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Urban Cattle Fattening System

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Abstract

A study was conducted to understand urban cattle fattening systems in Arsi-Negle town located 225 km south of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. Forty households were randomly selected from 3 kebles (smallest administrative units) for personal interview using semi-structured questionnaire. General issues related to cattle fattening were obtained through group discussion with key informants.

It was found that 75 % of the respondents were engaged in 'katikala' production (alcoholic beverage produced by distillation process). The process involves series of tedious steps all of which are done by women. The by-product of the distillation process 'atella' is widely used as animal feed. Seventy percent of households producing katikala were engaged in cattle fattening. The daily amount of 'atella' produced per household was 200–600 litres. Households producing higher quantities use the entire atella produced for fattening. Crop residues mixed with atella include barley, teff, and wheat straw.

Two age groups of fattened cattle were identified. Households (HH) having farm plots at the periphery of the town (48 % of households) fatten oxen at the end of their working period. On the other hand, HH not engaged in crop cultivation purchase young animals for fattening. Animals are fattened in a cyclic way i.e. new animals to be fattened are purchased only after selling the previous ones. The duration of each cycle is 2–4 months with a mode of 3 months. Number of cattle in each cycle varied from 2–4 with a mean of 2.5.

This system seems to work well for most families but is facing problems because of environmental concerns. Appropriate waste management practices and provision of alternative source of energy to decrease the rate of deforestation caused by the high fuel requirement of the distillation process need to be put in place to sustain the system.

Keywords: Atella, cattle, fattening, waste management