Feeding practice and management for dairy cows by small-holder dairy farmers in the Northeast of Thailand

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Introduction

- 95-99 % of dairy farms in Thailand can be classified as small scale or small-holder farms under mixed crop-livestock farming systems (Wanapat, 1995)
- Concentrate supplementation for lactating dairy cows has been practiced by many small-holder farmers
- In some areas of Thailand, concentrate use was found to be even higher than 1:1 concentrate to milk yield
- Feed costs are about 70% of total operating costs (concentrates 65- 80 %)
- The use of local feed resources to reduce production cost should be more concern
Objective

- To study feeding practice and management for dairy cows by small-holder dairy farmers in the Northeast of Thailand
Material and methods

Site of survey
- 118 smallholder dairy farmers with closely collaboration with DPO-NE
- 4 districts from Khon Kaen and Udon Thani provinces

Period of survey
- Since April to June 2008
Data management and statistical analysis

- Questionnaires and interviews

- Collected data were then entered into worksheets of Microsoft Excel 2003 (Microsoft Corporation, copyright © 1985-2003).

- The statistical analyses were performed using SPSS for windows version 15.0 (SPSS Inc., copyright © 1989-2005).
Activities done during farm visits
Results

Year of begin to rise dairy cows

- 2531-2535: 2.5%
- 2536-2540: 44.1%
- 2541-2545: 11.9%
- 2546-2550: 30.5%
- ไม่ระบุ: 11.0%
Number of dairy cows per farm

- Total: 26.9
- Milking: 11.3
- Dry: 2.3
- Heifers: 3.3
- Calves: 10.0

Heads/Farm
Type of concentrates

HMC = Home made concentrate (1)
CMC = Commercial concentrate (2)
HMCCMC = Home made concentrate and Commercial concentrate (3)
Frequency of using feedstuffs

/-เปอร์เซ็นต์ (%)-/
The opinion of the farmers to use home-made concentrate

- Good: 87.8%
- Not good: 0.0%
- No answer: 12.2%
Feedstuffs sources

- Feeds from outside: 92.9%
- Produce by farmers: 29.6%
Feedstuffs from outside

- Co-operative: 92.9%
- Company or factory: 9.2%
- Neighbor: 5.1%
- Other: 3.1%
Feedstuffs produced by farmers

- Cassava: 89.7%
- Corn meal: 3.4%
- Soy bean meal: 3.4%
- No answer: 3.4%
Problems and constrain

- Problems: 54.1%
- No Problem: 35.7%
- No answer: 10.2%
Conclusions and recommendation

- Most of farmers used home-made concentrate (HMC), plus by-products and commercial concentrates
- HMC comprised of local feed resources and easily prepared and the use would decrease feed cost of production
- Feed ingredients were on-farm planting (cassava) and other sources were mostly purchased through dairy cooperatives
- High cost of commercial concentrate due to rising price of ingredients particularly those of protein sources (soybean meal) were the main problems.
- Furthermore, further trainings on feed development and management should be organized for farmers in order to be sustainable and more profitable.
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Thank you for your kind attention