

A Case Study: Factors Affecting on Milk Production of Contract Farmers' of the Swiss Cheese Company Private Limited in Nuwara-eliya District

A. L. M. Rifky¹, A. M. Samaraweera¹, J. V. L. C. Jayasinghe² and
M. B. P. K. Mahipala³

¹Uva Wellassa University, Sri Lanka.

²Swiss Cheese Company Private Limited, Bogahawatta, Sri Lanka.

³Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

This study investigated the factors affecting on milk production of the contract dairy cattle farmers' of Swiss Cheese Company Pvt. Ltd. in Nuwara-eliya district. A field survey was carried out using 50 farmers in Queensberry, Bogahawatta, Maskeliya, Kellewatta and Rozella villages. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used. The investigated farmers were virtually landless and farming is done in extremely small ($118 \pm 8.7 \text{ m}^2$) block of land, in most cases owned by commercial tea plantations. Herd size was found to be 2.26 ± 0.18 with low number of lactating cows (1.0 ± 0.12). Although, almost all cattle farmers practice stall feeding (96%), majority of them (68%) depend entirely on naturally grown low quality, mix weeds. The roughage and concentrate offered were 47.8 ± 4.35 and $1.1 \pm 0.09 \text{ kg/cow/d}$, respectively. Although, the temperate cross bred dairy cows managed were at their $4 \pm 0.4^{\text{th}}$ parity, the milk production was found to be considerably low ($6.7 \pm 0.78 \text{ L/cow}$ and $9.2 \pm 1.14 \text{ L/herd}$). Age at first calving was 34 ± 0.2 and the calving interval was 14 ± 0.2 in months. Cost benefit analysis showed that the B/C ratio (per herd) was 2.36 ± 0.359 , thus the farmers gain profits from cattle keeping. The regression analysis revealed that calving interval, percentage lactating cows, expenditure, on concentrate, AI, veterinary service and the amount of roughage offered are the factors that significantly ($P < 0.05$) affect on herd milk production. Farmers' knowledge in cattle keeping was found to be significantly low possibly due to low level of formal education. According to perception of farmers', lack of capital for improve housing facilities, unavailability of forage source, low milk productivity of cattle and low farm-gate milk price were identified as constraints in cattle farming in the studied area. Herd milk production from contract farmers could be improved by introduction of better feeding (i.e. concentrate and roughage) strategies.

Key words: Cattle, Milk production, Feeding, Calving interval, Expenditure