

## **Analyzing the Performance of *Mahinda Chintana* Dairy villages in Batticaloa District**

N. Asoomath, M. M. Mahusoon and S. Lavanya

Department of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

Dairy sector is the most important of all livestock sub sectors and it has a great impact on the rural economy. The domestic milk production only constitutes about 26 percent of the country's requirement. Dairy village programme was introduced in 2005 by the President Mahinda Rajapakse in order to develop the dairy industry, and is being implemented by the Department of Animal Production and Health, Sri Lanka. In the present study, the performance of dairy village programme implemented in Batticaloa district was assessed through a field survey to evaluate the success of "Mahinda Chintana" programme. A total of 150 dairy farmers from 15 dairy villages including seven veterinary ranges in the Batticaloa district were randomly selected and interviewed using a formal questionnaire for collecting data on socio economic condition, details of dairy cattle, management practices, problems faced by the dairy farmers and extension services. About 66% of the respondents have prior experience in dairy cattle management. Fifty six percent of the farmers were small holders of dairy cattle and 35% were medium size holders. Almost 42% of the respondents practiced fully intensive rearing system while 39% were adopting tethering system. 48% farmers have got primary education and 7% of them were not even schooled. Concentrates feed was given by 75% of the dairy farmers. Constraints reported by the farmers were high cost for concentrate feeds, low price for milk, lack of grasses and grass land, lack of credit facilities, and drought. The implementation of dairy villages has increased the annual income of the farmers significantly due to better technical knowledge on management practices, pasture and fodder production, better health care practices etc. The management systems, however, were very poor (58%) in some aspects such as rearing system and feeding of the dairy cattle. The programme would perform better if the management aspects could be improved.

Key words: Dairy village, Dairy cattle, Dairy farmers, Mahinda Chintana, Management practices