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Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVK) role in promoting veterinary research in India

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Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), or Farm Science Centers, are an integral part of India's agricultural extension system and play a vital role in promoting and advancing animal husbandry and veterinary practices among farmers. Their work focuses on improving animal health, productivity, and the overall livelihoods of rural communities. KVKs have dedicated Subject Matter Specialists (SMS) for animal husbandry and veterinary science who carry out a range of activities in the following manner.

Training Programs: KVKs organize extensive on-campus and off-campus training for farmers, farm women, and rural youth. These vocational training courses cover various aspects, including scientific animal management, breeding, feeding, disease prevention and treatment, and specific enterprise development like poultry and dairy farming.

Technology Assessment and Demonstration: They conduct on-farm testing (OFT) to assess the location-specific applicability of new technologies and organize frontline demonstrations (FLDs) to showcase the production potential of improved livestock breeds and practices.

Advisory and Consultancy Services: KVK scientists provide expert guidance and problem-solving consultancy services, including diagnostic visits to farms to address specific animal health issues. Telephonic guidance is also a common method of support.

Production and Supply of Quality Inputs: Many KVKs produce and supply quality livestock, poultry breeds (e.g., Swarnadhara backyard poultry), and related bio-products to the farming community.

Awareness Creation: They utilize various extension methods, including field days, farmer fairs (kisan melas), radio talks, and social media platforms, to create awareness about improved technologies and government schemes related to animal husbandry.

Specific Focus Areas

Veterinary Healthcare: Emphasizing disease management, including prevention and control of common diseases like mastitis and tick infestation, and the importance of regular deworming.

Nutrition and Feed Management: Educating farmers on balanced feeding practices, preparation of compound feeds from locally available ingredients, and improved forage production techniques.

Genetic Improvement: Promoting the use of improved breeds for enhanced productivity, including artificial insemination training for dairy management.

Zoonotic Disease Awareness: Informing farmers about diseases transferable between animals and humans and how to prevent them.

Host Institutions

KVKs are typically established under the administrative control of State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), ICAR institutes, or State Veterinary and Animal Sciences Universities (SVASUs). For instance, KVKs specifically focusing on animal sciences might be hosted by institutions like the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS), the Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (GADVASU), or the P.V. Narasimha Rao Telangana Veterinary University (pvnrtvu.ac.in). This structure ensures strong linkages with the latest veterinary research. Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) primarily promote applied veterinary research by acting as a crucial bridge between research institutions (like the Indian Council of Agricultural Research - ICAR and State Agricultural Universities) and local farmers, ensuring that scientific innovations are tested, refined, and applied at the grassroots level.

KVKs fulfill this role through the following key activities

Technology Assessment and Refinement

KVKs conduct on-farm testing (OFT) of new veterinary technologies, livestock breeds, and management practices under real-world, local farming conditions. This helps researchers assess the location-specificity and suitability of innovations and gather crucial feedback from farmers for further modification and refinement of the technology.

Demonstration and Dissemination

They organize frontline demonstrations (FLDs) on farmers' fields to showcase the production potential and effectiveness of proven technologies, such as improved breeding methods (including artificial insemination), balanced feeding practices, and disease control measures. The "seeing is believing" principle encourages wider adoption of these scientific methods.

Capacity Building and Training

A core function of KVKs is to impart need-based, vocational training to farmers, farm women, and rural youth on various aspects of animal husbandry and veterinary healthcare. These hands-on programs cover areas like-

Veterinary Health Care: Disease prevention, vaccination drives, deworming, and diagnostic visits to address animal health issues.

Nutrition Management: Educating farmers on the importance of balanced diets and the use of locally available feed resources.

Breed Improvement: Promoting the use of improved, high-yielding, and disease-resistant livestock and poultry breeds.

Value Addition: Training on dairy processing techniques (e.g., milk processing, cheese making) to enhance income generation.

Knowledge and Resource Centers

KVKs serve as knowledge and resource hubs at the district level, providing farmers with valuable information and inputs. They produce and make available quality technological products, such as improved livestock young ones and bio-agents, and offer advisory services on livestock management, market trends, and government schemes through various means, including mobile advisories and digital portals.

Facilitating Linkages

KVKs act as a vital link between the entire National Agricultural Research System (NARS) and farmers. They facilitate interactions between scientists and farmers (farmer-scientist interactions) and collaborate with line departments,

NGOs, and other development agencies to ensure a holistic approach to rural development and effective implementation of research findings.

In essence, while primary, fundamental research occurs at dedicated institutions, KVKs play a vital, on-the-ground role in translating that research into practical, adoptable, and location-specific solutions in the veterinary and animal husbandry sectors, thereby promoting the application and impact of research findings.

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