

A STUDY ON MILK PRODUCTION IN THE AMPARA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Dairy farming has been an integral part of the rural economy of Sri Lanka. At present, the milk production in the country only meets about 26 percent of national milk requirement because of increasing demand for milk and milk products. The largest cattle population is reported from the dry and intermediate zones. The wet and wet intermediate zones produce 50 percent more milk than the dry and intermediate zones. Therefore, a detailed investigation of the present status of milk production, constraints and problems of milk production in the Ampara District, in dry zone of Sri Lanka is timely and relevant.

This study was conducted in the Ampara district of the Eastern Province from September 2009 to February 2010. The survey covered 120 dairy farmers from 24 villages, which were located in six selected veterinary ranges. Stratified random sampling method was used and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The study revealed that, a majority (49%) of the dairy farmers in the Ampara district was over middle age group, only 25% of dairy farmers rely on livestock farming alone or bearing it as their primary occupation. There were 54% dairy farmers practicing extensive system and 32% farmers were practicing semi intensive system and balanced taken by intensive system. Only 17.5% of farmers were rearing dairy animal for milk purpose.

The study proved that almost all the animal present in the surveyed area were indigenous breed and cross breed. None of farmers had pure European or Indian breeds. In the Ampara district, majority of dairy farmers allow the dairy animal for free grazing in day time. However, in semi intensive and intensive farming system,

dairy animals fed with concentrate. There were 6% of farmers were practicing artificial insemination only and 7% of farmer used proper shed in the study area. Foot and mouth disease, pneumonia, worm infection, bloat and diarrhoeae were prevalent diseases in the Ampara district.

From the study, the average milk production from the indigenous cattle, cross breed cattle and buffalo were 1.31 litre / animal / day, 2.65 litre / animal / day and 2.92 litre / animal / day, respectively. The average lactation period was 7.6 months while average calving interval was 14.6 months. Marketing of milk is very informal and middle man play a major role in purchasing and marketing of milk at the farm gate price of Rs 40 /- per litre and most of the farmers from semi intensive and intensive system sell their milk locally to neighbours at the average price of Rs 55/- per one bottle (0.75 Litre). The considerable amount of farmers also supplies milk to small scale dairy processor. Low amount of milk is flow through the hotel/ traders and large scale processor (MILCO (pvt) Ltd).

In the study area, dairy farmers facing major constraints and problems were resource availability, economic, technical, marketing, and institution and others. The majority of farmers (95%) complained on constraints and problems of resource availability, 74% of farmers on economic, 69% of farmers on technical and 61% of farmers on marketing.

The potential for dairy farming in the Ampara district was under utilized. This district can contribute in greater proportion to the economy of country through the development of the dairy production and removing constraints and problems of dairy farming in the Ampara district.

Keywords: Dairy farming, Milk production, Indigenous, Crosses

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