

Multi-nutrient Urea Blocks through PTD Process

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PTD is an approach, which involves farmers in developing agricultural technologies that are appropriate to their particular situation. It is a process where farmers as "insider" bring in their knowledge and practical abilities to test technologies. They interact with researchers and extension workers, the "outsiders". The farmer and outside facilitators find space for interaction and are able to identify, develop, test and apply new technologies and practices. PTD seeks to reinforce the existing creativity and experimental capacity of farmers and to help them control the process of generating innovations. In Rod Kohi area of D.I. Khan, the livelihood of rural communities depends on livestock. Livestock plays a direct and indirect role in their survival under harsh and difficult circumstances. The future of the people in this area lies in ensuring that the local communities are enabled to find solutions to their problems on a self-help principle.

The community identified different issues in livestock and out of these ranked diseases and shortage of feed in dry period as most relevant in their situation. The community realized that medication is not the ultimate end to control the diseases in livestock unless the immunity system of the livestock is improved. For this purpose, the available feed for

livestock has to be made nutritive. The expert from the Agriculture University Peshawar suggested trying multi nutrient urea block (MUB) to improve the health and production of the animals. MUB preparation training was imparted to the interest groups in the area followed by experimentations on MUB feeding to the livestock. The farmers reported that animals used MUB with a lot of interest. The farmers reported that the animals using MUB demonstrated less symptoms of mineral deficiency.

The use of MUB showed high relevance for D.I.Khan where farmers cannot avoid feed shortage for animals in dry periods. The MUB served as a supplementary strategy for poorly fed animals who subsisted on poor quality fodder and stall feeding of crop residues. The communities have overcome the mineral deficiencies in their animals through a simple doable method. The use of MUB also resulted in increased milk production. The ingredients used in MUB are locally available and are easily affordable. This experience made farmers think of some other options that could be tried. They always had ideas but they had never been confident to try them. The PTD approach has now inculcated a habit of making experiments which can help them find solutions to their problems at local level. They feel confident and are able to discuss the results of their experiment with other farmers. Many farmers are coming to them for discussion from inside and outside the village.