

Manual fodder cutters sought to benefit small-scale cattle owning farmers

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Farmers in the district have made an appeal to the Government to distribute manual fodder cutters to benefit farmers owning less than three cows. This would be in addition to the already existing distribution of mechanised fodder cutters at a subsidised rate for the benefit of farmers doing large scale business. Farmers and Animal Husbandry Department (AHD) officials said that 25 per cent of fodder is wasted when it is given to animals for direct feeding.

“This can be reduced to 10 per cent when it is cut into small pieces using a fodder cutter. This would be of much use to farmers when there is drop in the fodder production, due to inadequate rainfall”, they added. An AHD official said that earlier the Government distributed manual fodder cutters to farmers, before giving away mechanised ones a few years ago.

“Mechanised ones are priced at Rs. 17,400 and are given to farmers for Rs. 4,350 at a subsidy of 75 per cent. This year 470 such cutters have been distributed to farmers of this district”, he added.

Statistics available with the AHD here shows that there were as many as 6, 38, 164 milch animals – including 5, 58, 323 cows and 79, 841 buffalos – in addition to oxen in the district when the animal census was conducted in the district about a year ago.

“These animals are owned by about as many as two lakh farmers. It shows that the average per capita cattle head holding to three”, an official said.

“Small scale cattle owners who have one or two milch animals cannot afford to spend more for buying the mechanised fodder cutters that are now given by the Government at a subsidised rate. Mechanised cutters could benefit only farmers with more cattle as they cannot spend much time in manually cutting fodder”, farmer M. Ramesh (37) of Thalaivasal who owns two milch animals said. C. Vaiyapuri, state president of the United Farmers Association of Tamil Nadu, said that manual fodder cutters also have some advantages over the mechanised ones – that run on electricity. “Mechanised fodder cutters run on electricity. They cannot be used when there is power outage during summer. On the other hand, manual ones could be used by farmers even during such situations”, he added.