

New vision for the Camel Breeding in Rajasthan

Category : Animal Husbandry

Introduction

The camel plays a major role in the state's rich culture and heritage. Once the greatest bulwark of desert people against the drought, this animal held a special place in their heart and even symbolised love. A large number of folk songs and stories center around the camel which was also regarded as a symbol of love.

Certainly, the history of the Thar Desert would have taken a different course were it not for the camel that provided transportation and opportunity for trade. Without camels, Jaisalmer could never have developed as a trade centre, and its famous architecture would not be there. The Rajasthan Tourism Department also organizes a Camel Festival and various camel related shows – camel races, camel dancing, camel polo - define the programmes of the Desert Festival in Jaisalmer as well as the Marwar Festival in Jodhpur.



Challenges

The camel is part of the landscape of Rajasthan; the icon of the desert state, part of its cultural identity, and an economically important animal for desert communities. Over the last two decades, the camel population of Rajasthan has seen a drastic decline which shows no sign of levelling out.

This is in contrast to the global population trend: In many countries, especially Africa and Arabia, camels are experiencing an upward trend, mainly due to two factors: their resilience to climate change and the emerging demand for camel dairying. According to the last livestock census of 2012, approximately 80% of India's camels are in Rajasthan. The population of camels in the state dropped from 7.46 lakh in 1992 to 3.25 lakh in 2012.

Initiatives

The camel has been declared as **Rajasthan's state animal**. In order to do justice to this status of the camel and its cultural significance, the animal itself as well as its products once again have to become part of peoples' daily lives.

A Camel Development Scheme has been launched on 2nd October, 2016 by the State Government under **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY)** to create positive economic incentives for the traditional guardians of the camel, especially the Raika, but also the other camel breeding communities. The budget for the first phase was set as Rs.3135 lakh for 4 years.



Looking at the dwindling number of the camels, the state government has come up with a new camel development scheme to encourage camel breeding. A **Camel Development Scheme (Ushtra Vikas Yojana)** has been launched on 2nd October, 2016. Under this scheme, the camel farmer will be paid total Rs.10,000 on each calf born irrespective of any breed of camel, in three instalments. First instalment of Rs.3,000 will be given at the time of birth, second instalment of Rs.3,000 at the age of 9 months and the third instalment of Rs. 4,000 after the age completion of 18 months.

Sr.no.	YEAR	Camel Calf Born	Incentives to camel owners (in lac Rs.)
1	2016-17	8663	443.85
2	2017-18	13368	532.14
	Total	22031	975.99

Camel trypanosomiasis (SURRA) control programme

Surra, mange and worm infestation are common health problems encountered in camels in Rajasthan. These diseases are responsible for the poor health of camels, and if not treated in a timely way, may lead to death. Camel trypanosomiasis (SURRA) is the most important diseases causing the economic losses particularly in the camel rearing areas. The awareness programme and organisation of free veterinary health camps in highly populated area of camels & during the cattle fairs organised by the department of Animal Husbandry. During the camps required medicines for treating the animals are provided free of cost under **Pashudhan Nisulk Arogya Yojana**.

Serological techniques have been used in the diagnosis of trypanosomiasis. Serological tests that prove the immune contact between the host and the parasite are quite useful. Blood sample also collected during the health camp & sent to State/regional disease diagnostic centre for examination.

Sr.no.	Year	No. of camps orgained	No. of animals treated	No. of farmers benefitted
1	2016-17	150	17030	3486
2	2017-18	151	32326	3806
	Total	331	49356	7292

Intensive Training programme for camel breeders

The department of Animal Husbandry has started an awareness and training campaign through National Research Centre on Camel, Bikaner to encourage the camel-rearers for better practices on camel Management, Feeding, Breeding etc. is an effort to check the dwindling numbers of the state animal of Rajasthan. Objective of the training programme have a close interaction with the camel farmers and expose them to the latest scientific advancement in the field of raising livestock, thereby improving their income and their standard of living.

Three Days Residential Intensive Training Programme for camel breeders organised by the National Research Centre on Camel, Bikaner. In the year 2016-17 from 8 districts 138 Camel breeders trained while during the year 2016-17 and 574 Camel breeders from 27 district trained during the year 2017-18.



Impact

Government of Rajasthan has also initiated the “**Bhamashah Pashu Beema Yojana**” under which camel would be covered under life insurance plans. Under this scheme, the people belonging to the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and those who belong to the BPL category will have to deposit only 30 percent of the total premium amount and the rest of the 70 percent amount will be paid by the government. On the other hand, the people belonging to the general category would have to pay 50 percent of the premium amount and the rest amount will be taken care by the government.

Lessons Learnt

The Camel development scheme (Ushtra Vikas Yojana) signals a new approach. To save Rajasthan’s state animal, we need to involve and work with camel keeping communities to combine the best of tradition with technological and institutional innovations.

