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Present status and future prospects of buffalo curd production in Thihagoda D.S. in Matara -Sri Lanka: a case study

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Even though Sri Lanka has significant buffalo population of about 0.9 mln. distributed throughout the country. It was revealed that, low production and the quality of curd are limiting factors for the industry. Therefore, this study attempts to examine the present status of buffalo curd industry focusing on future prospects. As specific objectives, check the quality of milk used for curd production, to search the economic gains of the marketing chain and to find out possible product differentiation in marketing with respect to price of the pots with sizes and price of the pots with material. Fifty farmers were selected from the Thihagoda DS division in Matara District by using cluster-sampling. Among them 15 farmers were selected randomly to check the adulterants used in curd production. The study reveals that, all of the curd producing farmers add adulterants to the buffalo curd such as starch, sugar, salt as well as cow milk which leads to make low quality curd. Moreover, there exists greater variation in fat percentage, which varies from 5.8 to 11.2 indicating the quality reduction. These levels are greatly deviated from the standard fat percentage of buffalo, which is around 7.58%. Majority (60%) of farmers has indigenous breeds which produce only 0.5-1 l/ buffalo cow /day. The average herd size is 4-6, and average production in this area is 6-10 l/day. More than 60 % of farmers produced 6-10 curd pots/day. There is no product differentiation exist, and all are producing 800 ml clay pots that cost around Rs 60/pot. The profit gain of curd production is Rs 35-40/pot indicates that there exists high potential to increase the industry. Among the present problems of buffalo curd production and rearing, absent of pasturelands, lack of improved breeds, absence of collection centers are significant. Therefore, the study recommends supplying improved breeds to the farmers at reasonable prices and providing more opportunities to feed the animals. Further, proper steps should be taken to establish a collecting center. Moreover, strict rules and regulations should be implemented to avoid malpractices in curd production in order to produce better quality curd.

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