Cattle Breeding Activities Adopted by the Livestock Farmers in the Kilinochchi District of Sri Lanka

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In the Kilinochchi district there had been a complete displacement due to the unrest situation prevailed in the country, during the period of January to March 2009 and the resettlement commenced in January 2010. The status of the cattle breeding activities in the Kilinochchi district after the resettlement has not been studied which is crucial for the genetic improvement of the dairy cattle in the district. Hence, the current study was carried out in four veterinary divisions of Kilinochchi district to study the cattle breeding activities and the factors influencing cattle breeding activities in the Kilinochchi district of Sri Lanka. Out of the 645 cattle farmers 265 farmers were selected using table of random numbers. Information was collected using structured questionnaire. Data were tabulated using Microsoft Excel 2007 and Chi- square test and GLM procedure were carried out using SAS. The results revealed that the main purpose for keeping cattle was milk and manure and the breeds kept in the district were indigenous (46 %), Jersey crosses (49 %) and Sahiwal (2 %). Herd size did not differ significantly among veterinary divisions and the average overall herd size was 14.04 ± 16.24. Comparatively higher percentage of cattle farmers was observed in in the Kandawalai veterinary division. Approximately 87-97 % of the farmers adopted semi intensive management system and more than 93 % of the famers used semen of Jersey crosses for artificial insemination. Framers adopting natural service, artificial insemination and both natural service and artificial inseminations were around 28 %, 34 % and 38 %, respectively. Among the available cattle breeds Sahiwal breeds gave the highest milk yield of 6 L per day. Major reasons for adoption of AI were unavailability of genetically superior bulls for natural service (22 %), genetic improvement of existing cattle breeds (17 %) and to get healthy calves (15 %). The main reasons for non-adoption of AI technology in Kilinochchi were lack of knowledge of farmers regarding heat detection, high cost for insemination and distant of AI center from household (time consuming). Major constraints limiting cattle farming in the Kilinochchi district were lack of credit facilities for cattle farming activities and absence of communal grazing field to graze the cattle. Addressing the issues raised by the framers regarding cattle farming can improve the overall productivity and can contribute to poverty alleviation among the farming communities in the district.

Key words: Artificial insemination, Cost, Heat detection, Natural service, Number of inseminations per conception.