

POTENTIALS AND CONSTRAINTS OF DAIRY FARMING IN TALAWA BLOCK, MAHAWELI SYSTEM H

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Dairy sector has a strong potential in contributing to household economy and food security in dairy farming communities. This study was conducted to examine the potentials and constraints of dairy farming in Talawa block of Mahaweli System "H". Feeding, breeding, availability of breeds, milk production, land utilization and access to related services were the key issues considered in this study. As the data collection tool, in depth interviews were conducted to collect data. During the first step of sampling three units of settlements were selected purposively and during the second step, random samples of 60 dairy farmers were selected. Simple tabular methods were used in data analysis. Jersey cows have produced the highest amount of milk

(4.75 ± 0.64 l/day), second highest production by Sahiwal breed (4.625 ± 0.47 l/day)

and the third highest was by the Friesian crosses (4.375 ± 1.10 l/day). The average

unutilized land area was (0.4545 ± 0.18 ac/farmer). According to the results, it could be recorded that the most common feeding method is combined grazing and cut and fed (71.70%) followed by grazing only (20%) Only 45% of dairy farmers had artificially inseminated (AI) their animals and out of them only 51.66% were satisfied with the quality of the artificial insemination service in the area. Forty six percent farmers expressed their displeasure about the existing extension and veterinary services in the area. Unavailability of quality grassland and lack of AI services, substandard extension and veterinary services are the major constraints faced by the dairy farmers in Talawa area. According to findings, it could be suggested that more interventions in forms of demarcating lands for grazing, introducing pasture varieties with multiple ratooning and upgrading veterinary services for the improvement of the dairy sector in Talawa block in Mahaweli system "H" are of paramount importance.

Key words: Constraints, Dairy farming, Potentials