TOPIC: Livestock Management

Meaning of Livestock

Livestock are domesticated animals raised in an agricultural setting to produce commodities such as food, fiber and labor. The enclosure of livestock in pastures and barns is a relatively new development in the history of agriculture. Livestock management is the care and raising of animals for use or for pleasure.

Importance of Livestock

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    1. Livestock are generally raised for profit.
    2. Raising animals (animal husbandry) is a component of modern agriculture. It has been practiced in many cultures since the transition to farming from hunter-gather lifestyles
    3. The meat help with the production of a useful form of dietary protein ad energ**y**
    4. Mammalian livestock can be used as a source of milk, which can in turn easily be processed into other dairy products, such as yogurt, cheese, butter, ice cream etc.
    5. Livestock produce a range of fiber/textiles. For example, sheep and goats produce wool and mohair; cows, deer, and sheep skins can be made into leather; and bones, hooves and horns of livestock can be used.
    6. Manure can be spread on fields to increase crop yields. It serves as fertilizers for the growth of other crops is . The blood and bone of animals are also used as fertilizer**s**
    7. Animals such as horses, donkey, and yaks can be used for mechanical energy. Prior to steam power, livestock were the only available source of non-human labor. They are still used for this purpose in many places of the world, including ploughing fields, transporting goods, and military function
    8. The grazing of livestock is sometimes used as a way to control weeds and undergrowth. Thereby serves as a means for land management

Uses of Livestock

Livestock are used by humans for a variety of purposes, many of which have an economic value. Livestock products include:

Meat

Livestock can be used as meat by humans. Meat is a useful form of dietary protein and energy, it is the edible tissue of the animal carcass. Example, Cattle, Goat, Pig, Poultry Birds e.t.c

Dairy products

Mammalian livestock can be used as a source of milk, which can in turn easily be processed into other dairy products, such as yogurt, cheese, butter, ice cream, kefir, and kumis. Using livestock for this purpose can often yield several times the food energy of slaughtering the animal outright. Example of live stock is Cow.

Land Management

The grazing of livestock is sometimes used as a way to control weeds and undergrowth. For example, in areas prone to wildfires, goats and sheep are set to graze on dry scrub which removes combustible material and reduces the risk of fires.

Fertilizer

Manure can be spread on fields to increase crop yields. This is an important reason why historically, plant and animal domestication have been intimately linked. Manure is also used to make plaster for walls and floors, and can be used as a fuel for fires. The blood and bone of animals are also used as fertilizer. Livestock dung can be used as manure.

Labor

The muscles of animals such as horses, donkeys, and yaks can be used to provide mechanical work. Prior to steam power, livestock were the only available source of nonhuman labor. They are still used in many places of the world to plough fields (drafting), transport goods and people, in military functions, and to power treadmills for grinding grain.

Clothing and Adornment

Livestock produce a range of fiber textiles. For example, domestic sheep and goats produce wool and mohair, respectively; cattle, swine, deer, and sheep skins can be made into leather; livestock bones, hooves and horns can be used to fabricate jewellery, pendants, or headgear.

Conservation

The raising of livestock to conserve a rare breed can be achieved through gene banking and breeding programmes.

Feeding and Nutrition

What animals eat has a major impact on their performance, profitability and quality of the end product. For intensive livestock (pigs, poultry and sheep and cattle in feedlots), cereals, legumes and protein

meals make up the majority of the diet and are formulated to meet diet specifications. For extensive animals, quality of pastures and year-round supply become major issues.

Genetics and Selection

Genetic improvement is a major factor contributing to the profitability of production systems for livestock and poultry. Breeding and selection have resulted in significant economic gains in beef, lamb, wool, milk, pork, egg and chicken production.

Disease control in Livestock

- Quarantine of a new stock
- Inoculation: A vaccine is injected into the animals to make them develop immunity against certain disease e.g rinders pest.
- Proper sanitation through daily cleaning of feeds,regular removal of dropping and waste products, regular disinfection of pen
- Good management of stock through good feedings, rotation grazing

Control of Intermediate Host and Reservoirs

- Limiting the contact between intermediate and final hosts by improvements in management.
- Direct action may be taken to reduce or eliminate intermediate host populations.
- Reduction in the number of snail intermediate host by chemical (molluscides) or biological control (ducks, Maris species of snails).
- Reduction in the number of snail intermediate hosts by drainage, fencing and other management practices.
- Reduction in the number of insect and tick vectors by chemical (insecticides/acaricides), biological control (hymenopterous insects, entomopathogenic fungi and Bacillus thuringiensis) and genetic control (sterile male technique, chromosomal translocation).
- Use of vaccines (Tickgard) at appropriate times may control the vector population.

Destruction of reservoir hosts is important in controlling certain parasites, e.g., rodents for Leishmania and antelopes for African trypanosomes