

The livestock-keepers' choice of the animals, their breeds are guided more by their utility rather than the government's decree. Analysis.

The 20th livestock census by Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying reports overall population rise by 4.6%, amounting to the livestock population to be around 536 million. The statistics reveal the mood of rural economy which has shifted due to change in agricultural infrastructure.

FAVOURABLE ECONOMICS OF MECHANISATION

→ Surveyed report shows that cattle and buffalo occupy more than half of livestock population.

→ Goats and Poultry, sheep has seen more than 10% increase from the 2012 survey period.

→ Status of Indigenous Breeds

1) Overall decline in indigenous breeds indicate that Rashtriya Gokul Mission has not fructified.

2) Exotic breeds preferred over superior milk quality. This is indicative for 6% rate rise in milk yield in India.

3) Further, export rich market of dairy and its products have prevented indigenisation of breeds that offer higher nutritive value.

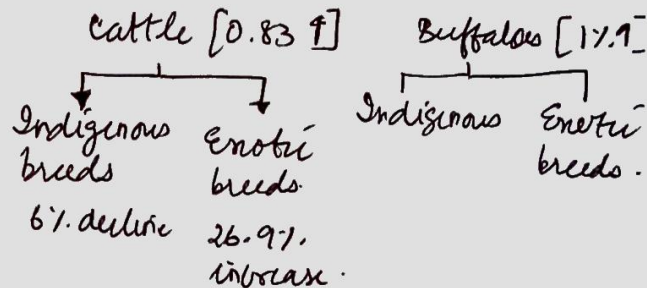
4) Farmers have resorted to crossbreeding techniques under National Buffalo Breeding Programme, which has accounted for 32% increase.

→ Male-female divergence ratio

1) When male cattles have dropped by margin of 20 mn, female cattle have registered 18% growth rate.

2) Ratio has declined from 1:1.8 in 2012 to 1:3.

3) This is attributed to the Pashu Sanjeevani Programme and Artificial insemination techniques under Gokul Gram



4) Female preference for male, reduces the economic worth of bonnies. (2)

5) These are indicative of influences ^{by} to economics of owning livestocks.

→ Meat consumption culture

1) Poultry, goats, sheep registered higher growth rate. Livestocks are exclusively bred for consumption indicate increasing poultry consumption.

2) The ban on cow slaughter in certain states, disturbance in cow vigilantism resulted in stray cattle menace in Punjab region.

→ Further there is an eastward shift in cattle population, with West Bengal replacing Uttar Pradesh as state with largest cattle population.

Thus, the census data reveals that, breed selection, choice of animals are largely dependent on economic variables. Further, the government initiatives have been tweaked according to the livestock needs, that has resulted in de-indigenisation of breeds. Effective research, awareness is required for improving market worth of Indian breeds.