

Green Fodder Cultivation Enhanced Dairy Production : KVK Valsad

Tribal farmers of hilly areas of Valsad district are small and marginal. About 69 per cent agriculture is rainfed where paddy is an important crop. Unavailability of green fodder round the year is one of the major constraints. Concentrate mixture feed available in market being costly is not affordable by farmers. Majority of tribal cattle owners fed their cattle with paddy straw which is nutritionally poor roughages. The health of cattle was very poor. Inter-calving period was also very long i.e. 16-18 months. Thus, earning from dairy farming was very low. KVK Valsad introduced perennial multi-cut fodder grass i.e. Co-3 and Co-4 varieties during 2009-10. The salient features of the Co-3 and Co-4 varieties are profuse tillering, non-lodging, high crude protein content, broad green leaves, less water requirement, and less content of oxalate. Thus, it has higher nutritive value. KVK, Valsad motivated farmers for multi-cut perennial fodder grass through organizing a series of extension activities. KVK supplied planting materials of both varieties free of cost. FLD was undertaken on 9.68 ha of land covering 58 villages in the district.

As a result of these efforts initially a few farmers started growing fodder grass on small piece of land but after realizing the importance area under multi-cut fodder variety increased by two folds in subsequent years following farmer-led approach. During last 5 years KVK from its instructional farm supplied more than one lakh tussacks of planting materials of both fodder varieties.

Presently, about 1022 farmers of 138 villages of Valsad district occupy an estimated area of 37 ha under both varieties. Now they are growing fodder crops in systematic manner in small plots. Fodder varieties produced an average yield of 180 t/ha/year. This alternative has not only reduced the cost of milk production by 8-10% but also increased the milk production from 3.5 lit to 5 lit/day/animal. Feeding cattle with balanced diet (with proper combination of dry and green fodder) has good impact on animal health which in turn reduced inter calving period by 2 months (14-16 months). A small intervention by KVK scientists had created remarkable change in the field of dairy enterprise.

Year	Area (ha) covered under demo	No. of villages covered under demo	Expansion of area	
			Area (ha) covered	Villages covered
2009-10	0.48	7	-	-
2010-11	1.20	9	2.80	12
2011-12	2.0	11	4.77	16
2012-13	2.60	14	7.76	24
2013-14	3.40	17	10.80	28
Total	9.68	58	26.13	80

