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“Filling gaps and removing traps  
for sustainable resource management”

## Public Images of Dairy Production Systems among Urban Citizens in Bogotá, Colombia

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### Abstract

In Colombia, the consumption of fresh milk and milk products is steadily increasing. This rise demands an intensification and modernisation of the current dairy production system. To do so, intensification of dairy production is envisioned, posing a threat to the livelihoods of smallholders which make up 81 % of dairy producers in Colombia. The aim of this study is to investigate the public image of dairy production systems among urban citizens in the city of Bogotá in order to find out what type of dairy production system is culturally sensitive and socially acceptable in Colombia. Designed as an explorative case study, 30 participants were interviewed using a triangulated research method including a word association task, a drawing exercise and a semi-structured interview. The results show that participants are aware of two distinct types of dairy production systems in the country- industrial production systems and smallholder production systems, but they show more affinity for smallholders. This is because participants appreciated values such as naturalness and care for the animals and associated these values with smallholders. At the same time, participants were concerned about health, hygiene and food safety standards of milk and milk products coming from smallholders. Industrial production systems were associated with modern technologies as well as high hygiene and food safety standards. In order to ensure culturally sensitive and socially acceptable dairy production systems in Colombia, it is necessary to enhance the development of smallholder dairy farms and to provide education and support for better health, hygiene and food safety standards on these farms.

**Keywords:** Colombia, dairy production systems, public images, urban citizens