STUDY ON BREEDING TECHNIQUES PRACTICED BY SMALL HOLDER CATTLE FARMERS IN NUWARA ELIYA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

By

B.G.D.M BANDARA

Department of Biosystems Technology

Faculty of Technology

Eastern University, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the breeding techniques practiced by smallholder cattle farmers in the Nuwara Eliya District of Sri Lanka, with a focus on improving milk production and addressing challenges in cattle breeding techniques. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews with 150 smallholder farmers across eight veterinary regions in the district. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to evaluate breeding practices, farmer preferences, and socioeconomic factors influencing cattle farming.

The findings reveal that Artificial Insemination (AI) is the predominant breeding method (67%), favored for its ease of management and efficiency, while natural breeding remains practiced by 33% of farmers. Jersey cross-breeds (69%) and Friesian (20%) are the most common cattle breeds, selected primarily for milk yield, disease resistance, and adaptability to the local climate. Key challenges identified include a lack of knowledge in heat detection and AI procedures, poor infrastructure, and environmental stressors.

The study highlights the need for targeted farmer education programs, improved veterinary services, and better access to AI resources to enhance breeding success and productivity. By addressing these gaps, smallholder farmers can optimize cattle breeding practices, contributing to increased milk production and sustainable dairy farming in the Nuwara Eliya District. This research provides valuable insights for policymakers, extension services, and stakeholders aiming to strengthen the dairy sector in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Cattle breeding, Artificial Insemination (AI), smallholder farmers, Nuwara Eliya, dairy farming, Sri Lanka.

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