CATTLE FARMING SYSTEMS AND LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT OF DAIRY FARMERS: EVIDENCEFROM DRY ZONE CATTLE FARMING SYSTEMS IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT

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The objective of this study was to assess the impact of different cattle farming systems on livelihood development of dairy farmers in the Anuradhapura District. The study was conducted using a sample of 120 non-beneficiaries and beneficiaries of dairy farm village project (DFVP) selected at random in a way to represent 60 farmers from each group from three Divisional Secretariat (DS) areas in Anuradhapura District namely Mihinthale, Kahatagasdigiliya and Galenbindunuwewa. Questionnaire survey was conducted to collect primary data required for the study. Two distinct rearing systems: traditional extensive system (TES) and semi-intensive system (SIS) were found in the area. Most prevalent system was TES with open grazing and low inputs utilization. Traditional extensive system was mostly found among farmers who were not benefited from DFVP and it was accounted for 65%. No significant difference was identified among average monthly income *per-capita* and rearing systems ($p>0.05$). No significant difference was observed ($p>0.05$) between average daily milk production per-cow and rearing systems among the three dairy villages. It was observed almost all the labour used were family labour of which 87% belonged to secondary or lower level education category implying the fact that cattle farming in selected DS areas could have been able to absorb less educated household labour force into this venture. Further high rate of labour absorption was found from TES, compared to SIS. Major buyers of row milk of these systems were private and the public sector. The share of the latter is about 27%. According to the results, it can be concluded that cattle farmers are more liable to manage their herds under extensive and minimal input systems. Contribution of income to the livelihood of these farmers from both systems remains equal. However, TES had been able to absorb more labour which helps to uphold livelihoods of these farmers.

Key words: Cattle farming systems, Dairy farm village project, Income, Livelihood