ANALYSIS AND COMPARISION AMONG THREE SELECTED DAIRY FARMING VILLAGES (DFVs) IN *ANURADHAPURA* DISTRICT

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The small scale dairy farming has a strong potential in contributing to the development of the rural economy of Sri Lanka through generation of employment and reduction of poverty and malnutrition. Accordingly the government established Dairy Farming Villages (DFVs) throughout the country to empower rural dairy farmers. This study was conducted to analyze the present status and to compare three selected DFVs in *Anuradhapura* district in relation to herd characteristics, milk production, milk consumption, marketing of milk and veterinary services rendered.

A semi-structured questionnaire supported, in-depth interview approach was used to collect data from three purposely selected villages in *Anuradhapura* district namely, *Oyamaduwa* in *Vilachchiya* area, *Dutuwewa* in *Galenbindunuwewa* area and *Paluwewa* in *Mihinthale* area and 25 dairy farmers from each village were interviewed. The outcome of the analysis showed that *Dutuwewa* had the highest ($p<0.05$) milk production (7.21 ± 0.09 L/day/family) as well as milk sales (6.63 ± 0.08 L/family/day) while having a significant improvement at the end of the five years from the start of the project compared to other villages. The *Oyamaduwa* had the highest ($p<0.05$) fresh milk consumption (0.62 ± 0.01 L/family/day), annual gross farmer income ($158,969\pm741$ Rs./family) as well as the highest number of milking cows (5 cows/herd) in a herd at the end of five years compared to other two DFVs.

The results also showed that Milco and Nestle were the major buyers of produced fresh milk irrespective of the DFVs (57.6% and 42% respectively). The major constraint faced by dairy farmers in all these three DFVs was the unavailability of good quality grasses to feed their animals and poor veterinary services. Therefore it is recommended that sufficient policy implications be carried out to demarcate areas for grasslands to provide good quality feeding materials to animals. Also, adequate veterinary services for the dairy farmers in the selected areas must be provided to ensure maximum productivity of DFVs.

Key words: Dairy Farming Villages (DFVs), Milk production, Fresh milk consumption, Farmer income, Veterinary services