



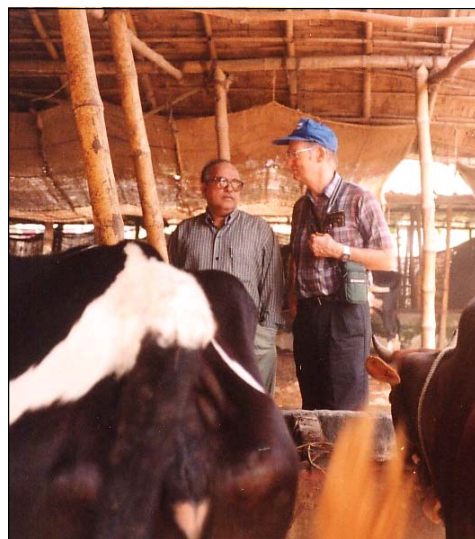
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With Volunteer Assistance
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Some farmers in Bangladesh have increased their dairy income by as much as 45 percent as a result of improved cattle feed and milk quality thanks to technical support provided through USAID's Farmer-to-Farmer Program.

Bangladesh has one of the largest cattle densities in the world with 145 large ruminants/km², compared to 90 for India, 30 for Ethiopia and 20 for Brazil. However, due to poor genetics, the average body weight and output of the estimated 3 million dairy cows are currently the lowest in the world, resulting in massive numbers of thin cows producing little milk.



Volunteer Roy Chapin discusses feeding strategies with a local dairy farmer.

The status of cattle in Bangladesh astounded Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteer Dr. Roy Chapin, a dairy nutritionist, on his first volunteer assignment in 2000. From his years of experience and research, he knew that milk and meat production could be improved with proper feed. Chapin has completed six assignments in Bangladesh to find the best remedy for turning low producing "skinny" cows into high producing "cash" cows. In his quest for a nutritionally-balanced feed for lactating cows, calves and growing heifers, he has worked with two leading feed mills and one of the top-producing dairy farms in the country.

In 2005 and 2006, Chapin worked with the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, the largest NGO in Bangladesh involved in rural development through empowerment of the poor. The organization has livestock enterprise development programs throughout the country and has access to more than 600,000 head of livestock. It play a key role by operating three mills that supply quality feed throughout the country's dairy industry.

"There is so much opportunity to increase milk production and profit in Bangladesh...if farmers will only feed their cows for income rather than subsistence."

- Dr. Roy Chapin, Volunteer

Chapin studied the Rural Advancement Committee's feed formulas and found that cattle were being fed at or slightly above a maintenance level. The focus was on cost of

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feed rather than what the cattle need to thrive and return a maximum profit.

Chapin developed an improved ration, "Chapin Dairy Mix," that adds vitamins and trace minerals to the feed. Initially, the Rural Action Committee formulated and produced an improved ration, Surma Super Feed. Surma costs a little more but enables farmers get much better returns—20-25 percent more milk—which easily offsets the extra cost and also increases farmers' net incomes. Apart from increasing milk yields, Surma also helps increase the body weight resulting in increased meat production and improved reproductive efficiency.

At the time of Chapin's first assignment with BRAC in 2005, the Rural Advancement Committee's plant was producing only 62 metric tons of cattle feed. As a direct result of training over a two-year period, the Dairy Feed Program has undergone significant changes resulting in increased production and subsequent gross value of sales and net incomes. Production volume increased by approximately 25 percent and resulted in a 27-percent increase in sales.

Price of feed is still a deciding factor for farmers, but Surma Super Feed now constitutes 30-35 percent of the total feed produced, and a vigorous marketing campaign hopes to build increased sales.

Good dairy cattle nutrition is resulting in increased incomes for thousands of Rural Action Committee beneficiaries. The nutritional cycle doesn't end with the cattle. Nutrients in manure are building soil productivity and better crop production.



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