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# Poda Thurupu – Telangana's first Indigenous Cattle Breed

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The Poda Turupu Cattle (also known as Thurupu Cattle) are an indigenous breed found in the state of Telangana, particularly among rural and tribal communities. These cattle are well-adapted to the regions semi-arid and hot climatic conditions, making them an integral part of traditional farming and livestock management in the state. The name "Thurupu" is derived from the Telugu word for "East," and the cattle are primarily used for draught purposes, especially in agricultural activities. They are commonly known as Thurpu Edlu in western Telangana. Local communities identify the cattle breed as Poda Edlu. Poda locally means spotted/ speckled/blotched.

The breed is recognized by National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) in the year 2020 and also by Telangana as its first officially recognized indigenous cattle breed. The breed is endemic to areas in and around Amrabad, in the Nallamala forest area of Nagar Kurnool district of Telangana state, which is considered as the breeding tract and includes Amrabad, Achampet, Lingala and Padra mandals.

**Key Characteristics of Thurupu Cattle:**

1. **Draught Power:**
   - Thurupu cattle are primarily valued for their **draught power**, making them highly useful for plowing fields, transporting goods, and other farm related activities. They are known

for their endurance and strength, which is particularly useful in regions with challenging terrain and less mechanized farming.

2. **Physical Appearance:** The breed is unique in appearance and easily recognizable with blotches all over the body.
    - **Size:** Thurupu cattle are generally medium-sized animals with compact body.
    - **Body Color:** Their coat color can vary, but they are commonly light brown, grey, or white. The typical coat color is white with brown patches or red/brown color with white patches. Majority of patches are seen on the lateral sides of the body. The males often have a more muscular build, while the females are lighter and smaller.
    - **Horns:** They have short to medium-sized horns, which curve slightly upwards and are often used as a distinguishing feature of the breed. Forehead is convex with deep groove at the centre in majority of animals.
3. **Adaptability:**
    - **Heat Tolerance:** These cattle are well-adapted to the hot, dry climate of Telangana and can thrive in low-nutrient environments. They have a high level of tolerance to extreme heat and can survive on sparse grazing, which is a key advantage in the region's semi-arid conditions.
    - **Drought Resistance:** Due to their resilience, Thurupu cattle can survive periods of drought and food scarcity better than many other breeds, making them ideal for marginal areas where agriculture depends heavily on rain-fed systems.
    - Bullocks are used mainly as draught animals and are preferred in both dry land and wetland agriculture because of their endurance, speed, and stamina. This is due to the strong and well-developed hooves, which are resistant to long wetland exposures.
4. **Management System:**
    - Traditionally, Thurupu cattle are raised in extensive grazing systems, where they are allowed to forage in common lands, forests, or agricultural stubble after harvest. They are part of mixed farming systems, where farmers rear cattle alongside crop production.
    - The breed can thrive in conditions with limited fodder and water availability. They are also aggressive in nature, and capable of fending off predators to protect their young.
    - The breed is often managed in **low-input systems**, relying on locally available feed resources rather than commercial feed supplements.

5. **Socio-Economic Importance:**
    - **Agriculture Support:** Thurupu cattle are essential for smallholder farmers who depend on them for farm operations, especially in areas where mechanization is still limited or expensive. Their contribution to farming makes them valuable assets in rural households.
    - **Cultural Significance:** In many tribal and rural communities of Telangana, cattle like Thurupu are not just livestock but also hold cultural and social importance. They are often part of rituals, festivals, and traditional ceremonies. They have traditionally been bred and kept by Lambadi and Golla communities employing Chenchu herders, and they play an important role in these communities' cultures. The herds, which primarily live in forest areas, migrate for several months each year in search of better grazing grounds, necessitating the migration of the herd keepers
6. **Milk Production:**
    - Unlike other breeds that are primarily used for milk production, the Thurupu cattle are not known for high milk yield. They are usually kept for subsistence milk production, providing just enough for household needs. The milk is used for daily consumption and sometimes for traditional dairy products. The average lactation yield of the cow is 570 kg (range from 494 to 646 kg) with an average milk fat % is 3.9 % (range from 3.7 to 4.1 %). Daily milk yield ranges from 2-3 kg.
7. **Conservation and Challenges:**
    - **Population Decline:** Like many indigenous breeds, the Thurupu cattle population has seen a decline due to the preference for high-yielding exotic breeds and crossbreeds, particularly in areas focused on milk production.
    - **Modern Farming Pressures:** With the advent of mechanization and the introduction of more productive dairy breeds, many farmers have shifted away from traditional draught breeds like Thurupu. This has put the breed under threat.
    - **Conservation Efforts:** There is a growing recognition of the importance of conserving indigenous cattle breeds like Thurupu for their resilience and adaptation to local conditions. Conservation efforts focus on maintaining genetic diversity and supporting the breed's role in sustainable, low-input farming systems.

**8. Advantages of Thurupu Cattle:**

- **Sustainability:** They contribute to sustainable agriculture by reducing the reliance on mechanized tools and fossil fuels for farming operations.
- **Low Maintenance:** These cattle require relatively low maintenance compared to high-yielding breeds, as they can survive on natural grazing and minimal supplementary feed.
- **Resilience:** Their ability to withstand harsh conditions makes them invaluable in semi-arid regions prone to droughts and resource shortages.

**Conclusion:**

Thurupu cattle are an important indigenous breed in Telangana, primarily valued for their draught power and adaptability to local climatic conditions. Despite facing challenges from modern farming practices and declining population trends, they play a critical role in traditional, sustainable farming systems and the livelihoods of many rural and tribal communities. Conservation of Thurupu cattle is essential to preserve their genetic resources and ensure the sustainability of agriculture in regions like Telangana.