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## SKILLS OF FARM WOMEN IN SELECTED ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PRACTICES

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### ABSTRACT

Findings of this study revealed that in all the selected animal husbandry activities, majority of the farm women possessed medium level skill. Majority of the respondents belonging to backward caste, joint family, and having cultivation or service as their main family occupation, possessed higher skills in animal husbandry. In total, skills of farm women in animal husbandry were found to be positively and significantly associated with age, family education status, dairy herd size, duration of maintaining livestock unit, mass media exposure, extension agent contact and combined score of mass media exposure plus extension agent contact. Out of all the independent variables, only extension agent contact and duration of maintaining livestock unit were found to exert positive and significant influence over skills of farm women in animal husbandry.

### INTRODUCTION

Women folk have been a major source in the advancement of human civilization. Their contribution towards the development of agricultural and animal husbandry practices cannot be questioned. Although they provide their contribution in these fields it has hardly been noticed. The primary duty of women is to manage the home. In many families about 70 to 80 percent time of the women is utilized in household work. Still they carry out many farm activities like giving feed, fodder and water to animals, bringing grasses and fodder from fields, milking and preparing dairy products etc. It is an established fact that majority of our rural women do not know the scientific way of carrying out these tasks. So it becomes increasingly important that the skills related to these activities of the farm women are measured, so that necessary skill training could be provided to them.

Very limited studies have been conducted by the social scientists on measurement of skills of farmers/farm women through actual performance test. Most of the studies conducted so far in India on the measurement of skills are based on verbal expression or self perceived method. The self perceived method being subjective in nature does not give the correct picture about the ability and competency of a person to perform a particular skill. Keeping the above points in view the present study was taken up to measure the skills of farm women in

animal husbandry activities with the help of available/developed performance test. Skill in the present study was operationalised as the ability to perform an animal husbandry operation accurately with minimum time, energy and at ease.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Mudia village situated in Bithrichainpur block of Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh. For selection of respondents a list of all farm women owning livestock was prepared. From them 10 farm women each of landless, marginal and small farmers category were selected randomly having a total of 30 respondents. The data was collected with the help of structured interview schedule as well as through observation or performance tests. From the list of animal husbandry practices performed by farm women as reported by Agrawal (1987), Prasad *et al.* (1988), the following major animal husbandry practices which involve high skills were selected:

Sl. No.	Activity	Test used
1	Management of milch animal	Developed
2	Preparation of balanced ration for animals	Fulzele (1986)
3	Care and feeding of new born calves	Fulzele (1989)
4	Clean milk production	Jamal (1989)
5	Preparation and feeding of home made concentrate mixture	Jamal (1989)
6	Curd making	Jamal, Kunzru & Sagar (1988)

These six animal husbandry practices cover almost entire spectrum of involvement of farm women, since they have very little role in breeding and health care aspects.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Socio-Personal and Communicational Characteristics of the Farm Women :**  
Majority of the farm women selected as respondents were belonging to middle age group (25-43 years), backward caste, nuclear family with medium family size i.e. having 5-10 family members. Majority of the farm women respondents were either house-wives or daughter in laws and had cultivation as their main family occupation. Almost two third of the respondents were illiterate and had

medium family education status. Majority of the respondents were rearing livestock since 4-17 years. Mass media exposure of the respondents was very low while the level of extension agent contact was medium.

**Skill Level of Farm Women in Animal Husbandry :** Table 1 clearly indicates that majority of the farm women had medium level of skills in all the selected animal husbandry practices. In total, nearly 63% respondents possessed medium skills in animal husbandry, while 20 percent had low skill. Very few respondents had high skills in animal husbandry operations.

**Table 1.** Distribution of farm women according to their skill level in various animal husbandry activities

Sl. No.	Activity	Skill level	No. of respondents n=30	Percent
1	Management of milch animals	Low (0-60.97)	6	20
		Medium (60.98-76.57)	21	70
		High (76.58 & above)	3	10
2	Preparation of balanced ration for animals	Low (0-53.97)	6	20
		Medium (53.98-73.03)	20	66.67
		High (73.04 & above)	4	13.33
3	Care and feeding of new born calves	Low (0-46.07)	4	13.33
		Medium (46.08-66.33)	20	66.67
		High (66.34 & above)	6	20
4	Clean milk production	Low (0-60.88)	4	13.33
		Medium (60.89-78.72)	22	73.34
		High (78.73 & above)	4	13.33
5	Preparation and feeding of home made concentrate mixture	Low (0-62.55)	5	16.67
		Medium (62.56-77.35)	21	70
		High (77.36 & above)	4	13.33
6	Curd making	Low (0-67.12)	3	10
		Medium (67.13-82.86)	24	80
		High (82.87 & above)	3	10
	Overall skill in animal husbandry	Low (0-369.3)	6	20
		Medium (369.4-437.06)	19	63.33
		High (437.07 & above)	5	16.67

**Relationship Between Skills of Farm Women in Animal Husbandry and Some Selected Independent Variables :** A careful perusal of Table 2 clearly shows that age, family education status, dairy herd size, duration of maintaining livestock unit, mass media exposure (MME), extension agent contact (EAC) and information source utilization i.e. (MME+EAC) had a positive and significant relationship with skills of farm women in the selected animal husbandry practices. Family size, educational status and land holding were found to have no significant relationship with skills of farm women in these practices. The results of this table reveals the fact that as a person grows old, he gains experience, which is very essential for improving skills in a particular field. Educated family atmosphere also provides opportunities to farm women for developing their skills. Dairy herd size and duration of maintaining livestock unit also affects the skills of farm women in animal husbandry because as the size of dairy herd and duration of maintaining livestock unit increase, the amount of time devoted to a particular activity also increases. This results in improved skills. Mass media exposure and extension agent contact also help in improving the skills of an individual. This is because as a person is getting more and more exposure to different mass media like TV, radio, exhibition, farmers fair etc., he/she is gaining more knowledge and learning new ways of performing activities, which in turn is helping him/her to improve his/her skills.

Data in Table 3 shows the regression analysis of skills of farm women in animal husbandry activities - a dependent variable with other independent variables. The regression model explained 49% variability of the studied variables. Duration of maintaining livestock unit exerted positive and highly significant influence over the skills of farm women in animal husbandry. The reason is quite obvious, that as an individual is more and more exposed to the activities related to animal husbandry he or she gets practice and experience. These practice and experience keep on increasing with the range of time, resulting in improved skills. Similarly extension agent contact also had positive and significant influence over the skills of farm women. None of the other variable showed any statistically significant contribution towards the skills of farm women in animal husbandry activities.

### CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study establish the fact that farm women of the selected village had medium level of skills in animal husbandry activities. Low level of mass media exposure could be one reason for their medium skill level in animal husbandry activities. Age was found to be an important factor which affected the skills of farm women in animal husbandry enterprise. It was also found that education did not influence the skill level of an individual while the family education status did affect the skills. Duration of maintaining livestock unit and extension agent contact were found to have a positive effect in enhancing the skills of farm women in animal husbandry.

Table 2. Zero-order correlation coefficient between selected independent and dependent variable.

Sl. No.	Independent variable	Dependent variable						
		Management of milch animal	Preparation of balanced ration for animals	Care and feeding of new born calves	Clean milk production	Preparation and feeding of home made concentrate mixture	Curd making	Overall skills in animal husbandry
1	Age	0.08	-0.046	0.023	0.468**	0.473**	0.05	0.388*
2	Family size	-0.037	-0.88	0.03	-0.106	0.073	0.048	0.008
3	Educational status	0.08	0.065	-0.398*	0.12	0.367*	0.1	0.049
4	Family education status	0.397*	0.091	-0.385*	0.375*	0.476*	0.468**	0.383*
5	Dairy herd size	0.07	0.378	-0.394*	0.13	0.499**	0.05	0.398*
6	Duration of maintaining livestock unit	0.694**	0.085	0.487**	0.600**	0.472**	0.620**	0.716**
7	Mass media exposure (MME)	0.189	0.086	0.399*	0.384*	0.487*	-0.392	0.375*
8	Extension agent contact (EAC)	-0.792*	0.470**	0.103	0.486**	0.182	0.478**	0.487**
9	Information source utilization (MME+EAC)	0.175	0.483**	-0.6	0.398*	0.491**	0.18	0.468**
10	Land holding	0.174	0.107	-0.337	-0.029	0.467**	0.398*	0.071

\* Significant at 5% level of probability.

\*\* Significant at 1% level of probability.

Table value of  $r = 0.365$  and  $0.467$  at 5% and 1% level of probability.

Table 3. Regression analysis of skills of farm women in animal husbandry activities -a dependent variable with other independent variables.

Sl. No.	Independent variable	Regression Coefficient (b)	't' value
1	Age	0.844	0.97
2	Family Education status	0.684	1.009
3	Dairy Herd size	0.312	0.319
4	Duration of Maintaining Livestock Unit	0.58	5.250**
5	Extension agent contact (EAC)	1.473	2.450*
6	Mass-media exposure (MME)	0.314	0.514
7	Information source utilization (EAC+MME)	0.586	1.715

\* Significant at 5% level of probability.

\*\* Significant at 1% level of probability.

R<sup>2</sup> value = 49.45%

A careful perusal of findings of the study clearly suggest a need to organise training programme and demonstration in the particular village, to improve skills of farm women in animal husbandry enterprise. The study also focused on the fact that majority of the farm women were illiterate and were unable to utilize a number of mass media like pamphlets, farm publications, news papers etc. Therefore, the first priority of any extension agency should be to make the farm women of this village literate, so that they can utilize the available literature for improving their knowledge as well as skills.

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