

GOAT PRODUCTION UNDER TRADITIONAL MANAGEMENT
SYSTEMS IN BATTICALOA DISTRICT

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The goat population in Sri Lanka is about 533,000. Majority of these goats are found in the Dry Zone, mainly in the districts of Jaffna, Hambantota, Batticaloa and Amparai. Goat farming contributes significantly to the economy of the rural farmers in these areas. Despite this importance, data on the characteristics and productivity of local goat production systems is scanty. The results of a questionnaire survey conducted among 86 goat farmers in the Batticaloa district are presented in this paper.

All goats in the survey area were found to be of local type. White was the predominant colour with varying amounts of tan and black patches. The goats were small in size (average height at withers 64.5cm). Traditional systems of management (herding) was adopted by 79% of the farmers, while tethering and semi-intensive rearing were used by 12% and 9% respectively. Breeding was uncontrolled. Most of the kiddings (71%) occurred during the months of November and December. The average age (\pm standard deviation) at first kidding and the average kidding intervals were 9.3 ± 1.7 months and 6.3 ± 0.8 months, respectively. The average size at birth and weaning were 1.9 ± 0.5 and 1.6 ± 1.0 , respectively. The average weight at birth was 1.29 ± 0.3 kg, while the weight at weaning was 4.15 ± 0.8 kg. The mean market weight of 18.8 kg was reached around 10 months of age. Heavy mortality (36%) was observed among young animals. The survey revealed that the growth performance of these goats was low due to poor feeding and the disease problems which exist in the area. Heavy kid mortality is another major constraints that limits productivity in these farms.

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