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Popular Article

Conservation of Indigenous Breeds: A Crucial Endeavor for Genetic Diversity and Sustainable Livestock Production

¹Manoj Kumar ²Devender Choudhary ³Ramkumar Saran ⁴Mahendra Singh Meel

¹Phd Scholar, Division of Animal Breeding And Genetics , IVRI Bareilly

²Teaching Associate, Animal Biomedical Waste Disposal Technology Center, RAJUVAS, Bikaner

³Govt Veterinary Officer, Bikaner

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of Veterinary Animal Nutrition, CVAS Navania, RAJUVAS

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Introduction

Indigenous breeds of livestock play a significant role in maintaining genetic diversity, preserving cultural heritage, and ensuring sustainable livestock production. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of conserving these breeds in India. This abstract provides an overview of the rationale, challenges, and strategies associated with the conservation of indigenous breeds.

Indigenous breeds are well adapted to local climatic conditions and possess inherent resistance to diseases and parasites. Their genetic makeup represents a valuable reservoir of unique traits and adaptations that can be utilized for improving livestock productivity and resilience. However, these breeds face numerous challenges such as declining population numbers, crossbreeding with exotic breeds, and changing farming practices.

Different Strategies for Conservation:

The conservation efforts for indigenous breeds encompass a range of strategies. One approach involves establishing breed registries and conserving semen, embryos, and live animals in gene banks. These repositories serve as reservoirs of genetic material for future utilization. Additionally, in-situ conservation involves the maintenance of breeding populations within their natural habitats, often in the form of community-based breeding programs.

The engagement and active participation of farmers, breeders, researchers, and policymakers



are critical for the success of indigenous breed conservation initiatives. Collaborative efforts involve documenting breed characteristics, conducting breed-specific genetic studies, and implementing selective breeding programs to improve economically important traits while preserving breed identity.

Furthermore, promoting the economic viability of indigenous breeds is crucial to incentivize their conservation. This includes establishing niche markets for their products, such as organic meat, milk, and fiber, and promoting eco-tourism based on indigenous livestock breeds. Public awareness campaigns and educational programs are essential for fostering a sense of pride and ownership among local communities, highlighting the cultural and ecological value of these breeds.

Conclusion

The conservation of indigenous breeds in India represents an integral component of sustainable livestock production. By safeguarding genetic diversity and utilizing the unique attributes of these breeds, it is possible to enhance animal welfare, promote food security, and support rural livelihoods. Continued research, investment, and collaboration are necessary to ensure the long-term viability of indigenous breeds and the preservation of India's rich livestock heritage.

