

Farmers' participation for clean milk production as the foundation for quality milk in formal milk supply chain of Kaski district of Nepal

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Abstract

Although the hygienic quality of milk in Nepal is a critical issue and the quality begins from the farm, the participation of farmers in the production of clean milk at farm is almost negligible in the country. That's why this research was focused to identify the optimal ways for clean milk production by exploring the encouraging factors for farmers' participation to produce clean milk in Kaski district of Nepal. To realize the research's objective, a combination of desk study and field research and intensive discussion among the farmers was performed. The field research was done based on survey of 30 farmers delivering milk to the collection centers of 5 MPCS from 3 VDCs and 1 Municipality of Kaski district of Nepal which is the representative of the country in term of milk supply chain and institutional setting for the milk market in the country. The survey research was supported by two case studies of Safal Milk Supply Scheme and District Milk Cooperative Union Limited (DMCUL) of the district.

It was found from the study that farmers are not practicing the method of clean milk production at farm because majority of the farmers are not aware about it and some of them are not following it because they are not getting any extra bonus for it and hygienic quality is not incorporated in the present milk payment system of the country. Other farmers are not applying it because of not using even simple milk testing procedures (COB test, alcohol test and acidity test) to control the quality of milk at collection level. Although the farmers' practices are the most important entry points of bacterial contamination in the milk chain of the country, lack of chilling facilities in every collection center, only one time (mostly morning) collection of milk, long way transportation of milk in ordinary vehicles, unhygienic handling during processing and distribution of processed products in ordinary vehicles were found important to flourish the bacterial contamination in the milk and milk products.

The study recognized that use of simple milk testing procedures in milk collection centers and introduction of hygienic quality in milk payment system seem useful in improving the quality of milk in the chain in some developing countries. Besides, it was identified that huge investment in training, awareness and distribution of equipment for clean milk production as well as involvement of cooperatives in every step of the milk production chain makes the successful implementation of clean milk production programme in India.

It was also found from this study that training and awareness programme to farmers for clean milk production is the most important encouraging factor for clean milk production. Bonus and penalty in milk payment based on hygienic quality of the milk collected in the collection centers are the second and third

encouraging factors to produce clean milk. Moreover, it was identified from the study that technical advice, easy availability of veterinary services, credit facilities for the farmers and favorable government policy in the sector are some other encouraging factors for clean milk production at farm level.

Training and awareness programme for farmers, introduction of hygienic quality in milk payment system including bonus first and later on penalty, regular testing of milk by using simple tests to control the quality of milk at the collection level, provision to provide some facilities to the farmers for clean milk production and preparation of favorable government policy in dairy sector by increasing farmers' participation is recommended to produce clean milk at farm level. Besides, to achieve the goal of supplying quality milk and milk products to quality conscious consumers, further research is also recommended.