

IMPROVING GOAT PRODUCTION IN THE 'COCONUT TRIANGLE' OF SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

A field survey was conducted in the districts of Kurunegala and Puttalam in the 'Coconut Triangle', to study the goat production systems in the area, and the problems faced. A random sample of 150 goat farmers, from 5 villages in the two districts, were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. Goat farms of three different herd sizes – small herd (<5 goats), medium herd (5-10 goats) and large herd (>10 goats) exist in the area. These farms differed in resource characteristics. Women are more involved in rearing of goats. 'Contract leasing' of goats reared was observed among small herd farmers. Large herd farmers provided special housing to goats. Small herd farmers do supplementary feeding of goats. Controlled herded feeding on grasses and shrubs is common or goats roam freely. Goats are sold on the basis of their live-weight. A lack of extension services for goat production exists in both the districts. Goat farmers had poor knowledge on improved nutrition, better disease control and breeding superior breeds. Some policy implications for developing goat production are discussed.