



Trends and Potential of Camel Milk in Pakistan

Description

Here are the major ideas I discussed in my discussion at the online seminar held by the Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Bahawalpur, Pakistan, concerning camel milk. Although the topic of the conference was camel udder health, I chose to concentrate my discussion on the state and future of camel milk in Pakistan.

“Amelioration of camel udder health through mastitis vaccine and novel antimicrobial combination”
NRPU-HEC-20-16147

SPEAKERS:



Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mazhar Ayaz
Vice Chancellor CUVAS BWP



Prof. Dr. Aftab Ahmad Anjum
Co-Principal Investigator
Director Institute of Microbiology/
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Dr. Javaria Alam
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Prof. Dr. Raziq Kakar
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Dr. Ali Raza Abbasi
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- Participants shall be awarded certificates.
- Program can be joined online or in person.

Date: 13-05-2024
Time: 09AM:11:00AM
Venue: Vice Chancellor's Secretariat

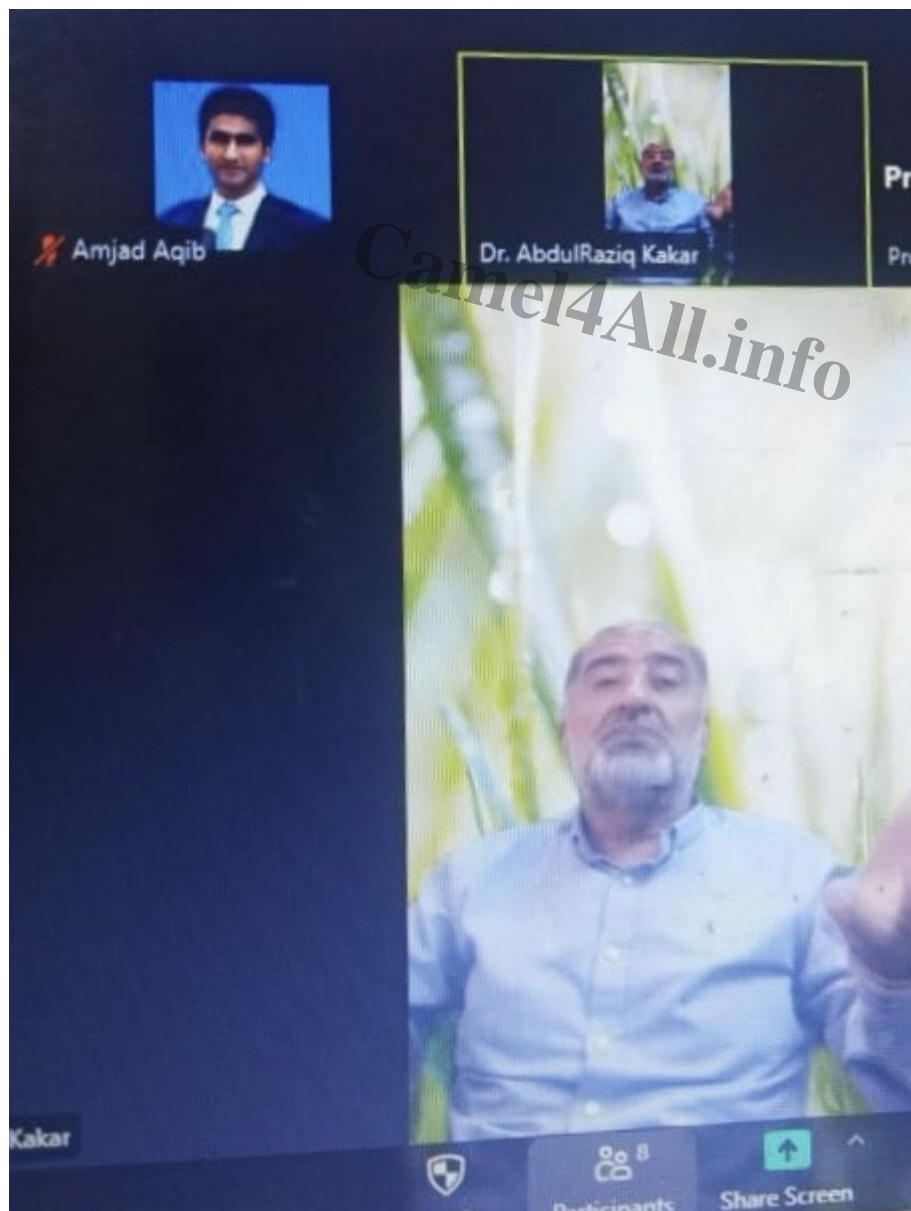
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Poster of the camel conference in Bahawalpur, Pakistan

The main points of my talk

- Pakistan is home to the world's best dairy camels, such as Brela, Kharani, Lassi, Sindhi, and more
- Pakistan has enough camels above one million
- The camelers' communities are still interested in the camel profession
- Pakistani camels enjoy the highest level of welfare and well-being; they are kept by camelers as their family members
- Pakistani camels still have the facility of grazing; they produce very healthy milk enriched with a diversity of phytochemicals

- Awareness about camel milk's therapeutic power is increasing and many people are shifting to camel milk for health reasons
- Some pastoralists move with their lactating camels and sell fresh milk to consumers directly near urban hubs
- The camel milk business is mainly run and regulated by woman pastoralists
- In some parts of the country, families are adding lactating camels to their family livestock; now you can see she-camels in the barn with cows and buffaloes
- Some semi-intensive camel farming (small-scale) is being initiated to produce milk for urban hubs like Karachi and Lahore
- Some small organizations are collecting milk from the pastoralists and selling it to consumers



The author, Dr. Abdul Raziq Kakar, is speaking at the conference

Investment opportunities and sustainable development

- **Camel milk channelization:** milk collected from the cameleers and safely delivered to the consumer. A clear and safe value chain will bring great success to such projects.
- **Export of high-yielding camels instead of live camels:** instead of selling live lactating/dairy animals, it will be the best choice for many reasons to sell the live embryos of the elite camels for dairy purposes. It will generate jobs at the country level and bring foreign exchange in return for genetic resources (**camel embryos**). However, such work must be performed under a policy/regulation to protect the proprietary rights of the **camel herders as the custodians of the genes**. Many farmers in different parts of the world are interested in camel dairy genetics from Pakistan.
- **Camel as a family dairy animal:** We should support and develop the camel as a family dairy animal. It takes little effort and awareness-raising training to convince the livestock keepers to adopt the camel as a family dairy animal. The author has already worked on this idea, and there has already been some success, especially in Balochistan.
- **No to food export policy and corporate farming:** All food items, including camels (live or meat) and camel milk, should not be allowed to be promoted and used as a source of foreign currency earnings. Corporate farming and food exports are not suitable for countries like Pakistan, where ordinary people are facing a food shortage.

Constraints and Challenges

The constraints can be divided into 3 main categories

A. **Shrinking grazing areas;** sadly, this is a very painful fact about the present situation in the country. The demand for land is very high and there are no regulations to protect the grazing rights of the pastoralists. All government projects, conservation parks, corporate farming, land allotments, etc. are materialized on historical grazing lands. There is no policy or organization to protect their rights.

B. **No policy-level support;** There is very little or zero support to the pastoralists, small and medium farmers, especially the camel keepers. The issue is not only the grazing land shrinkage but also the lack of support in **marketing the camel products**.

C. **The camel export:** Camel is exported illegally; it is not recorded and not regularized, and the middleman is earning the major profit, not the farmers. Nobody knows what is going on. This area needs policy support to help in the controlled export of camels, but the profit should go to the cameleers so that the camel profession further flourishes and develops.

D. **Milk Marketing and Channelization:** As mentioned above, there is no support for the cameleers at any level in the country. The pastoralists strive at their capacity and level to sell the camel milk. Support in milk channelization will be a great breakthrough in the camel marketing area. I then witnessed 3 very successful camel milk channelization stories in Mongolia, Ethiopia, and Oman, I was the consultant for the projects.

Conclusion

Due to its exceptional ability to withstand weather-related disasters, camels are the greatest option for food security in the event of climate change. Camels are being used by pastoralists in various areas, particularly in Africa, to replace cattle. The camel is the most valuable livestock in Pakistan, which is in the red zone for climate change and needs to meet its food security goals. All that camel keepers need is policy assistance to bolster their industry and lay the groundwork for a sustainable means of subsistence.

Date Created

May 14, 2024

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