

Characterization of Goat Production Systems in Badulla District of Sri Lanka

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Goat farming in Sri Lanka has a great potential for improvements, especially in rural economies, since it can be operated with low input levels. Badulla district is considered as a rural area where agricultural activities are predominant. However, the available information on goat farming in Badulla is minimal, limiting the opportunities for further development. Hence, the objective of this study was to characterize the goat production systems in Badulla district. A survey was conducted using 320 goat farmers in 15 divisional secretariats of Badulla district using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used to collect data on farmers' general information, herd characteristics, management practices and constraints of farmers. Data were analyzed using Minitab 17 statistical software. The results indicated that goat farming is more popular among Tamil and Muslim communities. Out of total study sample, 76.9% were Tamil and 19.7% were Muslim. Majority of goat farmers (80.6%) had only the primary education. Almost all farmers (99.7%) in the area considered goat farming as a secondary income source. In 91.9% goat farms, herd owner is a male although housewives and children helped in farming activities. Most of goat herds were indigenous (75.6 %) while 24.4% were Jamnapari crosses. The average herd size was 6.65 ± 4.70 . All farmers rear goats under semi-intensive management system. Although, cut and feed, tethering and free grazing were found as major roughages feeding systems, these can vary in different areas of Badulla according to the resource availability. Around 50.0% farmers used raised slatted floor houses. According to the farmers' perception, lack of goat breeds, less government support and less land availability were identified as main problems in goat farming in Badulla. Therefore, based on proper data, short-term and long-term development plans should be implemented for development of goat farming in Badulla.

Keywords: Goat, Production systems, Badulla, Indigenous, Jamnapari