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Milk Production Capacity of Dairy Cattle under Limited Resources and Distribution Pattern in Peri-Urban Area of Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

In Nigeria, animal protein intake from milk production by dairy cattle is low. The modest milk production is still in the hands of the pastoralists, who are either sedentary or itinerant. Fresh milk consumption is rare but is largely processed into products that are highly relished by Nigerian consumers. In this regard, a study was carried out using 50 dairy cattle farmers to appraise the trend of dairy production and the distribution channels of milk and its products for local consumption. The study showed that the most favoured breed in the area was White Fulani cattle accounting for 80% of total milk production whereas N'Dama and Keteku breeds accounted for (15%) and (5%), respectively. Grasses and browse trees were the major forages for feeding the cattle in the rainy season while there was an inclusion of crop residues in the dry season. In the study area, milk collection was usually done by hand milking. The average milk production per cow per day was 1.3 l and 1.02 l in the wet and dry season, respectively, totaling 240 days lactation length. About 40% of the total milk produced was consumed by the dairy farmer household member during rainy season but increased by 10% in the dry season. The remaining 50–60% milk produced was processed into local cheese (wara) and distributed for immediate consumption. Sales persons were house wives (59%) and female children (41%). Selling of the products was through hawking (52%), rural markets (37%), homestead (6%), urban markets (3%) and collection point (2%). Mode of distribution to sales points were by pedestrians (63%) and road (37%). Buyers were mainly the direct consumers (70%) and the traders (30%). It was concluded that the dairy cattle in the peri-urban area were marginal in milk production due to the type of breed and poor feeding pattern but the milk and its product are resourceful for rural consumption.

Keywords: Crop-livestock, dairy cattle, marketing, milk production, peri-urban