Abstract

Continuous fluctuations of the copra prices have prompted the need to search for alternative sources of income to stabilize incomes of coconut farmers. Rearing of cattle under coconut was introduced as a diversification method with the potential to serve this purpose and to increase the productivity of coconut lands. Although the integrating milk cows with coconut small holding has a technical feasibility, adoption of this method by farmers is still low. The objective of the study was to identify the factors that influence the adoption of dairy by smallholder coconut farmers to assist developing strategies to promote and disseminate new technologies that would enhance land productivity and increase farm incomes. The theory of planned behavior was used as the theoretical framework. Data were collected using a pre structured survey schedule. 70 households selected randomly from Kurunegala, Gampaha, and Puttalam administrative districts participated in the study. Both adopters and non-adopters were included in the sample. A five- point Likert Scale was used in recording responses. Binary probit regression analysis was conducted using SPSS. According to the findings, the attitudes ($p<0.05$), perception on environment ($p<0.05$) and social pressure contribute positively on decision to adapt new technology. Cost of production analysis reveals that 36% of the current market price of milk goes as cost. The high investment cost on concentrate feeds (97% from the direct costs) for milk production. But some farmers obtain higher milk yield (12-13L/cow/day) at lower ration costs depending on their skills, experience and management efficiency. Managing sustainable number of productive animals within the herd could be increased the profit than to increase the herd size. The study area had well developed milk market infrastructure and average price the farmer was given Rs.70/L of milk marketed.

Keywords: Coconut cattle integration, Attitudes, Social pressure, Perception on environment, Theory of planned behaviour