

DEDICATION AND INNOVATION OF AI SERVICE PROVIDER- A KEY TO THE SUCCESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGENY TESTING PROGRAM UNDER FIELD CONDITIONS

Punjab Livestock Development Board (PLDB) was formed on 21st June, 2001 to act as a Nodal agency to supplement the efforts of Animal Husbandry Department in all round development of the Livestock & Dairy sector in Punjab. The main activities of PLDB include: Production of frozen semen doses, providing AI services through 2864 veterinary institutions of State AH department and breed development program through Progeny Testing (PT).

Under National Dairy Plan-Phase-I (NDP-I), a PT project for production of High Genetic Merit (HGM) Murrah Buffalo bulls is being implemented in selected Artificial Insemination (AI) institutions of Patiala, Sangrur and Barnala Tehsils in Punjab State. The objectives of the PT project are to produce genetically superior Murrah bulls and to achieve a steady genetic progress in the buffalo population for milk, fat and protein yield and type characters in the villages where PT project is implemented.

Sh. Amandeep Singh is working with Dept. of Animal Husbandry, Govt. of Punjab as a Veterinary Inspector (VI) since 2001. Currently, he is working at Civil Veterinary Dispensary (CVD) Kheri Berna, Dist. Patiala. Apart from providing AI services, he is also responsible for carrying out mass vaccination, deworming, first aid in surrounding seven villages (Kheribarna, Madomajra, Devinagar, Drauli, Tulewal, Gajewas&Chatehra).

Initially, when his institution was included under Murrah PT project (NDP-I), he thought it would be an additional burden on him. He was reluctant to carry out ear tagging of the animals, maintaining data of various activities in the given formats and computerized information system and following other Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Later, when he started interacting with the project officials like Project Coordinator, District Coordinator, Veterinary Officer-PT and Supervisor, he realized that AI is not sufficient for genetic improvement of animals. He was convinced that implementation of a systematic and well-directed breeding program like PT is a pre requisite for genetic improvement in any population. With the help and guidance from the project officials, he took up the challenge and adopted some innovative approaches to implement the project in five villages namely, Kheribarna, Madomajra, Devinagar, Drauli, Tulewal under his jurisdiction.

In the beginning, the biggest problem was to convince the villagers to ear tag their animals for identification. Sh. Amandeep started organizing meetings with the villagers and started explaining them about the project, its objectives, importance of identification of animals through ear tagging, diseases like Brucellosis and its control through vaccination etc. To make the awareness program more effective, he arranged for LCD projector from his own resources and started showing films on NDP-I on a regular basis to villagers. This resulted in tremendous impact on the farmers and resistance towards ear tagging slowly decreased. Though the

acceptability of vaccination was lower initially, farmers slowly started accepting the program.

Initially, as per the official requirement, Sh. Amandeep was extending his services for providing AI in the surrounding villages from 8 AM to 2 PM. However, to cater to increasing demand from the villagers, he began providing services at the farmers' doorstep also.

In the PT project, paper formats have been provided to all AIService Providers to record various field activities. From the beginning, in order to save time spent for filling these formats, Sh. Amandeep Singh designed all formats in his personal Laptop in MS-Excel spreadsheet format. He started recording all data as per specified format in his Laptop and started sending them to VO-PT, Patiala for entering them through "Information Network for Animal Productivity and Health" - (INAPH)- an information network designed by National Dairy Development Board for capturing various transactions of AI, pregnancies, calvings, milk recordings etc. He gets regular feedback on the effectiveness of his service delivery from his project officials. This has made him realize that this has improved his work efficiency. At present he is performing an average of 35 AIs per month, with an authenticated data on conception rate of about 40% which was initially only around 34%.

In order to improve participation of farmers' in the project activities, he also designed Flex boards. Photographs of farmers along with female calves born in their household were displayed in the Veterinary Dispensary.

In addition, he also took initiative to organize a calf rally in Kheri Berna village. His initiative was immediately approved by the Project Coordinator and the VO- PT and the first calf rally under PLDB PT project was organized at Kheri Berna on 11th Nov, 2014. More than 50 PT born female calves along with their owners participated in the calf rally. Incidentally, a team from World Bank, who was visiting the project area also attended the calf rally.

Village level extension meeting at the Vet. Dispensary KheriBarna	Flex board with PT born Calves and Farmers displayed at Dispensary
	

Sh. Amandeep with his innovative approach in delivering services to the farmers and his hard work and dedication in maintaining proper records of AI, PD, Calving follow-up, animal movement etc. has demonstrated that through dedicated and systematic work, complex programmes like PT can be implemented under field

conditions. He has thus set an example for others in the project for effective field implementation of PT project.

PT Calves at the Calf rally at PLDB PT Project	Visit of World Bank Team to the Calf rally organized by PLDB
	

Compiled by Animal Breeding Group, NDDB, Noida and Punjab Livestock Development Board (PLDB), Chandigarh