

## **International Buffalo Symposium 2017: Partnerships**

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Honorable Vice Chancellor Dr. I. P. Dhakal, dignitaries at the Dias and colleagues and friends from near and far in this continents and across the globe.

It gives me tremendous pleasure to be amongst the august body of eminent scientists and researchers gathered in this very beautiful Chitwan where I spent my adulthood as a young lecturer at the then Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science (IAAS).Iam happy to be back. . On behalf of Michigan State University, I congratulate the conference organizing committee for putting together such an important Symposium in very short time. We are proud to join hands in this important initiative.

Michigan State University (MSU) has a long history of engagement in Nepal. In mid-seventies, MSU collaboration with the then Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science (IAAS) in its institutional capacity building with USAID assistance. Since the establishment of Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) in 2010 MSU has been collaborating in various areas of capacity building. In 2012, MSU jointly with AFU, Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC) and Department of Livestock Services (DLS) received funding for a project entitled “**Enhancing Nutrition and Productivity of Buffaloes to Mitigate Potential Impact of Climate Change in Nepal**” through USAID LCC CRSP Program managed by Colorado State university that was completed in 2015. This collaboration brought the scientists working in various aspects of improving production and productivity of buffaloes through series of meetings and review and training workshops. The idea of convening a conference to bring together the Nepalese scientists and researchers working in buffaloes in discussed in East Lansing during the visit of honorable VC Dr. Dhakal and Dr. Nab Raj Devkota Director of research, AFU (Co-PI of the project) in April 2016. Rest is history. The symposium organizing committee has made great arrangements for this important international gathering of scientists from across the globe. Congratulations!!!

Dean Dr. Thapaliya, has highlighted the importance and timeliness of this symposium. Dr. Bhuminand Devkota, Director PG Program hasgiven the details of the proceedings for this important 3 days of deliberations. Importance of buffaloes in the economies of South Asian countries is well recognized, especially for the smallholder livestock farmers. The theme of the conference “**Increasing Production and Productivity of buffaloes for Food Security and Economic Growth**” is cohesive with the objectives outlined in the proceedings and the needs of smallholder buffalo farmers.

Many papers will be presented highlighting the experiences in efforts to address the problems faced by buffalo farmers and opportunities to mitigate those problems. Nepal has tremendous resources in buffalo germplasm. There are three important indigenous breeds of buffaloes in Nepal namely; Lime, Parkote and Gaddhi. These breeds are well adaptive in the region with disease resistant capacity and they poses extraordinary ability to convert less nutritious diet into most important source of meat and

milk. Their genetic improvement work may provide ample opportunity to strengthen the productive performance and thus AFU, in collaboration with NARC, DLS and international organizations in the region could help improve its production and productivity.

Buffalo in the region is under threat due to over exploitation; from both milk and meat consumption. Due to its nature of slow growth, and fluctuation in population, serious attention is needed to assure availability of replacement stocks in timely manner. In this regard, Nepal has three major buffalo research and development centers (Lampatan – DLS, Tarahara – NARC and Rampur – AFU). To address these issues and concerted effort to improve production and productivity of buffalos we need a strong research networking that could help develop technologies appropriate for the region. In this regard, AFU has developed strong linkages in terms of research network inside the country and also internationally. Considering large pool of genetically pure Murrah breed herd at AFU, research collaboration to develop research projects would be meaningful for research focused on issues related to buffalo production.

Chitwan has become a very important hub for dairy production in the country. To train researchers and trainers in buffalo research and development, AFU could initiate **Center of Excellence in “Buffalo Research, Training and Outreach”**, with close collaboration with NARC and DLS, much research and development work can be accomplished for the benefits of smallholder buffalo farmers of the region. This gathering is very important and special as the conference recommendations that we propose will be road map to establish such a research hub in Nepal.

Thank you,

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