

LEVEL OF ADOPTION OF CLEAN MILK PRODUCTION PRACTICES BY SMALLHOLDER DAIRY FARMERS IN SRI LANKA: A STUDY IN THE KURUNEGALA DISTRICT

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Dairy is a high potential agro-industry in Sri Lanka predominately undertaken by smallholder farmers. Food safety and quality are significant factors in the process of developing dairy industry. Clean Milk Production (CMP) which involves producing milk under a set of preventive practices is the first step towards ensuring food safety and quality. Hence, this study examined the level of adoption of clean milk production practices by smallholder dairy farmers in the Kurunegala district. The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between the smallholder dairy farm performance and adoption of CMP practices and to identify the constraints to adopt CMP practices. Data were collected using interviewer administrated questionnaire from 120 smallholder dairy farmers selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. The results revealed that the majority (94.2%) of respondents adopted some CMP practices such as regular examination of the milking animal, provision of clean and fresh water to milking animal for drinking and using a healthy person for milking. The high cost involved in adopting CMP practices was the major constraint. It was also revealed that adoption of CMP practices guarantees a premium price for milk. There was a significant difference in productivity and profitability between high adopters and low adopters. Average farm productivity of high adopters was higher by 577 liters per cow per lactation period than the average farm productivity of low adopters. The average profitability of the high adopters was 38% higher than the average profitability of low adopters. There was no significant difference in return on investment (ROI) between the two groups. Overall this study revealed that CMP practices can contribute significantly to enhance productivity and profitability of smallholder dairy farms in the Kurunegala district.

Keywords: *Clean milk production (CMP) practices, Dairy farm performance, Dairy industry, Smallholder dairy farming*