

Cottage Curd Production in Matara District with Special Emphasis on Farmer Awareness and Preference towards the Use of an Improved Culture for the Production of Quality Curd

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Abstract

Curd is a fermented milk product obtained from coagulation of cow or buffalo milk or a mixture thereof by the activity of lactic acid bacteria. Buffalo milk curd is a very popular indigenous fermented milk product of Sri Lanka produced by traditional small scale farmers. The study was conducted to collect information on cottage curd production in Matara district of Sri Lanka. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the DS divisions in Matara considering the cost effectiveness, feasibility of the study and number of curd producing farmers. Twenty five curd producing farmers in selected DS divisions were interviewed. A pre-tested interview schedule was employed to collect information on cottage curd production and awareness and preference towards the use of an improved culture for the production of quality curd. Majority (92%) involved in curd processing were female members of the family and animal caring was totally done by males. All the processors utilized cultures from previous day batch of curds prepared by them. A majority of the processors (68%) added 5 ml of culture/pot (range 2.5ml - 10 ml). Sixty percent knew the reason for the addition of culture while none of them knew what the culture contained. However, all of them knew that a good culture gives a better quality curd. 44% detected failures of curdling. A majority (64%) of them mentioned that it was due to the use of an old culture and as a remedy all of them added new culture. Total cost for the culture/pot varied from Rs. 0 to 19.40 (average Rs. 3.84). None knew the SLS requirements for curd. Sixteen percent checked final product quality while others (84%) did not. Only 28% preferred to buy improved culture for the production of quality curd and liked to pay Rs. 9/curd for culture, while others (72%) believed only on the culture prepared by them. None of the processors were aware of the culture developed by Veterinary Research Institute (VRI) and further, they did not use any other improved culture. Even though, 40% of the processors detected the defects on curd before the expiry date, all the processors were satisfied with their product quality. It is concluded that the traditional thinking pattern of the majority (72%) of curd processors prevent introduction of improved culture for the quality curd production. However, strong extension education programmes would be suggested to popularize it among the processors.

Keywords: awareness, cottage curd production, improved formulated culture, preference, quality