



Small Ruminant Marketing in India

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Abstract

Small ruminant production is an important sector in the Indian livestock industry, and marketing plays a vital role in the sustainability of this sector. This article aims to provide an overview of the current status, challenges, and opportunities for small ruminant marketing in India. The article examines the different channels of small ruminant marketing, the role of intermediaries, market information, market infrastructure, and policies. The article also highlights the challenges faced by small ruminant farmers in accessing markets and the opportunities for them to improve their income by adopting modern marketing practices.

Introduction

Small ruminants such as sheep and goats play a significant role in the livelihoods of small and marginal farmers in India. They are a source of income, employment, and nutrition for millions of households in the country. However, small ruminant farmers face several challenges in accessing markets, and the lack of adequate marketing facilities and infrastructure often results in low returns and exploitation by middlemen. Marketing is, therefore, an important aspect of small ruminant production, and the adoption of modern marketing practices can help small ruminant farmers improve their income and livelihoods.

Channels of Small Ruminant Marketing

Small ruminant marketing in India is primarily through two channels, namely, local markets and wholesale markets. Local markets are the primary source of marketing for small ruminant farmers, and the sale is often done through intermediaries. The intermediaries include commission agents, traders, and butchers who play a crucial role in connecting the farmers to the market. The wholesale markets, on the other hand, are mostly located in urban areas and cater to the demand for meat and



dairy products. These markets are regulated by the state government and are equipped with modern facilities for the auction, sale, and storage of small ruminants.

Market Information and Infrastructure

The lack of market information is one of the significant challenges faced by small ruminant farmers in accessing markets. The farmers often do not have access to real-time market prices, market demand, and supply information, which affects their decision-making. The government has established several market information systems to provide farmers with timely and accurate market information. However, the coverage of these systems is limited, and their effectiveness is still a matter of debate. Market infrastructure such as animal markets, auction yards, and slaughterhouses is critical for small ruminant marketing. The government has initiated several schemes to improve market infrastructure, but the progress is slow, and the facilities are often inadequate.

Challenges and Opportunities

Small ruminant marketing in India faces several challenges, including the lack of market information, inadequate market infrastructure, and the dominance of intermediaries. The small ruminant farmers often lack bargaining power and are forced to sell their produce at a lower price. The lack of grading and standardization of small ruminants also affects the marketability of the produce. However, there are also several opportunities for small ruminant farmers to improve their income by adopting modern marketing practices. The adoption of e-marketing, contract farming, and value chain integration can help farmers increase their bargaining power and reduce the influence of intermediaries.

In India, the small ruminant sector plays an important role in the livelihood of rural households. However, despite the potential for growth, there are various constraints to the development of small ruminant markets. Some of these include inadequate market infrastructure, lack of organized marketing channels, and limited access to information about market opportunities. Additionally, there are also issues related to animal health, such as the prevalence of diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease and Peste des Petits Ruminants, which can limit market access.

To overcome these constraints, the government of India has initiated various programs to promote small ruminant marketing. One such program is the Small Ruminant Development Program (SRDP), which aims to provide support for the development of small ruminant markets and increase the income of small farmers. The program provides training and extension services to farmers, helps establish linkages between farmers and markets, and supports the development of market infrastructure.



In addition to government initiatives, there are also private sector players involved in small ruminant marketing in India. These include traders, processors, and exporters, who play an important role in linking farmers with markets and facilitating the movement of animals across different states and regions. However, there are also challenges associated with private sector involvement, such as issues related to market power and price volatility.

Despite these challenges, the small ruminant sector in India has significant potential for growth, particularly with the increasing demand for meat and dairy products. However, to fully realize this potential, there is a need for continued investment in market infrastructure, improved access to information about market opportunities, and greater coordination between government and private sector players.

In conclusion, small ruminant marketing in India is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a range of interventions to overcome the various constraints to growth. While there are government programs and private sector players involved in small ruminant marketing, there is still a need for continued investment and innovation to fully tap into the potential of this important sector. By addressing these challenges, small ruminant farmers in India can increase their incomes and contribute to the development of rural communities.

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