

A preliminary study on Peri-Urban goat rearing practices in six villages of the Galle Four Gravets DS area

M M D S N Perera, Y J D J W Seresinhe and Thakshala Seresinhe*

Department of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya, Sri Lanka

A household survey was conducted in six villages (Kandewatta, Dadalla, Talapitiya, Magalle, Hirimbura and Dewatta) in Galle Four Gravets DS area, to determine the present status of the Peri-urban goat management systems. Hundred and fifty eight farm families were interviewed using a structured questionnaire based on socio economic status, breeds and herd size, feeding practices and problems associated in goat farming etc. There were 721 goats with an average herd size varies from 4 to 56 belonging to 35 holdings; 35% Muslims and 65% Buddhists. Herd composition favoured females rather than males confirm the occasional sales of male animals for meat and the renowned interest shown for milk production. Among interviewed, 29% farmers involved as a full time occupation while 71% were involved as a part time occupation. The females involved were 47%, mainly as a part time occupation. Purposes of rearing were mainly milk production for domestic consumption and sale of surplus stock (40.7%), sale of milk (28.4%) sale of meat (28.4%) and other purposes (2.5%) respectively. Herds consisted 56% of non-descriptive breeds and 25% of local breeds while 19% farmers had 19% of Jamnapari and boar breeds to improve the breeding value of their herds. Mainly intensive systems of rearing (62%) were practiced while tethering (18%) and free-range system (21%) was also existed. Feeding practices found to be more traditional while animals were mainly fed with Jack (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) (74%) leaves. Other leaves such as *Gliricidia sepium*, *Erythrina indica* and *Leucaena leucocephala* were offered by 26% of the farmers. Sixty eight percent farmers offered *ad libitum* water whereas 94% farmers offered concentrates such as prima cattle feed, rice bran and coconut poonac. Among the farmers interviewed 68% offered salt while 3% offered commercial mineral mixture. This is an indication of the use of low inputs to enhance animal performance. The main problems associated were lack of improved breeds, lack of breeding materials, high price of concentrate feeds etc. Indications are that goat production could be greatly improved by farmer awareness on proper feeding and breeding methods.

* headas@slt.net.lk