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RAJ-ZANSKAR: INDIA'S FIRST ZANSKARI HORSE FOAL PRODUCED THROUGH EMBRYO TRANSFER TECHNOLOGY

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23rd April 2024, Bikaner

Zanskari, a native pony breed of Leh-Ladakh in Trans-Himalayan region of India is well adapted to high-altitude regions. This breed of horses is known for their ruggedness, ability to withstand extreme cold climates, work tirelessly, and carry loads at high altitudes. According to 20th Livestock Population Census, the total population size of Zanskari is 6660 and comes under the endangered category. There is an urgent need to conserve this precious breed in the country. In this endeavour, ICAR-National Research Centre on Equines, Hisar is working strenuously to conserve the breed and has standardised the technology of embryo transfer in equines.

Continuing their success in producing foals through Embryo transfer, Scientists at the Equine Production Campus, Regional Station of ICAR-National Research Centre on Equines, Bikaner for the first time in the country have produced a Zanskari horse foal using Embryo transfer technology.

To produce the viable embryo, fresh semen from a Zanskari stallion has been used for artificial insemination and the embryo was recovered through flushing from the mare at 6.5 days after ovulation. The recovered embryo was transferred to the estrus-synchronised surrogate mare. The mare delivered a healthy female foal on 23rd April 2024. The birth weight of the foal was 28 kg.





Foal named '*Raj-Zanskar*' produced through Embryo transfer technology in Zanskari breed of horse

The team led by Dr. TR Talluri, Equine Production Campus, ICAR-NRC on Equines, Bikaner has also successfully vitrified 18 Marwari horse embryos and 3 Zanskari horse embryos till now and currently, studies are in progress to revive the cryopreserved embryos and transfer them into surrogate mares.

Congratulating the team of Scientists, Dr. TK Bhattacharya, Director, ICAR-NRC on Equines said that the need of the hour is to conserve the indigenous population of horses which are under the threatened or endangered category. He further elaborated that '*Raj-Zanskar*' is the first Zanskari horse foal produced through Embryo transfer technology in the country.

Dr SC Mehta, Head, Regional Station, Equine production Campus, ICAR-NRC on Equines, Bikaner congratulated the team for their success

(Source: Equine Production Campus, ICAR-National Research Centre on Equines, Bikaner)

