

PROCESS OF SOCIALIZATION IN FARM ANIMALS

LPM-609 (Unit-III)

Lecture-1



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Process of Socialization in Farm Animals

- First social relationships are formed in every species of social animal early in the life.
- Normally social attachments are made among the parents and other members of its own species.
- May also be formed with human beings and members of other species.
- The process of forming a primary social relationship is very important in domestication of mammals and birds.

1. Socialization in Birds: Imprinting

- Generally hand-reared birds (**wild and domestic geese**) become attached to human beings and respond to them as they might normally do to their own species and even giving mating reactions.
- The hand-reared birds still react to their own species, but prefer their human foster parents.
- The social bonds are formed so rapidly is called the process "**imprinting**".

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- The same phenomenon occurs in domestic geese, ducks, chickens and turkeys.
 - If a newly hatched birds is exposed only to human beings during the first 2-3 days of life, it will become firmly attached to them in spite of subsequent opportunities to form attachments with its own species.
 - It will also become attached to moving models or even motionless objects to which it is exposed at this time.

2. Socialization in Domestic Mammals

- ▶ Mammals show the same tendency early in life to form attachments to their caretakers and associates, whether they belong to the same or another species.
- ▶ In precocious animals (sheep), this takes place within the first 10 days of life.
- ▶ In does (born in an immature state), the formation of primary social relationship begins late at 3 weeks of age, reaches its peak at 5-7 weeks and declines slowly thereafter.
- ▶ The capacity to form social relationships never entirely disappears, but is limited by the development of other behaviour patterns in both the young animal and its parents.

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- Social mammals will also form attachments to animals other than man.
 - Young lambs become attached to dogs and dogs to rabbits.
 - Great practical importance to persons who handle and breed domestic animals.
 - Taking an animal away from its kind at an early age and hand-rearing it has the effect of transferring all its social relationships to human beings, which results into difficulty to use as a breeder.
 - Its care of young may also be disturbed, as sometimes happens in sheep raised on the bottle.

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- ▶ Contact with and handling of young animals at the sensitive age will make them much more amenable to later human handling.
 - ▶ The young of most species of mammals have the capacity to form relationships simultaneously with their own species and with human handlers.
 - ▶ If the handler postpones the attempt to form a social relationship to a later age, the usual result is a permanently timid animal.
 - ▶ Horses, which have been trained only as adults, are wilder and much less tractable than those with which human contacts have been established in early life.

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- Accompanying the process of socialization, young animals also become attached to their physical surroundings.
 - They become greatly disturbed, when (as older animals) they are taken away from a familiar environment.
 - Tendency to form attachments seems to be largely an **internal process** which takes place at the proper time in development, irrespective of the kind of external stimulation the animal receives.
 - The time at which socialization or imprinting normally takes place is a **critical period** in the life of an individual.
 - Experience at that time determines the individuals which will be its close social relatives and by extension determines its behaviour towards similar individuals in later life.



THANKS

