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## **Session 3. Initiation and implementation of a functional milk recording scheme in countries where it does not yet exist**

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Identification of opportunities and constraints in establishing and maintaining a functional milk recording scheme.

### **Why is a recording activity needed?**

1. To know the actual situation of milk productivity at all levels (herd, village, national).
2. To provide information to farmers for decision-making, management and culling.
3. To provide information to policy-makers for decision-making and planning at national level.

### **Constraints faced (in the countries that do not have recording systems yet).**

1. Buffaloes in general have very low productivity, therefore, the value of the animal is low.
2. Farmers are not aware of the usefulness of animal recording.
3. There are no leading institutions that can initiate a milk recording system.
4. There is a lack of skilled manpower for on-field recording and data collection.
5. There is a lack of expertise to organize a selection scheme (scientists, computer experts, etc.).

### **Proposed solutions**

1. Initiate recording activity in large herds, where farmers will realise the benefits of recording and make use of information for decision-making and planning.
2. Initiate recording activity providing low cost useful information on individual animal: conception, pregnancy, fat percentage.

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## **Discussion**

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3. In the case where the majority are smallholders they see no advantage in receiving management information for individual animals as they know everything about their animals, one should think about providing data at village level to encourage farmers to see their performance in relation to other farmers in the village and improve their own performance adopting the good practises followed by the better performing farmers. Create farmers cooperatives that can initiate and supervise recording activities.
4. Promote importance of recording among key decision-makers in governments of different countries to initiate buffalo recording.
5. Identify research institutions that offer skills and personnel to initiate recording systems on a small-scale in a selected group of farmers.
6. Recording activity can be initiated within an artificial insemination or progeny testing programme.

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## Conclusions

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1. Initiation of recording schemes can be promoted by:
  - the government;
  - farmers' cooperatives;
  - research institutions.
2. In all cases it is necessary to promote awareness on the benefits of recording to all concerned people.
3. Recording could be initiated with medium-size herds.
4. Initially data collection could be restricted to important variables like conception, milk production, fat production, etc.
5. Recording activity can be initiated within an artificial insemination or progeny testing programme.