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## I

Calf plays an important role in the development and profitability of a dairy farm and dairy farmers, as future of dairy herd solely depends on the successful raising of the young calves. Healthy calves are not only essential for sustenance of dairy farm but also necessary for preserving the good quality germ plasm. Calf mortality is a major concern at farmer level as well as at organized farm. Under the jurisdiction of BIRD, A.P. runs five Cattle Development Centres (CDC) in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh total 1132 buffalo calves (Male & female) were born during two years period (April 2010-March 2012) and it was noticed that 73.41 percent calves were died within 1 to 5 months of their age due to different reasons. This alarming situation attracted the attention and to assess the causes of calf mortality present study was planned.

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Data generated through survey of 533 farmer families maintaining 2,897 buffalo animals from 43 villages spread over 6 tahsils in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh formed the basis for this study. Questionnaire developed for collecting information from farmer families were field tested before use. Researchers encouraged farmers to narrate their personal experiences about rearing of buffaloes and special to new born calves instead answering yes or no type questions and qualitative information so generated was quantified using scoring method before tabulation. The herd structure and composition was known by grouping all the animals under study as buffalo calves below one year, buffalo animals of 1 to 3 years, female under milking, dry and heifers and buffalo males used for breeding or agriculture purpose.

The data collected was tabulated, grouped and analyzed using standard statistical methods.

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The average village herd size per farmer was observed to be  $5.44 \pm 0.15$  (Table 1). The comparable herd size ( $5.08 \pm 0.08$ ) was recorded by Gokhale and Bhagat [1] for crossbred cattle in Maharashtra state. Mean herd size in K.Y.Gudem and Polavaram blocks were larger ( $6.15 \pm 0.29$  &  $6.14 \pm 0.24$ ), followed by Buttai Gudem ( $5.00 \pm 0.71$ ) block and Jangareddi Gudem ( $4.93 \pm 0.21$ ) block, while herd size for Jeelugumilli and Kamavarapukota was  $3.70 \pm 0.46$  and  $3.43 \pm 0.50$ , respectively. Out of total 2,798 buffalo animals which were studied, 62.79 percent animals were she buffaloes (in milk, dry & heifers), 24.92 percent calves below 1 year, 11.22 percent buffaloes of 1 to 3 years age and 1.07 percent buffalo males (breeding & agriculture work purpose).

## C w

The information on management practices followed for buffalo calves was compiled in table 2. The information revealed that almost all buffalo owners' (99.62%) told that buffalo calves died in their herd. Further information in this context noticed that 33.40 per cent owners' calves were died due to pneumonia, 30.96 per cent owners' calves were died suffering due to diarrhea, Khan et al. [2] reported in Pashavar city

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