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"Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources"

# Characterisation of the Production System of Dairy and Beef Farmers from Iporá and Neighbourhood, Goiás State, Brazil

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**Abstract**

Dairy farming has contributed to family livelihood with a monthly income, although it demands intensive labour in milking, feeding, and young stock rearing. On the other hand, beef cattle production system in Brazil is very diverse, with no single recommendation that can be largely applied throughout the country. The objective of the present study was to carry out the diagnosis of the production system of dairy and beef farmers from Iporá and neighbouring municipalities. Two hundred and forty farmers were interviewed between April 2013 through April 2014 in rural communities meetings, agricultural retail stores, during the campaign of vaccination against the foot and mouth disease and in the 28$^{th}$ Agricultural Exhibition of Iporá. Average milk production/farm is 213.1 L/day with a productivity of 7.9 L/cow/day. Most of the dairy farmers (n=133) milk their cows manually in uncovered sheds with soil floor (n=88). Some dairy farmers have adopted certain practices that may reduce milk quality during milking, such as dry the calf saliva on the teats with the cow tail (n=45), remove the calf saliva on the teats by hand and dry it on the cow hair (n=57), and remove the calf saliva on the teats by hand and dry it on the pants (n=59). The most predominant production system in beef farming is calf rearing (n=40), followed by rearing, breeding and finishing animals (n=28), and pasture-based breeding heifers (n=25), where Nelore is the most employed breed in all production systems (n=82). A few dairy and beef farmers have vaccinated their animals against leptospirosis (n=25 for dairy; n=19 for beef), bovine virus diarrhea (n=22 for dairy, n=17 for beef), infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (n=19 for dairy; n=15 for beef) and neosporosis (n=6 for dairy; n=9 for beef), which are known to cause abortion. The predominant labour used in dairy (n=108; 67.1 %) and beef (n=48; 45.7 %) farms is the family members. The production system of dairy and beef farmers from Iporá and neighbourhood outputs low productivity levels. Additional research and efficient extension services are needed to improve the production system and increase the productivity and income of these farmers.

**Keywords:** Beef production, dairy production, farming system

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