

IMPACT OF GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN LIVESTOCK SECTOR

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In the current global COVID-19 pandemic situation, the entire human race is fighting for their lives, kept themselves indoor amid nation wise lockdown, maintaining the prevention strategies as implemented by the government. The novel COVID-19 corona virus, although originated from a wholesale food market in Wuhan city of China (as per retrospective investigation) crossed the international border swiftly and infected peoples from almost all countries across the globe (Shereen *et al.*, 2020). Now we stand in such a situation where the world has seen around 7 million COVID-19 positive cases with a death toll over four lakhs. Apart from huge life loss, the effect of global lockdown has resulted in the severe economic breakdown, job insecurity, poverty and will seriously affect industrial growth. In the livestock sector, the impact of COVID-19 oriented loss may not be quantifiable in real time, but observing the recent scenario, some possibilities can be assumed, which will be presented in the subsequent sections.

Constraints arising due to COVID-19 pandemic in livestock sectors

Although the source of COVID-19 virus is of animal origin, there is lack of strong evidence stating that animal plays a significant role in transmitting the virus to humans. The infection is highly contagious among human and mode of transmission is by respiratory droplets containing virus particles which is being released during coughing, sneezing, talking and by touching contaminated surfaces (Phan *et al.*, 2020; Li *et al.*, 2020; Kampf *et al.*, 2020). But at this point, studies failed to prove such mode of transmission among animals or from animals to humans. Therefore, with the limited information available, it is said that risk of this disease transmission from animals to human is low.

1. Shortage of animal feeds

Due to global lockdown and physical distancing strategies, shortage of labour, as well as supply of raw materials, has been drastically reduced. Due to movement restrictions and transportation difficulties, animal feed companies have reduced total feed production, which could seriously affect the trade flow in the global marketing system. This breakage in the animal feed supply chain could hamper the general health of the animals resulting in reduced efficiency of livestock production.

2. Difficulty in marketing livestock origin products

The immediate effect upon global lockdown was the marketing of livestock products in local, national as well as international market. The serious breakdown of marketing chain was a cumulative effect of labour shortage, partial or complete restriction of transport leading to dumping of the food products, increased production cost and the modified demands of goods by the customers.

The worst affected groups are the small-scale livestock farmers whose daily household income has solely relied upon the currency generated by selling meat, milk or other livestock origin products. Due to less access to the market and less customer support, the poor owners bearing a huge economic loss which is a matter of great concern and needed immediate action to alleviate their problem.

3. Modified customer demand

We are now living in a world where we prefer to purchase a decorated product from a reputed e-commerce company rather than buying the same available in the local market. This scenario became evident amid COVID-19 global lockdown where we felt more secure to purchase any item through e-commerce service while neglecting the local market due to the fear in our subconscious mind of getting exposure from the goods produced marketed in the local area. Despite the fact of maintaining cleanliness, personal hygiene and maintaining the quality production of goods, less demand by the customers has seriously affected the local marketing system. For example, the practice of door step supply of milk has been drastically reduced due to customers fear of contracting the disease while consumption of milk (which is not true as studies could not find any relationship between livestock product or byproduct

consumption and disease occurrence) increasing cost of production with minimal return of the small scale livestock farmers.

Adoptive strategies amid global COVID-19 pandemic scenario

- For nonstop delivery of required raw materials, special permits to be issued from higher authority and dedicated drivers for supplying the goods to be employed.
- Local sourcing and production of animal feed could be a better alternative.
- Local markets to be remained open by maintaining proper social distancing and hygienic measure.
- Local food producers should strictly follow quality measures in the production line.
- Customers should consume and support the locally made food products which will eventually strengthen the economy of small scale and medium scale enterprises.
- Livestock enterprises should be encouraged to start producing products with long shelf lives for long term storage.
- Creating awareness among poor livestock farmers regarding personal hygiene, physical distancing, sanitizations per WHO guidelines.
- Strict biosecurity measures and routine screening of animals for disease identification is a must as the nature of COVID-19 virus has not been fully elucidated and the risk of transmission from human to animals or vice versa cannot be fully neglected.

Conclusions

The global pandemic situation brought by the novel COVID-19 virus has been spreading like fire with no tendency to limit its fatality. World Health Organization and many experts have declared that “The world must learn to live with it”. With no scope for developing an effective vaccine in the near future, we have to come up with some novel strategies that not only will help us in safeguarding human health but also will ensure nations economic growth. By maintaining social distancing and WHO guidelines, we can effectively engage in income generation activities and also can help the needy people, including small scale livestock farmers to support their daily household. This is the fight for our lives, and together we can win against our common enemy COVID- 19.

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