

Research Highlights

Development Research is high on priority as the effectiveness of the development programme lies in research back up. While there is a continuous flow of improved technologies from institutions engaged in research, there are challenges emerging from the depletion of local natural resources and global climate change. BAIF has been continuously introducing improved, sustainable technologies in the field and identifying problems encountered by farmers. The feedback is the basis for the formulation of new research studies, which are conducted as on-farm trials with the active involvement of farmers. This has been the key to ensuring dynamics in the programme and relevance to the local situation.

The following are the major Research Projects:

- To develop new protocols of progeny testing of sires, which can drastically reduce the time and costs, milk production data from Holstein x Zebu cows were analysed and the impact of simplified milk recording systems were evaluated. With the proposed simplified milk recording protocols, three to four times more bulls could be tested and the evaluation can be completed at an early age.
- An impact study of BAIF's cattle development programme conducted as a doctoral research of Bombay University in the operational areas of Bidri Cooperative Sugar Factory at Mouninagar covering 10 villages in Kagal taluka of Kolhapur revealed that presently, there are over 12,500 crossbreds under milk production, fetching the families over Rs. 15 crores per annum from the sale of milk and Rs. 6.3 crores from the sale of cattle. There are many families maintaining more than 12 cows and earning a net income of Rs. 1.0 lakh per annum. Establishment of biogas plants and adoption of organic farming have been increasing significantly.
- A comprehensive study was conducted to identify the problems and opportunities of small farmers in desert areas of Rajasthan which emphasised the need for conservation of native breeds of cattle, silvipasture management, goat development and dryland horticulture promotion.
- An analysis of value chains of amla, tamarind and kokum revealed that the profit distribution to the farmers was very small unless the number of intermediaries in the chains is reduced by small scale cooperative processing and creating direct market linkages. Hence, marketing of fresh products directly to consumers has added advantages.
- Research on participatory watershed programmes in Madhya Pradesh and Eastern Rajasthan revealed positive impact on conservation of natural resources, rural livelihoods and willingness of the farmers to adopt new technologies and practices, only after ensuring food security.
- BAIF has been identified as a consortia leader to promote sustainable development through transfer of technology in 5 backward districts of Maharashtra covering 5000 families from 139 villages under the World Bank-funded Project of ICAR.
- Based on the studies in strengthening People's Organisations and best practices developed in this process, a handbook on "Working with People's Organisations" has been brought out for professionals engaged in rural development.