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Assessing Contribution of Livestock to the Livelihood of Farmers of Western Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT Animal husbandry has been an integral part of Indian agriculture. It assumes greater significance in India's socio-economic development. Livestock system is known to enhance sustainable livelihoods for farmers. The present study assessed contribution of livestock system to farmers' livelihood in terms of six dimensions. The study was taken up in western Maharashtra covering 5 *taluks* of Satara district and 100 livestock farmers. The percent contribution of livestock to the household income ranged from 18.60 to 33.90 percent. The livestock contributes 34.61g protein, 52.32g fat and 1690.5 mg calcium to the daily diet of the farm household. The average nutrients required to is 42.57 g protein, 64.35 g fat and 2079 mg calcium. Farm yard manure obtained from the livestock annually adds an average of 89.33 kg nitrogen, 44.69 kg phosphorous and 178.76 kg potash to the fields of each farm household. Livestock generated annual employment of 140.79 man- days for adult women and 95.35 mandays for adult men. Twelve percent of the households used livestock for mitigating uncertainties of farming. Sixty-three percent of respondents opined livestock farming is a symbol of higher social status. The study concludes that livestock system contributes economically and socially to enhance sustainable livelihoods.