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Wildlife Protection

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Thermal stress poses threat to sustainable livestock farming

Navamy Sudhish
KOLLAM

As many districts in Kerala experience a heatwave-like condition with soaring mercury and elusive summer rain, livestock farmers are struggling to protect their animals against thermal stress.

Apart from the routine dip in yield in summer, both small and big ruminants are facing multiple challenges that include low fertility and disease resistance capacity.

In order to quantify the impact of thermal stress on cattle, the Centre for Animal Adaptation to Environment and Climate Change Studies (CAADECCS) under Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University

(KVASU) has started a project.

According to experts, productivity alone should not be a norm for selecting cattle in the context of climate change. "Kerala farmers should go for cattle with higher heat tolerance so that production and reproduction rates will not be impacted by hot and humid conditions. We should identify and conserve a group of animals with resilience indicators," says V. Beena, Professor and implementing officer of the project at CAADECCS.

In Kerala, more than 95% of the cattle are cross-breeds with low thermal tolerance compared with native varieties and as climate becomes harsher, sustaining livestock pro-

duction will be a tough task. Since reproductive cycles will be impacted, there will be delay and difficulty in conceiving, embryonic mortality and absence of heat symptoms. While all these lead to an increase in inter-calving period, the farmer has to suffer considerable economic losses.

In a study conducted by KVASU, rapid breathing, the first symptom of thermal stress, was observed in cross-breed cows when temperature crossed 36 degrees Celsius.

Though goats are comparatively resilient, farmers are finding it difficult to manage commercial goat farms as thermal stress will be very hard in intensive rearing systems.

Dance

3

Song used for record
Bihu performance
hurts Nagas of Assam

Bihu:

It's a Assam's most popular harvest festival, occurs three times a year: Rongali or Bohag Bihu in April, Kongali or Kati Bihu in October, and Bhogali or Magh Bihu in mid-January.

- done by both men and women in groups.
- Bihu is also used to refer to Bihu dance, also known as **Bihu Naas**, and **Bihu folk music, also known as Bihu Geet**.
- To highlight the pomp and gaiety, the dancers are clothed in colourful traditional costumes.
- Group formations, fast **hand movements**, and **brisk footsteps** are all part of the dancing performance.

- The most prominent of the three, the Rongali Bihu, commemorates the spring celebration.
- The Bhogali Bihu, also known as the Magh Bihu, is a harvest festival that includes communal feasts.
- The Kongali Bihu, also known as the Kati Bihu, is a sombre, thrifty event that commemorates a season of scarcity.
- The Bihu dance is supposed to honour and replicate the seasonal mood, celebrating fertility and love, and is performed during the festival in mid-April.

THANK YOU

