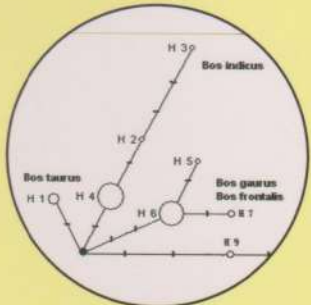


Strategies for Propagation and Augmenting Productivity of Mithun in North Eastern Hill Region



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Preface

The North Eastern Region of India comprising of the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura has a total geographical area of 18.37 million ha of which about 55% is under forest cover. This region is a well recognized biodiversity hotspot. The region belongs to the Indo-Burma Hotspot which ranks the 6th among the 25 biodiversity hotspots of the world. This region is blessed with a numerous varieties of flora and fauna and is home to a vibrant bio-diversity of great magnitude.

Mithun (*Bos frontalis*), a unique bovine species are found only in four (Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram) out of eight North East States and play a unique role in terms of social customs among the mostly tribal inhabitants of these hilly terrains. This animals though domesticated are still reared in the forests in free-range system under traditional practices with almost no human input except occasional salt lick. This animal is raised as community herd in a designated area specified by the village society to rear this animal. Due to gradual denudation of forest, the normal habitat is declining and thereby brining in conflict between Mithun rearers and non-rearers. At the same time, changing social practices among the tribal population who are the custodians of this unique bovines, are responsible for somewhat decreasing importance of Mithun among the younger generation of the society over the years and hereby comes the need for conservation of this unique species. Even if the meat, milk and hides of this animal are very high quality, the farmers generally use this animal only for meat purpose.

Every efforts were made to include various research information available on Mithuns at national and international level in this book. Our valued contributors were encouraged to come out with a few viable strategies for propagation and augmenting productivity of Mithuns which was the successful outcome of an International Brain Storming Session. If this book proves to be helpful and serves the Institute, community, individual researchers or for that matters anybody else, then the editorial efforts to put in all the information in this book would be worthwhile. We acknowledge our valued contributors of this book who are working with the ultimate aim of genetic improvement and conservation of this animal for sustainable development preserving the local ethos and culture of Mithun rearing tribes. We also acknowledge the financial assistance from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dimapur with gratitude for printing of this book. We sincerely believe that this book will illustrate the theme for which this is meant.

Date: 14 February 2012

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This book is the outcome of an International Brain Storming Session entitled *Strategies for Propagation and Augmenting Productivity of Mithun in North Eastern Hill Region* held in National Research Centre on Mithun (ICAR), Nagaland, India on 12 January, 2012.

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