

**Effects of Improved Management Practices on Production of Fresh Milk  
Among Small Holder Dairy Farms Operating in a Dairy Chain in  
Kilinochchi District, Sri Lanka**

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In the dry zone of Sri Lanka, dairy farms are owned and operated predominantly by smallholders whose management practices are rather arbitrary resulting in low milk yields. In Poonakari Division of the Kilinochchi District, majority of farms have small herds, of 2 to 5 heads of cattle per farm. The milk collected is conveyed to collection centres and cooperatives. The collection centres in turn supply to processing industries. A small quantity reaches consumers directly. Though it is required for milk to be checked for quality at all centres, this aspect is generally overlooked. An international NGO that offers training to producers to increase the volume and quality of milk. This research attempts to determine how the milk production has changed with the training received and how the socio-economic factors influence milk yield. A total of 280 farmers in the Poonakari DS division were selected using a purposive random sampling technique and interviewed with a pretested structured questionnaire. Of which, nearly a 50% of the respondents had undergone training in improved milk production. The herd sizes were 2 to 4 heads of crossbred animals each. The statistical stability of data was ensured by performing tests for homogeneity, normality, and multicollinearity and a multiple regression analysis was performed to find out the influence of socio-economic factors on milk production. The results revealed that the experience of the dairy farmer (1%), his training (10%), landholding size (5%), incorporating the Azolla in the feed (10%) and availability of fresh grass or fodder (5%) were significant factors which contributed to the enhanced milk yield. Results highlight the contribution of training of dairy farmers. Particularly, feed management practices help streamline the efficiency of the farmer. The age, education, gender, and the

civil status of the farmer, distance to the market, or the herd size were not statistically significant. T-test reveals that the difference in milk production between farms receiving and not-receiving training (0.81l/Cow/day) is statistically significant ( $P < |t| 0.047$ ) confirming the relative increase in milk productivity due to training received.

**Keywords:** Dairy farms, Feed management, Milk production, Poonakari