

0110. 2nd Progress Report on the Dairy Development Project (Dec 1984)

The Dairy Development Project started giving cows on 21 March 1984 when we advanced 18 VLWs with Rs 2,400 each.

All of them have repaid these interest free advances in full when they received their stipends for the year 1985, except in one case (DDP 0088) where we had to extend time for another one year since his cow died and he could not claim insurance. With the exception of 4 persons, the management of these cows was good. This was mainly because of the intensive training they received at the Red Dane Project, Hassaraghatta, and at our central dairy at Bagepalli. 3 of these cows died and 1 has a uterus problem.

After these 3 deaths we requested our then Veterinarian to resign, since we felt that his neglect and lack of professional competence contributed largely to those deaths. We then appointed another more qualified vet who has been giving excellent care and attention ever since.

The first cow with Canara Bank participation were given on 20 June 1984 to 8 Coolies from the Kothakota CSU. Though 10 had been selected and loans sanctioned, 2 of them backed out in the least minute due to personal family problems:

At the same time, M. Laxminarasimhappa who had lost a cow and was still willing to try again was helped with a further advance to buy one more cow.

This was the second batch of cows that we brought in bulk from the Bangalore Market. While we were not cheated as to price and breed too much, these animals did not hold their yields for prolonged periods.

But a much more serious problems was that we lost control after about 2 months and could not directly control re-investments. Blame for this has to be put squarely on the Community Worker and shared by me.

The CSU said that they would control the finances of the Loanees and take care of re-investment (i.e. using the monies from milk sale proceeds for buying feed-concentrates, paying for medicines, repaying the bank loan and for personal consumption). But in reality they were not able to exert enough pressure on half the Loanees. While one cow died due to glass pieces in her rumen (a case of gross neglect), 2 others were not fed properly during their advanced pregnant dry periods and so aborted without developing their udders. As a result, they are now totally dry and will remain so till they re-conceive and calve again. Will these 2 Coolies, who neglected perfectly healthy animals by not feeding sufficient concentrates, have the interest and financial ability to maintain their cows for another year? And what happened to their bank repayment schedule in the meantime? The fourth cow contracted pneumonia and was neglected during her recovery. As a result she is sick and yields just enough milk to maintain herself, without paying the bank.

This spells the doom of these 3 Coolies (the one whose cow died got insurance). While individuals in the Bank may be sympathetic, the Bank as an institution will be cruel, continuing to charge penal interest on the deferred repayment. The VLW had warned us against this immature haste in handing over responsibilities to the CSU but we had not heeded his advice. These 3 cows need not be sick if the Community Worker and I or the VLW had insisted on adequate feeding of concentrates by retaining financial re-investment control.

On 18 July 1984 we bought another 19 cows for the Coolies of Nakkalapalli and Somnathpura CSUs with Canara Bank finances.

In these villages the KDDC did not start a Milk Collection Society and we had to set up a Milk Collection Centre ourselves. This meant an unexpected and unbudgeted expense of Rs 5,558 but proved to be a great boon. It meant that we had a direct control over the monies got by the Loanees since the milk was being transported and supplied to a KDDC Society at Devaragudipalli in my name, and I received payments in my hands once a fortnight.

The programme is working excellently in these 2 CSUs with very good yields (due to requisite feeding of concentrates) and prompt bank repayments. The Kothakota experience has made me wiser on the dangers of handing over control before a certain level of maturity is reached. At first the Coolies resented this form of a very strict control, but now they are beginning to realise the importance of re-investment. Reinvestment we have found, is a concept and culture totally lacking even in the Middle Peasants. We are sure that in another year's time this control can be relaxed to a great dial. Just as it is in my interest to keep a tight grip right now, so too it is in my interest to hand over responsibilities in the long run, because I have no intention of continuing to be their Extension Worker for ever and ever.

Then all of a sudden the dreaded Theilerai epidemic struck the taluk and cattle began to die like flies. There was no control measure since the carrier of the protozoan parasite was the tick. And there were no preventive vaccines.

We had a very high causality rate and an alarming fatality till quite by accident our Veterinarian successfully experimented with Matalcalfin Tablets, till then used with good results in the treatment of human malaria with excellent results. In spite of most of our cows being effected, we were able to arrest relapses and preserve mild yields by using Metacalfin. The fact that we were able to give good nourishment during recovery (additional concentrates) also helped in near total recovery of milk yields.

Fatalities in Nakkalapalli and Somnathpura CSUs

On 26 September 1984 we bought 9 more cows with Canara Bank finances. Of these 2 went to Kothakota (1 to replace the one that died due to glass pieces entering the rumen), 2 to Somnathpura (1 to replace the one that died due to Cirrhosis) and 5 to the Jelipigaripalli CSU. All these cow were bought from the Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, and proved to be very good yielders. But they were not spared from the deadly Theilerai and 2 died in spite of great care and medication.

Unfortunately one of them was the replacement given to DDP 0007 at Kothakota CSU which died. The other died at Jelipigaripalli in spite of excellent management conditions and a mild parasitic infection (we have been using the laboratory facilities of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore).

Recent fatalities

In summary we bought a total of 52 cows and of them 8 died. 5 Coolies gave up dairying, and 3 replacements were bought. So there are 47 cows in the village today out of a total of 55 bought. of them 43 are in a reasonably good condition, but 4 (3 at Kothakota and 1 at Yellampalli) are having problems. Of these 19 were directly financed by us and Canara Bank financed the remaining 36. Which means that other 64 cows can be given through Canara Bank financing in the taluk under the DDP.

Of these, we will be giving another 34 cows in the next weeks (13 to Yellampalli (HC), 11 to Yellampalli (MV), 5 to Aiavarapalli, 5 to Maravapalli Thanda and 10 to Aachepalli (HC)). Then we would have given a total of 79 cows under the DDP by January 1985 and 30 more could still be given in 1985 under Canara Bank financing.

In addition we have also assisted the Community Workers with interest-free advances which have been fully paid back, and with veterinary extension and training services.

VIABILITY OF CROSS-BRED COWS:

With our one year experience we can conclude that cross-bred cows in the Rs 5,000 range and yielding a peak of about 10 to 12 litres of milk are NOT viable.

If we calculate and monetise the cost of labour and fodder invested to maintain the animals the Coolies run at a net loss every month. Further, these cows maintain their yields for about 5 months and the Loanees are not in a position to pay the bank instalment for more than a maximum of 6 months after calving.

However, there are 2 reasons why we can still recommend cross-bred cows to Coolies of Bagepalli taluk as a profitable venture:

1. Severe unemployment and seasonal under-employment ensures that at least a couple of persons per family are idle. They can look after the cows and also go out for 6 months of the year in order to scrounge for green grass to feed the animals. But their labour should not be computed in a viability study, for anyway there is absolutely no alternate employment for them even if they do not look after the cows. Similarly, fodder. The little fodder they grow does not have any market value in this taluk. So the cost of their fodder (which they store and use in the 6 summer months) should not be calculated in a viability study.
2. With a sex ratio 1:1 it is reasonable to expect that the Coolies get a female calf every other year. Rearing this will not be an added burden to his family – in fact we see a definite joy in them when tending to the calves – and she should be ready to be covered by the time she is 18 months old. Even if she repeats, she should calve by the time she is 2½ years old, and then a first lactation cow should be produced every other year, with a market value of at least Rs 5,000. This will form the real profit from the venture. Milk yields will only just maintain the animals (without taking into account labour and fodder costs).

But this has the obvious implication that only a family with a large number of members and with a little patch of dry land can maintain cross-bred cows. The DDP is not for the poorest of the poor within the Coolie class. At the same time the DDP is not viable for the self-employed Middle Peasant also and our experience (DDP 0007) suggests that they will not be able to manage these animals properly. While dairying with these low yielding cows does not bring in enough profits, neither can the Middle Peasants devote their full time and attention to their management during the 6 crop months.

At the same time a severe drought will wipe out the project. This is the nemesis we dread!

FINANCING WITH CANARA BANK:

I am convinced that The present system of financing the cows through the Canara Bank is extremely dangerous and is ultimately going to contribute to the ruin of all the DDP Loanees. Though the Loanees can pay for only about 6 months, the bank as an institution cannot be sympathetic (as opposed to the very friendly and cooperative attitude of the staff) and interest and penal interests are going to accrue, guaranteeing that the Coolies will never be able to repay their loans.

But given time I assure you that the Coolies will most definitely benefit in the long run and the amounts that they are now repaying the bank will be for their personal consumption solving their day to day problems in some measure.

But time is the most important question. If we can follow a policy of being patient and not insist on a regular, mechanical, monthly repayment schedule (being insensitive to their so many problems) the cow project will surely succeed. But at the same time I know that if I am

liberal now, I will only be contributing to their doom. DO we want the DDP to become like the IRDP and contribute to a primitive accumulation in the countryside? I still feel that if we can afford to ask that 3 problematic Loanees from Kothakota to just forget about repayment for another year and even advance them with another Rs 660 (the cost of half bag of concentrates a month for a year) then they can recover their health and still be profitable from next year.

Further, I have observed that it is the first lactation year that is the problem. The cows are new to the Coolies and have to adjust. The Coolies are new to the cows and have to adjust. And the concept of re-investment just does not exist at all. In Kothakota I have blundered and do not think that just a simple rectifiable mistake has been committed. I now know that participation and taking responsibilities will not happen if I just wish them to. It involves a lot of hard, preparatory work. And I should have listened to the VLW.

RECOMMENDATION:

I suggest that we put Rs 3,75,000 in the bank as a Fixed Deposit. Then a total fixed deposit of Rs 5,00,000 will earn enough interest to offset, in total, the interest payable by the Loanees. In this new system we will be able to be more realistic, specially in granting time to problematic cases.

And I am convinced that ALL cases will be problematic after the first 6 months because of reduced yields.

Simultaneously we can bargain with the bank that the entire amount of Rs 5,00,000 must always, at all times be given out in the form of loans. This present system of the bank releasing another 33 loans after one year if the first 100 Loanees repay properly is something that the Coolies have not fully understood in spite of all our efforts to educate them. And even if they have understood, one year is too far off to excite them and make them participate fully, with interest, in the CSU meetings on the DDP. This is one main reason why the Kothakota CSU allowed these 4 Loanees to slip so badly and neglect reinvestment. But now the whole project can be alive, and 3 cows can be given to 3 new Loanees every month. In this way the DDP can contribute much more effectively to the building up of the mass organisation, and that is our main objective.

At the same time I suggest that we continue to involve Canara Bank in the same way. If we, instead, keep the entire Rs 5,00,000 in the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha running account and give loans, then the seriousness of the project will be lost. I do not believe that we are quite capable of being good money lenders and insist on repayments. Let that responsibility remain with the bank. Already the malicious propaganda that the IRDP loans need not be repaid is leading to a situation of neglect in the villages that frightens me very much.

I urgently request that the Group consider these recommendations and place them before NOVIB when Adrian Saldanha and Jan Naggars visit us tomorrow.

BREEDING

As important as achieving high and constant milk yields and maintaining the health of the animals is the need to get cows to conceive and calve better calves regularly.

21 of the 47 cows in the field are now pregnant after being covered by our bulls. 2 more have been artificially inseminated at the Government Veterinary Hospitals. 9 have calved recently. 14 are not pregnant though it is more than 3 months since they last calved. And 1 will not conceive because her uterus is damaged and we are awaiting a PTD claim from the insurance company.

Our veterinarian is giving top priority to this aspect of our service and I am not too worried on this front.

But we have a negative development to record. 4 bulls were purchased for a total of Rs 15,656. Of these one was bought at a high price from the Ashirvanam Farm, Kengeri, for his sturdy legs and build and also for the 25% Shaiwal blood. He is stationed at Bagepalli and is giving very good service about twice a week. All the cows he has covered have conceived with a single service.

The other were pureblood red Dane bulls from the Hassaraghatta Central Government Farm. We had been advised to introduce Red Dane Bold into our animals to get a sturdy bone structure, but unfortunately 2 of them died. One due to unexplained causes suspected to be brain tumour. The other after a prolonged history of anaemia in spite of our best efforts. This second fellow refused to put on weight and eat properly, and this could have been because of environmental and dietary adjustment problems. We do feel the need to replace at least one of the bulls and put him at Aiavarapalli to service the surrounding cows, though it may not have advisable to go in for pure lines again.

At our central dairy we have produced quite a few bull calves. Only one has matured and been successfully used. Another 2 with estimated yield transmission capacities of 9,200 kgs and 4,800 kgs (but not yet proved) and very beautifully mixed bloodline of Holstein, Red Dane and Jersey with Shaiwal are growing in the villages yet another very promising bull calf had to be rejected when he was 6 months old for health reasons.

In spite of setting up these bull stations I am convinced of the need to introduce exotic bloodlines with very high dam yields. More than just pushing up the peak yields, this is the only way of increasing lactation yields and making the cows hold their yields for prolonged periods. However much the peak yields of native bloodlines is pushed by better management and nutrition, they just cannot be persuaded to hold their yields for prolonged periods.

The quality of the frozen semen supplied by the Government is shameful. And now, with the policy of the NDDB to stabilise bloodlines at 60%, we are heading for a disaster where stock quality and performance is concerned. And there is not much validity in the argument that our villagers cannot maintain good animals. Experience, training, and orientation coupled with good veterinary extension services can make them manage the animals as well as anyone.

For this reason, when we tried to procure a liquid nitrogen container, we failed to get even an old outdated model presently being produced in India.

We contacted NOVIB on 11 July 1984 and Adrian Saldanha offered to get us very good container capable of holding liquid nitrogen for nearly a year (at least 6 months under our condition of weather and use) along with 600 straws of dam yields of over 8,000 Kgs. More important than this high dam yield is the totally exotic quality of the semen, and I look forward very eagerly to begin using these straws on some of our better managed cows in the villages.

BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

The original budget we had submitted to NOVIB and some mistakes mainly because we did not have enough practical experience. We had informed NOVIB on 3 October 1984 and Dr. Sj. Theunis wrote back on 22 October 1984 saying that the requested changes will be considered only by the end of 1985 before sending the third year's transfer.

These adjustments include a totalling mistake of Rs 15,000, over expenditure under Instruments and Medicines of Rs 32,000, increased cost of transporting cows amounting to Rs 3,600, and the unexpected cost of setting up one Centre at Somnathpura and another one in the next weeks at Aachepalli at Rs 10,000. All this Total to Rs 60,600 and the cost of the liq-

uid nitrogen container and straws which Adrian is now bringing will have to be added to this figure (though NOVIB will make the payment directly in the Netherlands).