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CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES: THE CASE OF SELECTED PRIMARY DAIRY COOPERATIVES SOCIETIES IN TIYO DISTRICT, ARSI ZONE OF OROMIA REGION, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

The study conducted with the objectives of analyzing Constraints and Opportunities of dairy cooperatives in Tiyo District of Arsi zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia. Two stage random sampling method and structured interview schedule were employed for the selection of respondents and collecting data from members respectively. 75 members from 4 primary dairy cooperatives were selected at random. 30 participants of Focus Group Discussion were also involved in the study while the preference indices were used to analyze the data. Increasing demand for milk, increase in urban and peri urban population, increase in the trends of milk price, conducive agro ecology for dairy farming, proximity to major towns, and accumulated experience and social capital in dairy farming in the study area were among the opportunities while lack of market access for members' milk, Lack of improved dairy cows, Lack of facilities, shortage and poor quality of animal feeds, Lack of credit, Poorly developed infrastructure, high cost of exotic breeds and feed, members' low attention towards dairy sector, and low commitment and negligence of Cooperative officials in discharging their responsibilities were among constraints identified. All stakeholders should think of better market access for dairy products and there must be a national level dairy industry program like Operation Flood program of India so as to facilitate the enhancement of milk production in the country. Members must assist their respective cooperatives financially as well as in kind through donation of raw milk.

KEYWORDS

constraints, cooperatives, dairy, opportunities.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Ethiopia is one of the largest countries in Africa both in terms of land area (1.1 million km²) and human population (77.4 million) (UNFP, 2005). Agriculture is the basis of the Ethiopian economy. It accounts for about 52 per cent of the GDP and 90 per cent of the total export revenue and employs 85 per cent of the country's labor force. It is the major source of raw material for agro-processing industries and of foreign exchange earnings (IFPRI, 2007). In spite of demonstrated potential to boost agricultural production, sustainable agricultural productivity increase has not been achieved (Eleni et al., 2003). Ethiopian agriculture is characterized by its subsistence nature and ineffective and inefficient agricultural marketing system which are believed to be the major factors for the low growth rate of agricultural GDP (FDRE, 2006).

A significant proportion of the country's livestock is found in Oromia. According to CSA, Statistical Abstract, 2005, Birhanu, et al., 2007, Oromia had about 46% of the country's total livestock population (excluding nomadic areas and urban holdings). In the mentioned year, Oromiya had about 17.2 million cattle, 7 million sheep, 4.8 million Goats, 960,000 horses, 150,000 mules, 1.7 million donkeys and 140,000 camels, 13 million poultry and 2.5 million beehives (excluding nomadic areas and urban holdings). Despite the potential, there are problems of low productivity, low awareness on technologies, marketing, widespread animal diseases, poor feeding system, traditional husbandry practices, etc.

Transforming Ethiopian agriculture from its current subsistence orientation into market oriented production system forms the basis of the agricultural development strategy of the Government of Ethiopia (Berhanu et al., 2006). Ethiopia adopted an Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI) strategy, which initially focused on food crops and natural resources management. Recently, the country has added *market orientation* to this strategy (Eleni et al., 2006). In 1994, the government of Ethiopia expressed renewed interest in collective action to promote greater market participation by small holders (FDRE 1996 and FDRE 1998). It re-affirmed in the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) (FDRE 2002) and the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) (FDRE 2005), in which cooperatives are given a central role in the country's rural development strategy (Bernard, Eleni, Alemayehu, 2007). Cooperatives which are commonly defined as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through jointly owned democratically controlled enterprise" (ICA, 1995) play key role in the poverty reduction and sustainable development of a nation (MOI, 2003). In a subsistence agriculture where smallholders are engaged in uneconomic and fragmented production, the role of cooperatives in improving the agricultural marketing system has been fully recognized. Based on the fundamental principle of "*the future belongs to the organized*" expanding and strengthening of cooperatives is the underlying approach of the government in improving the marketing system (NEPAD, 2005).

Cooperatives in Ethiopia remained to be passive in changing the livelihood of most Ethiopians despite the fact that the legal framework was found back in 1960. Ethiopian cooperative movement has undergone drastic changes and transformation in the past. With all its demerits, it paved the way to the foundation of the modern cooperatives. According to report by FCA (2009), there are 26,128 primary cooperatives with over Birr 1.003 Billion capital and 5.27 million individual memberships. In order to strengthen the bargaining power of primary cooperative societies, 143 cooperative unions having capital Birr 143.6 million have been established (FCA, 2008).

In Oromia Region, the evolution of modern cooperatives emerged during 1987. According to OCPB (2009), there are 8928 primary cooperatives with total membership of 1,619,811 of which 1,405,132 (86.75%) are male and 214,679 (13.25%) are female. The capital and savings of these primary cooperatives is 251,313,508.00 and 116,835,353.00 Birr respectively. There are also 68 different types of cooperative Unions having 1,610 primary cooperatives as membership and 72,284,187.00 Birr capital. Recently, one Farmers cooperative federation with 40 cooperative unions as member affiliates and 20 million birr initial capital has been organized in the region.

All these cooperatives are registered and operating in the foreign and international markets as per proclamations No 147/1998 and its amended proclamation No 402/2004. Moreover, the region has one Cooperative Bank having 27 branches in different parts of the region. The startup capital of the bank was 110 million birr. Currently, it has reached to 155 million birr capital and total asset of more than one billion birr.

For many people, dairy production is the most important income generator. Dairying provides a regular income to farmers in different parts of Ethiopia. Different authors confirmed that the smallholders' dairy package production system is a powerful means of raising farm incomes and welfare (Ahmed et al, 2003). For the marketing and management of dairy, knowledge and members' participation are vital. Given the considerable potential for smallholder income and employment generation from high-value dairy products (Staal, 2001), development of the dairy sector in Ethiopia can contribute significantly to poverty alleviation (Mohamed, et al., 2004). Per capita consumption of milk in Ethiopia is as low as 17 kg per head per year while the average figure for Africa is 26kg/head (Gebre wold et al., 1998). As a matter of fact, the existing excess demand for dairy products in the country is expected to induce rapid growth in the dairy sector. Factors contributing to this excess demand include the rapid population growth, increased urbanization and expected growth in incomes (Mohamed, et al., 2004).

As said by Staal (2001), dairy cooperatives have typically been formed in response to a fundamental farmer problem: the inconvenience of small quantities of milk to market. Milk is perishable which requires special handling to insure quality and shelf life. Holding milk where infrastructure may be lacking can be costly and risky. On the other hand, the rapid delivery of small quantities of milk to market may not be practical or economic; some smallholder producers may market no

more than 1-2 liters of milk on a given day. The practical collection and transport of milk to market therefore usually requires some bulking, and the need for speed and reliability requires good organization of that bulking. As a consequence, there is strong incentive for smallholder producers to try to form collective organizations to meet these needs, which are dairy cooperatives.

There are several reasons why cooperatives fail or succeed, in addition to economic and business factors. A cooperative may fail if it ignoring members' needs and satisfaction, members are a vital part of any cooperative organization and their active participation in and loyalty to a Cooperative's business is integral for the success of the cooperative (Goddard, 2002, cited in Sanjib, 2007). Even though, the potential of dairy cooperatives in contributing to the improvement of the small holders' dairy farmer-member is immense, it is found out that due to lack of knowledge, awareness, and training in marketing of dairy products, they were not able to drive the required benefit from their dairy cooperatives (IPMS, 2005). Thus, the study mainly focuses on analyzing the opportunities and constraints of dairy cooperatives located in Tiyo district of Arsi zone, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The shift from a centrally controlled economy to a market economy in the dairy products sector has inspired the farmers to produce more dairy products each year and to improve dairying practices by using proper inputs. According to Ahmed, et al., (2003), in their recent study concluded that, over the last decade following the political changes in 1993, the dairy sector in Ethiopia has shown considerable progress. The dairy sector in Ethiopia is expected to continue growing over the next one to two decades given the large potential for dairy development in the country, the expected growth in income, increased urbanization, and improved policy environment (Ahmed, et al., 2003). As the market liberalization process continues, the essential in the growth strategy is the role of agriculture, particularly the development of an efficient and flexible dairy products marketing system, for which adequate and active members' participation in dairy marketing is imperative. The means by which these objectives are to be achieved relies on 'transforming poor farmers, both men and women, from producing principally for their own households to producing for the market. The focus is to reorient them towards commercial agriculture in order to have a momentous impact on poverty eradication in the country.

According to Debrah and Birhanu (1991), market access poses a key bottleneck to the expansion of smallholder milk production and processing. Since the present dairy products marketing system in Ethiopia is young, not all market mechanisms are expected to be operational and also demand a profound member's participation in marketing dairy products. Difficult market access restricts opportunities for income generation. Remoteness results in reduced farm-gate prices; increased input costs; and lower returns to labor and capital. This, in turn, reduces incentives to participate in economic transactions and results in subsistent rather than market-oriented production systems. Sparingly populated rural areas, remoteness from towns and high transport costs all pose physical barriers impeding market access. Transaction costs such as lack of information about markets, lack of negotiating skills, and lack of collective organization are other impediments to market access (Halloway et al, 2000).

Moreover, if and when the markets are available, their functioning is constrained by various problems and obstacles: imperfect market information for buying and selling dairy; lack of cash and credit availability to finance short-run inventories and processing operations; insufficient facilities for storage and transportation; no uniform system of common grade standards to facilitate trading at a distance; lack of management skills; and unsuitable legal codes to enforce contracts, lack of knowledge and favorable attitude towards the market, inadequate skill (Mbogoh, et.al, 1994). In addition to this, the members of Ethiopian Orthodox Church abstain from consuming milk and animal products about 150 days per year during the fasting periods. The surplus milk has thus to be converted in to butter and cottage cheese (*Ayib*) (Debrah and Birhanu, 1991). Co-operatives increase the participation of smallholders in fluid milk markets in the Ethiopian highlands (Mohamed et al., 2004). Cooperatives should also be given enough technical and financial support as they are serving as an important market outlet for smallholder producers. The nature of milk production as an agricultural activity, and of milk as an agricultural product, is the main reason for the dominant role played by producer owned co-operatives in milk marketing. The key principles underlying the establishment and operation of marketing co-operatives are to do with bargaining power and economies of scale in activities.

Co-operative marketing evolves because on one side of the trade of milk are many small-scale producers with a product which perishable and costly to transport. On the other side of the market in the local area is a single relatively large buyers or a small number of relatively large buyers who assemble, process, distribute and retail milk. These imbalances of market power have led to producers' co-operatives being the main stay of dairy marketing (Falvey, et al., 1999).

Berhane and Workneh (2003), in their review, indicated the very useful involvement of the government of India at every step of the development for expansion of dairy cooperatives in the country for the success of dairying and suggested that the Anand pattern of dairy development (India) can be emulated at least around the major milk sheds in Ethiopia, for instance around Nazareth (Adama), Dire Dawa, Harar, Bahir Dar, Gondar, Awassa, Jimma and Asella (one of the present study area). As demonstrated in India, dairy marketing cooperatives could provide farmers with continuous milk outlets, and easy access to essential inputs such as artificial insemination (AI), veterinary services and formulated feeds. Dairy cooperatives are supposed to help to trigger a series of positive developments in the sub-sector; hence strengthening the existing group marketing activities and formation of new cooperatives in different parts of the country (Berhane and Workneh, 2003).

Dairy cooperatives contribute a lot especially with regard to linking producers to market and by providing input supply. Among the major constraints for dairy marketing in Ethiopia included availability and costs of feeds, shortage of farm land, discouraging marketing systems, waste disposal problems, lack of improved dairy animals, poor extension and animal health services, and knowledge gap on improved dairy production, processing and marketing. Therefore, knowing the existing opportunities and constraints of the dairy cooperatives becomes important as a take-off point towards making a successful dairy marketing and improved livelihood of members. So far, there is no much empirical evidence as to the constraints and opportunities of dairy cooperatives in the study area. Therefore, this study tries to assess the constraints and opportunities of dairy cooperatives.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the major opportunities of dairy cooperatives in the study area?
2. What are the constraints faced by dairy cooperatives societies?
3. What steps are needed to improve the identified constraints of dairy cooperatives?

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The General objective of the study is to investigate factors influencing dairy cooperatives in *Tiyo district* of Arsi zone of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

This study is conducted with the following specific objectives that are set to help realize the major objective:

1. To assess the major opportunities of dairy cooperatives in the study area;
2. To examine the key constraints of dairy cooperatives;

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

For formulating appropriate strategies, the diagnosis of existing opportunities in dairy marketing and constraints hindering the success towards effective participation is inevitable. Dairy cooperatives, members, and external stakeholders at all levels might use this study as a corner stone for designing and implementing appropriate strategies for effective marketing participation of members and overall improvement in the dairy cooperatives in Tiyo and other district of Arsi zone with similar socio-economic conditions. The research study, by investigating the major constraints that hinder members of dairy cooperatives from participating effectively in marketing of dairy products in Tiyo district will provide realistic basis for planning the appropriate guidelines that enhance further improvement. It would also help those governmental and non-governmental institutions and agencies having interest in dairy cooperatives to know existing opportunities and prevailing constraints.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study employed survey method with field orientation. In essence, precision of facts is better from a census. However, due to financial and time constraints, total coverage of the entire population is not practical and also not necessary. Sampling allows the researcher to study a relatively small number of units representing the whole population (Sarantakos, 1998). For this study, *probability sampling technique* was used.

One of the potential dairy producers' district in Arsi zone is Tiyo, where the first dairy development project was launched and preceded by districts in North Shoa, Oromia Region. So Tiyo is purposively selected for the study. In this study, two stage random *sampling* method was adopted for the selection of the respondents. In the first stage, from the 8 dairy cooperatives found in the district, four dairy cooperatives were selected at random for the study. In the second stage, using random sampling procedure and probability proportionate to size of the population (PPS), 75 members of dairy cooperatives were selected as respondents for the study. In addition, there were 40 management committee members (cooperative officials) in the four selected dairy cooperatives. From each of the four dairy cooperatives, randomly 50% of management committee members were included as respondents of Focus Group Discussion; i.e. 20 (50% of 40) management committee members and 10 key informants (4 village leaders, 4 reputed elders, and 2 marketing experts from both district(woreda) Cooperative promotion office) were also considered as respondents (participants) of FGD. In this study, to determine sample size, different factors were taken into consideration including research cost, time, human resource, accessibility, and availability of transport facilities.

The study used both primary and secondary data to gather the required information for achieving the stipulated objectives. The method of data collection was interview method which has used structured interview schedule. In addition, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted (as per the check list developed for this purpose) with participants (by dividing them into two smaller groups) for getting in-depth information regarding the objectives of study. The Interview Schedule prepared in English was translated to *Afaan Oromo* (local language mostly understood by respondents) before final administration. In this study, descriptive statistical tools were used to analyze the quantitative data. The important statistical measures that were adopted were *percentage and frequencies*. In addition to this likert scale was employed to indicate the order of members' preferences regarding opportunities and constraints.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the major findings of the research and discussions of the major findings are followed

TABLE 3.1: PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS IN SURVEYED DAIRY COOPERATIVES

S/No	variables	options	frequency	percentage
1	sex	male	69	92
		female	6	8
		Total	75	100
2	Age in years	20-25	5	6.67
		26-30	10	13.33
		31-35	21	28
		Above 35	39	52
		Total	75	100
3	Marital status	married	72	96
		single	0	0
		Widowed	3	4
		Total	75	100
4	Educational level	Grade 0-4	4	5.33
		Grade 5-8	24	32
		Grade 9-12	26	34.67
		Above grade 12	3	4
		Total	75	100
5	Experience in the cooperative	Up to 1 year	1	1.33
		1 -3 years	8	10.67
		Above 3 years	66	88
		Total	75	100

Source: Author's Survey, 2014

TABLE 3.2: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

S/No	variables	options	frequency	percentage
1	Number of milking Cows owned	1	47	62.67
		2	15	20
		More than 2	13	17.33
		Total	75	100
2	Annual income from dairy activities	Up to 1000 EBR	4	5.33
		1000-2000 EBR	34	45.33
		2000-3000 EBR	20	29.33
		Above 3000 EBR	17	22.67
		Total	75	100
3	Indebtedness	No debt	73	97.33
		Debt up to 500Birr	2	2.67
		Total	75	100
4	Milk purchased through cooperatives	All milk is not purchased	70	93
		All milk is purchased	5	7
		Total	75	100
5	Availability of market information	Little market info	19	25
		Info is available from different sources	56	75
		Total	75	100
6	Access to credit	No access at all	75	100
		There is access to credit	0	0
		Total	75	100

Source: Author's Survey, 2014

RESULT OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PARTICIPANTS

In all the FGD, the opportunities and constraints raised were summarized as follows:

OPPORTUNITIES PERCEIVED BY PARTICIPANTS OF FDG AND MEMBERS OF THE COOPERATIVES

The major opportunities identified by the survey were ease of entry to the dairy sector, growing trends in urban and peri-urban as well as rural population, increasing demand for milk by the children and younger generation, increased in the trends of milk price, conducive agro ecology in the area for dairy farming, proximity to the major towns including the capital city, Addis Ababa, and accumulated experience and social capital in dairy farming in the area. As a result, all the respondents of the study expect that the dairy industry will become a major player in agricultural development and has further potential to contribute significantly towards increased income and employment. Need and potential for future commercialization and organization of dairy farmers (through cooperative union) for better land utilization and fodder production, enhanced feed access and distribution are also among the existing opportunities identified by the survey.

CONSTRAINTS PERCEIVED BY PARTICIPANTS OF FGD

Low level of raw milk supply, lack of milk collection centers, lack of Access to market for their dairy products, lack or absence of milking cows (due to cease of lactation period of dairy cows and sudden death of cows as a result animal diseases), traditional dairy marketing system (no modern and efficient dairy marketing system), lack of timely and reliable market information and fair price for their dairy products at the farm gate, scattered (non-coordinated) local milk markets, unreliable milk supply, low productivity of local breeds, no milk processing plants, weak transfer of market information, price fluctuation of dairy products, high transaction costs and ever increasing in the price of animal feeds, lack of improved dairy cows and high cost of exotic breeds, shortage of formulated animal feeds and grazing land, lack of animal health posts and clinics, lack of AI(Artificial Insemination)services and access to credit, lack of technicians trained in AI, reluctance of members in delivering milk to their society, failure of members to fulfill their membership obligation like payment of share capital, Poorly developed infrastructure like roads, water supply, and electric power, lack of trained manpower in dairy societies, lack of commitment and negligence of members and Cooperative officials to be avail on society’s regular and special meetings and pass resolutions, lack of strong technical support from Cooperative promotion offices found at different levels, lack of adequate awareness of members about their cooperatives, members lack the sense of ownership of their societies(most dairy cooperative members do not trust their elected officials), lack of adequate training of members, officials, and hired staff of the cooperatives, poor culture of the community with respect to milk consumption, lack of internal control and misuse of the society’s property, lack of business plan in the dairy societies, weak members and other customers treatment by the societies, lack of efficient societies’ resource utilization, and members usually do not consult their family members and experts with respect to dairy marketing.

CONSTRAINTS IN DAIRY MARKETING PERCEIVED BY MEMBERS

As depicted on the table 3.4 below, the major constraints perceived by the members of the Cooperatives include; lack of market access for their dairy products especially during the fasting months, Lack of facilities (cooling, transportation, and storage), lack of improved dairy cows, high cost of exotic breeds, shortage quality feed, ever increasing in the price of animal feeds, lack of access to credit, Poorly developed infrastructure like roads, water supply, and electric power, and low commitment regarding cooperatives affairs, low commitment and negligence of Cooperative officials in discharging their responsibilities. Dairy Cooperative members were asked to rank the constraints that hampered them from effectiveness of their Cooperatives in order of importance. The 10 most important constraints were Lack of market access for members’ milk especially during the fasting months, Lack of improved dairy cows, Lack of facilities (cooling and storage), shortage and poor quality of animal feeds, Lack of credit to expand dairy activities, Poor infrastructures like roads, water supply, and electric power, high cost of exotic breeds, high transaction costs and ever increasing in the price of animal feeds, members’ low attention towards dairy sector, and low commitment and negligence of Cooperatives management committee in discharging their responsibilities.

BRIEF DISCUSSION ON THE TOP FIVE CONSTRAINTS OF DAIRY COOPERATIVES IN THE STUDY AREA

A) LACK OF MARKET ACCESS FOR MEMBERS’ MILK (ESPECIALLY DURING THE FASTING MONTHS)

Most of the survey respondents (more than 86 percent) perceived that lack of market access for members’ milk (especially during the fasting months) is the most challenging constraint that was treating members’ participation in their dairy cooperatives. The situation restricted the Opportunities of dairy farmers from further income generation. This in turn reduced the initiatives of dairy farmers to participate actively in their dairy Cooperatives and related economic transactions. As a result, the dairy farmers in the study area were experiencing subsistent dairy production systems rather than market oriented.

B) LACK OF IMPROVED DAIRY COWS

The second most important constraint perceived by interviewed members and that hinder them from effective participation in their dairy Cooperatives was lack of improved or cross breed dairy cows. Lack of high yielding improved dairy cows was the critical constraint that has been pressurizing the small scale dairy producers (both members and non-members of the dairy cooperatives) in the study area. In addition to the unavailability of high yielding exotic dairy breeds, their associated high purchasing cost is another challenge that has been treating the members of dairy cooperative societies. The participants of FGD (Focus Group Discussion) have mentioned that the unit purchase price of one high yielding exotic dairy cow or heifer has reached to 30,000. Birr (Ethiopian Currency) which is unlikely to be affordable by resource-poor small scale dairy farmers in the study area.

C) LACK OF FACILITIES (COOLING, TRANSPORTATION, AND STORAGE)

As milk is a perishable commodity and its life is shorter than vegetables, availability of effective facilities like coolers, storage, and transportation facilities are vital. However, these facilities were among the bottlenecks of the dairy cooperatives in the surveyed area.

D) SHORTAGE AND POOR QUALITY OF ANIMAL FEEDS

The sampled members of the dairy cooperatives were ranked the Shortage and poor quality of animal feeds as the fourth main constraint in dairy production and marketing More than 60 percent of the respondents replied that they had difficulties in having adequate feeds for their dairy cattle. The constraint is not only the inadequacy of animal feeds, but the available feed in not well formulated and thus of poor in nutritional quality. In connection with this, most of the members had shortage of land to plant/grow high quality animal feeds in their home yard. In addition to this, shortage of grazing land and poor quality of the pastures grown on the land were also predisposing factors to the constraint.

E) LACK OF ACCESS TO CREDIT

It is obvious that credit relaxes the financial constraint of smallholder farmers. It enables the dairy farmers to purchase essential dairy inputs (improved cross breed cows, concentrate feeds, milking utensils, and others) and expansion of their dairy businesses. About 51 percent of the members of the dairy cooperatives have perceived that access to credit was the fifth most important constraint that adversely influenced their effective marketing participation businesses.

TABLE 3.3: SUMMARY OF MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES OF DAIRY COOPERATIVES

S.No	Major opportunities	Most Important (3)	Important (2)	Least Important (1)
1	Growing trends in population	60(80)	10(13.33)	5(6.67)
2	increasing demand for milk	55(73)	17(22.67)	3(4.33)
3	increased in the trends of milk price	50(66.67)	16(21.33)	6(12)
4	conductive agro ecology	47(62.67)	20(26.67)	8(10.66)
5	Ease of entry to the dairy sector	39(52)	27(36)	9(12)
6	Accumulated experience and social capital in dairy farming	33(44)	30(40)	12(16)
7	Need and potential for future commercialization and organization of farmers	29(38.67)	31(41.33)	15(20)

Figures (numbers) in the parenthesis show the percentage (%)

Source: Author’s Survey, 2014.

TABLE 3.4: SUMMARY OF MAJOR CONSTRAINTS OF DAIRY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

S. No	Major Constraints	Most Important (3)	Important (2)	Least Important (1)
1	Lack of market access for members' milk especially during the fasting months	64(85.33)	7(9.33)	4(5.34)
2	Lack of improved dairy cows	65(86.67)	7(9.33)	3(4)
3	Lack of facilities (cooling and storage)	43(57.33)	11(14.67)	21(28)
4	shortage and poor quality of animal feeds	41(54.67)	29(38.67)	5(6.66)
5	Lack of credit to expand dairy activities	38(50.67)	22(29.33)	10(20)
6	Poor infrastructures like roads, water supply, and electric power	35(46.67)	22(29.33)	18(24)
7	high cost of exotic breeds	33(44)	23(30.67)	19(25.33)
8	high transaction costs and ever increasing in the price of animal feeds	33(44)	30(40)	12(16)
9	members' low attention towards dairy sector	30(40)	34(45)	11(15)
10	low commitment and negligence of Cooperatives management committee in discharging their responsibilities	29(38.67)	37(49.33)	9(12)

Figures (numbers) in the parenthesis show the percentage (%)

Source: Author's Survey, 2014.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. CONCLUSION

Growing trends in urban and peri-urban as well as rural population, increasing demand for milk by the children and younger generation, ease of entry to the dairy sector increased in the trends of milk price, conducive agro ecology in the area for dairy farming, proximity to the major towns including the capital city, Addis Ababa, need and potential for future commercialization and organization of farmers and accumulated experience and social capital in dairy farming in the area are among the existing opportunities identified.

Lack of market access for members' milk especially during the fasting months, Lack of improved dairy cows, Lack of facilities (cooling, transportation, and storage), shortage and poor quality of animal feeds, Lack of credit to expand dairy activities, Poorly developed infrastructure like roads, water supply, and electric power, high cost of exotic breeds, high transaction costs and ever increasing in the price of animal feeds, members' low attention towards dairy sector, and low commitment and negligence of Cooperative officials in discharging their responsibilities were among the main constraints perceived by members of dairy cooperatives and participants of FGD.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the finding the following recommendations were drawn:

- The dairy stakeholders (members, cooperatives, Government, and NGOs) should think of better dairy products market access and establishment of milk processing plant at dairy cooperative union level
- Provision of high yielding improved exotic dairy cows at fair price to the farmers
- The dairy cooperatives must be fully capacitated with coolers, storage, and transportation facilities
- Provision of better quality feeds at reasonable price (from the cheap sources) and launching programs for fodder development
- There should be access to credit especially for small holder farmers
- Improving the status of infrastructures like road, water supply, and hydroelectric power
- Enhancing the formation of dairy unions as well as establishment of animal feed processing factory so as to obtain the economies of scale (bargaining power.)
- Continuous education and training for members, cooperative officials, and hired staff to improve their awareness about the dairy sector alongside the follow up and control of the activities of cooperative
- Management committee of the cooperatives should be dedicated in discharging their responsibility and members must support their cooperative though donation of raw milk to tackle financial limitation.
- The government (both federal and regional) should develop the strategy to secure adequate amount of credit facilities to small scale resource poor dairy farmers at fair interest cost and convenient terms of payment.

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