

Community Empowerment through Livestock Development & Credit in Pakistan



Livestock is critical to Pakistan, particularly its rural areas. It provides quality food like milk, meat and eggs and organic fertilizer for crop production. Value added products, like carpets and leather garments, are also significant foreign exchange earners. Millions of rural poor depend on livestock for their livelihood and it is their only means of savings for emergencies. If well integrated into the household economy, it shows more efficient use of family labour and secures a cash income spread over the entire year.

Women dominate livestock management in Pakistan and are involved in almost all aspects of animal health and production. However, women's role in livestock production has been underestimated, undervalued and widely ignored. It is therefore important to develop a sustainable system in which women can benefit from providing primary livestock services in the villages where the animals are located.

UNDP, Nestle Pakistan, Engro Food Pakistan partnered in the project.

This three-year, 6 million US\$ project launched in August 2006 aims to provide enhanced income and employment for 3,600 rural women through livestock skills development, improved livelihoods and food security at the household and community level. They are taught about different small livestock businesses, i.e. home poultry, dairy farming, animal nutrition, beekeeping, milk collection and its management, etc.

Livestock production will be increased by 50% through timely primary animal health services that help reduce livestock morbidity and mortality. The project will reach 5,000 poor livestock-owning households through provision of institutionalized collateral free credit and savings facilities. Collateral free credits with support services for livestock ventures will eventually be made available to some 150,000 households.

As of December 2007, some 850 Lady Livestock Workers (LLWs) had graduated from the trainings developed in partnership with the University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences (UVAS). Sixty percent of these women are earning livelihoods amounting to approximately Rs. 1.2 million per month. On average, Rs. 3,000 per month is being earned by each LLW working in her village.

Lady Livestock Workers are now extending veterinary services in 280 villages and contributing meaningfully to livestock health management. Linkages were also developed between LLWs and diverse key players such as pharmaceutical companies for prompt and sustainable supply of required medicines at a competitive price. Institutional support for the project is manifested by the personal interest and support of the top leadership of the Government. The first batch of LLWs was passed out by the President of Pakistan along with the Governor and Chief Minister of Punjab.

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