

Basic reasons of failure of silage production in Pakistan

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Introduction

In Pakistan the livestock industry has to face two severe fodder scarcity periods (May-June and October-November) that has a big effect on animal production. Conserving the surplus fodder in the form of silage and using it during shortage periods can avoid these problems. Silage technology was introduced in Pakistan almost two decades ago by different government and international agencies. Despite heavy inputs in terms of time and money, silage production could not get a place in traditional livestock feeding and production systems. The present study was aimed to probe into the question of failure of silage making and feeding in Pakistan.

Materials and methods

150 livestock producing farmers, 50% living in areas under government institutions influence (AUGII) and 50 percent at a distance, in different agricultural communities were selected at random and interviewed for 30 minutes, about silage making, costs, feeding and other allied problems, using a pertested proforma.

Results and discussion

Results of the present study revealed that more than 90% of farmers living in AUGII were aware of silage making and its feeding, whilst only 10% farmers living away (farmers at distance, FAD) have knowledge of this technology (Table 1).

Table 1: Farmers Response about Silage Technology (%)

	Knowledge of silage techn.	Feeding experience	Wants to make	Wants commercially prepared silage
AUGII	90	70	20	60
FAD	10	5	-	20

It was noted that farmers living in AUGII, because they have more knowledge about silage feeding, want to continue with this practice, but due to high production and labor costs are not able to do so. However, they showed a positive response for use of silage if it is commercially made and available at reasonable prices as in the case of poultry rations. The impact of government and other international agencies was restricted near to government institutes and in peri-urban areas.

Table 2: Constraints Related with Silage Making

	Cost	Time	Small area or animal unit	Quality of silage	Cost: Benefit
AUGII	80	60	90	70	80
FAD	NI	80	70	NI	NI

NI: No idea

Small area of land and small animal units were other major factors that affected silage production (Table 2). A majority of the farmers owns only few acres of land (3-5 acres/family) and their major concern was cash crop production; and they owned small animal units comprising 1-2 animals to meet their daily household needs. For such a small unit farmers can easily get fodder from barren lands, roadsides and canal sides or by working in big farmers' fields.

Conclusions

1. High production cost, small land and animal units are major constraints that do not permit farmers to go for silage production.
2. The cost:benefit ratio is not impressive due to small animal units.
3. To reduce the production cost mass scale commercial production of silage should be started.
4. Effective extension work and feedback is required.