



FARMER FIELD AND BUSINESS SCHOOLS (FFBS) APPROACH IN DAIRY VALUE CHAIN



Introduction

A Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS) is a participatory extension approach resembling an informal school that empowers farmers to choose production methods through a discovery-based approach.

Establishment of FFBS

Establishment of FFBS involves a participatory process of community mobilization that identifies a group of farmers with similar interests in the dairy value chain. A FFBS can also be formed from an existing dairy farmer group

Membership of FFBS

A membership of size of 25-30 individuals is recommended for an FFBS. This allows active participation from every member during the implementation process.

Classical steps in FFBS

Step 1: Conduct ground working activities

This is the mobilization stage of the FFBS methodology, which involves identifying group facilitators to be trained and community groups to implement a dairy FFBS. A facilitator trainee should have a certificate in the discipline e.g crops manual and technically competent for a farmer, they have to undertake a season long FFBS cycle.

Step 2: Training of facilitators

The facilitators identified during the FFBS ground working phase are trained in the following areas:

- All aspects of dairy production and marketing.

- How to effectively deliver dairy production and marketing topics using non-formal education methods.
- Participatory technology development (PTD) on dairy.
- Non-formal education methods with emphasis on what, when, and how to use non-formal education methods in FFBS.



A session during training of facilitators

Step 3: Establishment and running of FFBS

The FFBS is established through a process of identifying and listing the major challenges that are ranked using pairwise ranking procedure as shown below:

1) List of production challenges

- Poor husbandry practices in dairy (PHPD)
- Use of inferior breed technologies (IBT)
- Poor feeding management (PFM)

2) Pairwise ranking procedure

Each problem is listed on a Table along the first row and column, as shown below. The problems are given abbreviations for ease of fitting them into the table. Within the table, two problems are compared at a time, and results are scored and ranked as shown.

	PHPD	IBT	PFM	Scores	Rank
PHPD		IBT	PFM	0	3
IBT			PFM	1	2
PFM				2	1
PHPD- Poor husbandry practices in dairy; IBT- Use of inferior breed technologies; PFM- Poor feeding management					

The problems within the Table are counted and scores are given, resulting in the ranking of the problems from the greatest to the lowest. In this example, poor feeding management (PFM) is ranked first, justifying the need for participatory technology development (PTD).



Sub-groups involved in problem identification and pairwise ranking

3) Setting participatory technology development designs to address use of low producing breed technology

Participatory technology development is a process of engaging the FFBS to design a learning process around the problem ranked first by identifying opportunities referred to as treatments. The treatments are used to address the problem.

Suggested treatments

Treatment 1 Feeding dairy cow on Napier alone

Treatment 2 Feeding dairy cow on Napier plus desmodium

Treatment 3 Feeding dairy cow on Napier plus commercial supplement

Treatment 4 Farmers practice of feeding dairy cow on natural pastures alone

The treatments are designed in a block shown below

Plot 1 (Cow 1) Napier grass	Plot 2 (Cow 2) Napier + desmodium	Plot 3 (Cow 3) Napier + Commercial supplement	Plot 4 (Cow 4) Natural pastures alone
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4) Livestock Ecosystems Analysis (LESA) on dairy value chain

livestock ecosystem analysis is used to measure the performance of treatments as follows:

LESA PROCESS



Observation of dairy performance



Data collection on dairy parameters



Data presentation to plenary members of FFBS



Data processing analyzing parameters

Step 4: Field days

During the period of running the FFBS, field days are organized, inviting the rest of the farming community to share what the group has learned. One or two field days can be conducted per production cycle. During these field days, FFBS members act as facilitators.

Step 5: Graduation

This activity marks the end of the production cycle for the long FFBS. The farmers, facilitators and the coordinating office usually organize it. During this time, farmers are awarded certificates.

Step 6: Farmer-run FFBS

Graduates of the FFBS now have the knowledge and confidence to run their own FFBS on dairy value chain and therefore they are given an opportunity to run a field school.

Step 7: Follow-up by facilitators

The facilitator will occasionally follow-up on FFBS that have graduated, preferably on a monthly basis. The core facilitators also provide support for ongoing farmer-run FFBS. Farmer field school master trainers will backstop the core facilitators who then train farmers. In case of any challenge, the same channel can be used to address it.

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