



Cow Universe



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articles. We need volunteers who can contribute sketches for the newsletter. We also need volunteers who can just browse the internet in their free time, find good articles on cow and contact the author of the articles on e-mail and ask for their permission to publish them on Cow Universe. We are also looking for volunteers who can offer creative suggestions so that we can better our reach.

Appeal from the Editorial Team:

If there are a lot of you reading this, you might have by now noticed that there was no newsletter released after September 2008. Well, there are reasons. The entire editorial team went on an arduous trek across the Himalayan ranges and apparently had no internet connection to publish the newsletter. On its trek, the team dueled with fire-breathing dragons and thousand head serpents. Now that it has returned victorious from its contacts, the team had decided to revive the newsletter all over again. Ok! That was a bad excuse, but at least much better than saying that the team was busy with other things.

As a matter of fact, the editorial team was plain unhappy with the quality of the newsletter and hence decided to go into a hiatus for a while. Though it has now woken up from its slumber, it is still not happy with the path ahead. The team firmly believes that to make this 'Back with a Bang' attempt a success, it requires the readers to constantly provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. But feedback and suggestions alone does not ensure an improvement in quality, because implementation requires more volunteers to be involved. Hence this is an appeal from the editorial team for those who believe in the cause of the Save Cow campaign to put their hands up and contribute in a definite way.

What is expected of you?

What can you do best is a question you can answer better. If you have good writing skills, we are looking for you. If you are an artist, we need you. If you are good at networking, you are the person we want. Honestly, there is no just one way you can help the cause because there is a way you can contribute with any of your skills. The cause needs everything. We need volunteers who can edit, write and review

A profit based economy that cared less for values is in doldrums. We have disturbed nature to a point from where there may be no return. In a human history that spans millions of years, the maximum damage to nature has been done in the last century or so and the most of the maximum in the last two decades. How could that be possible? Is it a mere coincidence that we shunned a rural based economy that was primarily dependent on cows for an urban based economy driven by carbon spitting machinery? No, we are not against anything that goes in the name of development, but all that we ask for is to take time and think. Is there a way where we can strike a balance and restore sanity on earth, before it is probably too late? Hence we need you to step forward and be a part of this change, not just a victim of change.

The master says, the most dangerous person is the one who stays indifferent. While a supporter encourages you to better yourself, an opponent motivates you to better him. But indifferent people are like those 'can't say opinion holders' in newspaper polls who are of no use to the cause. They are a liability and unfortunately we probably have many of those. The cause needs you, each one of you. Write to us, we want to hear what you have got to say. Now, what are you looking at? Go ahead and write that email to cowuniverse@gmail.com.



Dharma the All pervasive:

For Inclusive Protection of all animals along with Cow, it is important to understand the all pervasiveness of Dharma.

When we talk about saving cows, please don't understand it as saving only cows. It is just a symbolism. We should carry the same feeling towards all birds, animals and the whole of mankind. Because these are what the whole nature is made of and hence it is not just important to save them but also the righteous thing to do. When we understand this we understand further up by default.

no need for protection. Consequently, there is no need to destroy other things for our very living. Then we understand the real essence of 'Live and let live'.

Shree Shree Raghaveshwara Bharatee
Mahaswamiji

When we look things in that perspective...

Nature itself is Dharma. For the eyes to see, for the ears to hear, for the nose to smell, for the sun to shine, for the stars to twinkle, for the wind to blow and the rivers to flow – all this is Dharma, which means, Dharma is not just for us, it is for all the living and non living beings that constitute nature. So everything in this world comes under the defined boundary of Dharma. But within that boundary the state of everything is infinite and hence each of these holds a different scope of work. In that scope, every thing strives to be the best. Hence there is no limit to Dharma.

Today, the meaning of Dharma is used in a very limited sense. We understand Dharma as mere performance of prayer and worship. We have completely forgotten that these are mere practices and not constitute the whole of Dharma. We also take pride in our limited understanding and when someone interferes in our sense of understanding we resist and we fight. And by fighting we have lost the real sense of what should be done with the concept of Dharma.

If everyone and everything thinks just like us, where our life is headed to? If the sun thinks like us and stops shining, clouds stop raining, fire stops heating or cow stops giving milk, what will happen? Brainstorm...

If we think seriously, our understanding of Dharma will expand. Mind will understand realities and we can coexist and hence there is

Effects of Indian cow urine on the egg production and quality

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with 15.51% increase in the treated group. The mean yolk weight was 16.9 ± 0.8 and 18.1 ± 0.7 grams, respectively with 7.21% of increase in the treated group. The averages of albumin weight of control and treated group were 28.9 ± 1.3 and 32.97 ± 1.3 grams, respectively with 14.00% of increase in the treated group. All these results had shown significant differences in egg quality and production from the control. Thus, Indian cow urine can be used in birds to improve health as well as production traits.

Abstract

Recently the cow urine has been granted U.S. patent for its synergistic properties with antibiotics and as bioenhancer. The present investigation was taken up to study the effects of cow urine on the egg production and quality of eggs in the layer birds. 50 layer birds of 20-22 weeks of age were kept under hygienic conditions in Poultry farm and were divided into 2 equal groups. Group I (25 birds) were kept as untreated control while group II (25 birds) was given distilled cow urine of Indian cow (Sahiwalbreed) @1 ml/ bird daily with water for 105 days. Daily egg production, egg weight, egg length and egg width were recorded. At the interval of 15 days eggs were collected from the groups for the study of egg quality trait like albumin index, yolk index, shell thickness, shell weight, albumin length etc. using spherometer, screw gauge, and vernier caliper. The daily averages egg production of control and treated group were observed 10.75 ± 0.58 and 20.25 ± 0.59 , respectively with an increase of 87.67% in the treated group. The daily averages egg weight of control and treated group were observed 51.3 ± 1.95 and 59.5 ± 1.3 grams, respectively, which was increased 16.08% in treated birds. The daily averages shape index of control and treated group were observed 73.52 ± 1.4 and 77.07 ± 1.07 , respectively with 4.82% increase in the treated group. The averages shell thickness were 0.409 ± 0.01 and 0.45 ± 0.007 in control and treated group, respectively with an increase of 10.26% in the treated group. The mean shell weight of control and treated group were 5.8 ± 0.35 and 6.7 ± 0.32 grams, respectively

Cows give fulfillment in life

Upendra Shenoy, Aruna Kumara, V. K. and Anand, A.S.

More than 80% of the rural families in India own cattle, including half of the families who fall below the poverty line. Most of these cattle are of indigenous non-descriptive breeds, considered unproductive by most educated livestock specialists. In spite of various incentives, the cross breeding programmes by the government and various NGO's have only resulted in a limited number of crossbred animals. Why is this? And what do rural people want themselves? KPP, a Compas partner organization in Karnataka, India, has started a support programme for indigenous cattle breeds.

Some 10 years ago, Mr. Purushothama Rao, a farmer expert, inspired a group of farmers in and around the village of Tumari in Karnataka, India to work towards organic farming. Mr. Rao's farm was a living example of the potential of this option, and as a group they exchanged experiences about the transition from conventional to organic farming. In 1996 this group of farmers formed the organization Krishi Prayoga Pariwara (KPP), the Fraternity of Experimenting Organic Farmers. At present, the organisation counts some 5,000 members in 60 villages. The members operate in groups and meet regularly to discuss their findings related to *Grama Vikasa*: holistic development based on organic farming, with a spiritual and cultural orientation.

Enhancing income opportunities

The farmers are supported by two postgraduates in agriculture, who guide them in their experimentation, support marketing of the produce, and maintain links with scientific institutions. Moreover, KPP members revise ancient texts to find practical ideas for testing and improving organic farming techniques, such as seed treatment, pest management, processing, and storage. Several projects have been undertaken over the past years. Apart from promoting organic agriculture and



establishing direct producer-consumer linkages, KPP has worked in several fields to create additional income generating opportunities for the rural families. During the past two years they have worked, for example, on a process for preparing organic *Kumkuma*, which is the bright red powder traditionally applied on the forehead of people. Its production has created an additional income for some 5000 rural women. Other activities include experiments to control the common disease called 'yellow leaf complex' in arecanut, one of the most common cash crops in the area, and supporting youth in vegetable growing as an alternative cash crop. To support the farmers' post-harvest technologies, small machines and equipment have been developed, such as the *amla* seed remover, *amla* flake maker, a juicer and a ginger slicer. The farmers have also decided to work on identifying and revitalizing indigenous cattle breeds with the help of a spiritual leader.

The sacred cow

In India, cows have been treated as sacred - as *Laxmi*, the Goddess of wealth, and as the cosmos in which all gods and goddesses reside - for centuries. The cow is worshipped every day and has a sacred place in family rituals, as the cow's blessings are needed to ensure a happy family life. The cow is called *Kamadhenu*, which means 'the one that gives the desire (or higher fulfilment) in life'. The cattle of India are of *Satwik* character, which indicates a state of self-contentment with little material wealth. It is believed that the soil and the environment is made *Satwik* by cattle, and that living with cattle will lead to an

increased Satwik character of the person, and result in a more holistic society. Indian rural life depends on cattle for both happiness and economy. Cows are not worshipped in vain; within the sacredness of the cow lies an ecological rationale and conservation imperative. Cattle make use of crop waste and uncultivated land, thus providing organic fertilizer and enhancing crop productivity. The cow is also a source of food and leather. All its products, like urine, dung, milk, curd and clarified butter (*ghee*) are used in agriculture and health, as well as in different rituals. Cattle power is also used in transport. And its contribution is strongly linked to the work of women, in feeding and milking the cows, collecting cow dung, and nursing sick cows to health. Women are the food processors in the traditional dairy industry, making curds, ghee and buttermilk. Ghandi once remarked: "*The cow was, in India, the best companion. She was the giver of plenty, the mother of life. Not only did she give milk, but she made agriculture possible.*"

Crossbreeding with Indian cattle

In India there are 26 descriptive indigenous breeds of cattle as well as numerous non-descriptive breeds. They are Zebu cattle of the *Bos indicus* type, which are characterised by a hump on their backs; most breeds also have long horns and extra skin under their neck (dewlap) and between the forelegs (navelflap). This extra skin surface, together with other special characteristics of the skin and hair, indicates their capacity to resist heat and external parasites. Well-known local milk breeds in India are Sahiwal, Gir, Red Sindhi and Rathi. Other known local breeds have different capacities, like extra resistance against heat and external parasites, resistance to diseases, and the ability to thrive and produce under stressful conditions. But, over generations there has been a change in the position of cattle. Increased beef exports have led to a decline not only in livestock numbers, but also in the rich diversity of cattle breeds known for their hardiness, milk production and draught power. This decline of animal wealth is seriously affecting the local economy and rural livelihoods. Because of the increased

exports, the price of cattle has gone up, and there is less dung available for manure and cooking fuel. Moreover, the indigenous cattle breeds have been considered unproductive by western standards, whilst many Indians have been educated to look at cattle from a merely economic point of view. This marked the start of various projects to bring in exotic cattle breeds, and to stimulate cross breeding. Unfortunately, the indigenous milk cattle breeds were not considered for these cross breeding programmes. Instead the Jersey and Holstein Friesian breeds were introduced. These are of the *Bos taurus* type of cattle, hump less and without the skin characteristics which provide resistance to heat and external parasites. This is one of the main reasons why the crossbreeding with these cattle was not successful in India.

Results of crossbreeding

The farmers in KPP were disturbed by the fact that the crossbred cattle were not performing well in their area. These animals require more concentrates and roughage than the indigenous breeds, and often suffer from diseases and disorders, for which qualified veterinarians have to be called in. Poor farmers are unable to cope with the increased costs of maintenance and the dependency on external inputs, such as antibiotics and other chemicals. Moreover, the farmers attach importance to fat percentages in the milk, persistency of production, looks and temperament of the animals, and are not impressed only by high yields. The farmers of KPP concluded that except for a few incidences of success, crossbreeding at large has been not economically viable. This made them decide to look at local cattle breeds afresh. A survey conducted by a KPP team found that, for example, one local breed known as Malnad Gidda can yield between 3 and 5 litres of milk per day, which is comparable to 4 to 6 litres of milk yielded by cross breeds in the KPP project area. Through selection and careful breeding the yields of this breed can be improved. This indicates the potential of improving indigenous breeds in a natural way. The National Dairy Research Institute in Bangalore has expressed its interest to support this programme. KPP also

listed statements of the farmers regarding indigenous cattle: they are more suited to the varying local agroclimatic conditions, feed on local plants, and increase soil fertility. Their milk is rich in vitality and nutrients, and local veterinary practitioners can help the farmers to maintain the health of the cattle. This ensures employment for the local people and preserves bio-diversity.

Working with local breeds

The KPP local cattle breed conservation and improvement project has the following objectives: to study the present-day situation of local cattle breeds, to document traditional veterinary practices and to experiment with them, to revitalize cattle fairs, to upgrade and improve selected local breeds, and to distribute the cattle of the improved local breeds to interested farmers. Moreover, KPP is collecting relevant literature on ethnoveterinary medicine, documenting the role of indigenous cattle in family life, revitalizing the local health traditions based on cow products, and disseminating all information to interested farmers. The findings of this KPP study is documented in a booklet 'Kamadhenu', which describes the characteristics of the four main local cattle breeds of Karnataka State: Amrithmahal, Hallikar, Krishnavalley and Deoni. It also supplies information and includes good pictures of many other Indian cattle breeds. The booklet gives several preparations from Ayurvedic medicine based on cow products, and their effect on human health. Examples are: *Panchagavya*, a combination of five products - urine, dung, milk, curd and ghee - used in cancer treatment, and the cow dung based soap to cure certain skin problems.

Breeding centre

In the project area of KPP a local spiritual leader, Sri Raghaveshwara Bharathi Swamy, guides a cattle conservation and breeding centre situated on the 120 acres of land belonging to the monastery. He is also implementing various other social development programmes for around 15,000 families. KPP has brought animals of various indigenous breeds, selected by a veterinarian and a local cattle middleman, to the monastery. The centre is playing a key role in

the selection, breeding and distribution of local breeds, while also producing a variety of cow-based products for human health. They are supported by experienced Ayurvedic doctors and by a research institute in Nagpur, Maharashtra State. In July 2001, the new cattle shed of the monastery was inaugurated with a ritual to bless the newly arrived cows and to get blessings from the cows in return. KPP will be able to reach more families with the guidance of this spiritual leader, as he is visited by hundreds of disciples every day. With his support the booklet 'Kamadhenu' will reach a large section of the population, and thus enhance the process of reflection on the value of local breeds and cow-based products. Sri Swamy says: "We want to conserve the local breeds, because the cross breeding programmes have harmed this society a lot. The local breeds are disappearing along with the indigenous knowledge attached to them. The cattle grazing land is also disappearing and farmers now depend on others for many things. Here, we have animals of several Indian breeds that are threatened by extinction, like the Punganoor from Andhra Pradesh, the Vechur from Kerala, the Kangayam from Tamil Nadu, and the Krishnavalley from Karnataka. Nature and people want evolution and not revolution. Evolution is a holistic way. For us this is real development."

KPP

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Sri Swamy (right) exchanges views about endogenous development with farmers, KPP staff and visiting guests