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Current Status and Future Perspectives of Traditional Dairy Farming and Industry in Republic of Benin

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Abstract

In Benin, livestock rearing for milk production plays a major role in human nutrition and the economic growth of the local population leading into poverty reduction in rural areas. Benin's milk producing livestock is comprised with a diversity of dairy herds' made-up largely by indigenous cattle breeds, but also exotic or imported cattle and goat breeds. These animals are most commonly brought up using the pastoral and agro-pastoral production system. Recently, some semi-intensive production systems have been put into use by some individual farmers, corporate and national organisations. The classification of animal production systems is based on socio-cultural, economic and agro-ecological criteria. In Benin, dairy producing livestock is most commonly kept by Peulh and Gando breeding farmers who are often pastoralists. The findings showed that milk is mainly produced from cows and goats. Thus, in 2016 a total of 110.06 and 25.73 thousand metric tons of milk were produced from cattle and goats, from an estimated population of 2.34 and 1.84 million heads, respectively. The increasing trend observed in milk production by local dairy farmers covers only 20% of the local milk demand. This has led to a need in the importation of milk and dairy products. The most popular and most consumed traditional dairy product in Benin is Peulh cheese, also known as Wagashi. Some dairy products such as melted butter, curd and traditional yoghurt, also known as Degùè, are well appreciated by local consumers. Some of the factors that affect the development of the dairy sector in Benin include finance, environmental constraints, structural issues, sanitary equipment, and technical problems. This work also proposes some approaches to a solution to enhance competitiveness of the sector.

Keywords: Benin, cow, Degùè, goat, milk, Wagashi