

CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF DAIRY ANIMALS IN MONSOON SEASON

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Introduction

Monsoon is the most important season for the livelihood of the people of an agriculture based country like India. India generally follows South-West monsoon. The period between June to September is considered as monsoon period in India. Seasonal moderate rain is a much needed boon for India. However, many parts of the country face the situation of heavy rain. Most of the areas of the country are prone to heavy rain.

The monsoon also poses special challenges to the care and management of livestock. The heavy rains, high humidity and muddy conditions can affect the health, productivity and overall well-being of livestock. Effective management strategies are essential to ensure the health and productivity of cattle during this time of year.

Care and management of livestock

1. Concentrate feed must be stored in moisture-proof stores to avoid contamination, especially with aflatoxins.
2. **Improved ventilation** was needed which can be met through exhaust fans,

draft fans or other outlet ventilators. Protection from wind and rain would give animals more strength to resist the disease, he added.

3. **Vaccination and deworming:** Vaccination and deworming schedules should be made in advance to undertake deworming and vaccination of major diseases of animals before the monsoon season.

Feeding: With the downpour of rain, seeds which have remained dormant in the soil in hot weather due to lack of moisture, get a chance to sprout and germinate. Mostly the lush green grasses found in monsoon contain low fiber with high moisture. If animals feed on such grasses, nutrient deficiency starts appearing in animals with reduced dry matter intake and watery dung along with a fall in milk fat content. So it is essential to dry the feed/fodder before offering it to animals and maintain an appropriate dry and green fodder ratio (60:40). Animal grazing needs to be avoided as far as possible since there are chances of consumption of poisonous plants by the animal. Larvae on leaves of grasses may

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become a source of infection. Gradual changes in feed need to be done from dry fodder (mostly fed during summer) to mixed green fodder. The animal manger should be about one foot above the ground and 1.5 feet away from the wall as the moisture content of the wall may change feed taste. Prepare feed concentrate only 15 days in advance. Regularly add about 50g mineral mixture to the ration of animal.

During the monsoon season, farmers should follow some practices to provide optimum care for their dairy animals.

- Deworming should be carried out at the beginning of the monsoon season and throughout the season, as worms develop particularly quickly during this time.
- Farmers need to spray parasiticides on their animals frequently to remove ectoparasites and trim any bushes near their shelter to address the problem of ectoparasites.
- Regular vaccination of livestock helps to contain diseases on the dairy farm i.e. Haemorrhagic septicemia (HS), Black quarter (BQ), and Foot and Mouth disease (FMD), the farm must be regularly disinfected with a disinfectant to contain the occurrence of diseases.
- The stalls should be sufficiently large, dry and ventilated with clean air. It is recommended that the shelters are built in an elevated position to avoid waterlogging, which can lead to the occurrence of water-borne diseases.
- Regular hoof inspections and trimming of hoof and the provision of suitable flooring and drainage to minimise the risk of hoof problems in dairy cows, as well as the provision of a balanced ration, which is crucial for hoof health
- Proper cleaning and ventilation of the shed along with disinfection of the udder after milking can help control the incidence of udder problems such as mastitis. Clean cow dung, left overfeed and urine very frequently to prevent animals from udder infections.
- Ensure water sources are protected from contamination and regularly check for signs of waterborne diseases. Frequent cleaning of water troughs will help prevent the growth of harmful pathogens.
- A balanced diet is critical for livestock during the rainy season when access to nutritious feed may be limited due to waterlogged pastures. Supplement the animals' diet with appropriate feed to meet their nutritional requirements. To reduce watery faeces, mix greens with

straw or can be allowed to dry in sunlight for 2-3 hours. Chances of aflatoxicosis can be reduced by avoiding moist feeds or oil cakes, which are the potential sources of fungal toxins.

Conclusion

The rainy season can be challenging for livestock farmers, but with proper care and management of livestock during the rainy season, it can be a rewarding time for growth and productivity. By understanding the impact of the rainy season on livestock, providing adequate housing, nutrition and hoof care, controlling parasites and diseases and setting up drainage systems, farmers can ensure the welfare of their animals and maintain high levels of productivity.

References

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