of technologies. The recently released and registered forage varieties will encourage seed producers to start production and marketing of forage seeds at a commercial level. With the handing over of the released varieties of forage seeds to DLS - National Pasture and Animal Feed Center Program, it is expected that it will reach a large number of seed producers that can start production and marketing legally. The FRCs have also found the business model of linking with dairy cooperatives to be beneficial and will continue to expand in other districts. Though the recently established association is in its early stages it will contribute in advocacy and lobbying the rights of forage seeds producers by resolving the contemporary issues.

Development impact

The nutrition levels of smallholder dairy herd remain at sub-optimal level 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 workshop



Figure 2: Dr. Tek Bahadur Gurung, Director, Livestock and Fisheries Research, NARC, also the chairperson of the workshop, giving his remarks



Figure 3: Dr. Banshi Sharma, Joint Secretary at Ministry of Livestock Development, giving his remarks about the workshop



Figure 5: Ms. Sunita Sanjyal, Scientist, NARC - PFD, sharing her presentation on 'Activities and Lessons Learnt'



Figure 5: Mr. Kishore Shrestha, Chief, NARC – PFD sharing his presentation on Legalization of Forage Crops through Public Private Partnership Approach



Figure 6: Participants at the workshop



Figure 7: Mr. Kishore Shrestha, Chief, NARC - PFD handing over the registered forage seeds to Mr. Gopal Dulal, President, Nepal Forage Development Association for further multiplication



Figure 8: Dr. Tek Bdr Guring, Director, Livestock and Fisheries Research, NARC handing over the six released varieties of forage seeds to Ms. Nirmla Singh, Chief, National Pasture and Animal Feed Center Program, DLS for further multiplication