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## Traditional Art Contest of *Sonok* as an Alternative for Selection of Good Quality of Madura Cattle

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### Abstract

Madura cattle is one of the prominent local cattle breeds in Indonesia; probably formed from Bali, Ongole and *Bos taurus* cattle. The uniformity of this breed was developed from tuft selection of Madura people. Madura cattle are embedded in cultural activities of the Madura people. One of the cultural events involving Madura cattle is *Sonok* contest, which are pairs of good female, driven by a jockey, have to walk in 25 metres of line and reach a finish line which is designed like a gate, and step their forefeet perfectly and cohesively. This contest is traditionally aimed to select good heifers and cows. Cultural practices in keeping *Sonok* cattle and criteria applied to select them, can be used for conservation of Madura cattle. The aim of this study was to explore phenotypic characteristics of *Sonok* cattle among different age groups.

In total 166 heads of *Sonok* cattle divided into 6 age groups were observed for body colour, existence of dewlap, hump, smear colour around eyes, mouth and legs, and existence of the coloured back line. In total 106 heads of *Sonok* heifers and cows were observed for their body condition score (BCS).

Most *Sonok* cattle in all of age groups are dark brown (64%), have medium dewlap (66%) and small hump (61%), non specific smear colour around eyes (55%) and mouth (52%), and on legs (58%), and no coloured back line (55%). It seems that Madura cattle characteristics are a combination of the characteristics of Bali and Ongole cattle. These characteristics have been used by farmers as traditional selection criteria through the *Sonok* contest. Almost all *Sonok* heifers and cows had good body condition score (98.1%). By applying traditional selection, Madura people have been maintaining the phenotype uniformities of this breed for hundreds of years. This might be valuable and contributing to conservation of Madura cattle.

**Keywords:** Madura cattle, phenotype uniformity, *Sonok*, traditional selection