

PREVALENCE OF MASTITIS IN DAIRY FARMS IN KOTAWEHERA GOVERNMENT VETERINARY RANGE

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Estimation of prevalence of mastitis in cows and its risk factors are important to design and implement its control/preventive programmes for prevention. Information about farm management addressing number of milking cows, cow sheds, whether milker is regularly changed or not, whether hand washing is practiced before milking, whether teat dipping is adopted, whether strip cup test is performed are important in this regard. In this study, the breed of the cows and other information were collected by using a questionnaire administered in personnel interview among dairy farmers in Kotawehera veterinary range. Clinical mastitis cases were detected by identification of 5 cardinal signs of inflammation of the udder by me. At least 2 or more of the above cardinal signs were to be present to categorize a given cow as mastitic. To define, as having mastitis, at least one quarter was to be clinically detected and a herd was defined as mastitic when at least one such cow was detected.

A total of 144 lactating cows from 50 farms in Kotawehera veterinary range (sampled during November 2013 - May 2014) were studied. The overall prevalence of mastitis among cows was 34%. Having poor shed condition was identified as a risk factor (OR=1.6, 95%CI=0.59-4.4) for mastitis. Teat dipping (OR=0.6, 95% CI=0.17-2.71) and changing the milker (OR=0.5 95% CI=0.1-2.5) appear to act as protective factors for mastitis, which is a controversial finding. Though farmers indicate that they do not change the milker, it is normal in an average village setting for somebody to milk the cows if the regular person is absent. Hand washing before milking, which should be a protective factor in general, acts as a risk factor (OR=1.66 95% CI=0.31-8.4) in this study, which is also controversial. The reason for this could be improper hand washing or use of polluted water without soap for hand washing both of which could increase the risk of mastitis.

The observed relatively high incidence of clinical mastitis highlights the need to implement a control programme in this veterinary range. More farmer training programmes, possibly milker training programs, application of CMT for higher producers, ABST from VIC for CMT positive cases and treatment schedules for infected cows, were planned in the range, as a result of this investigation. Dry and clean floor to keep cow's udder and teats clean and dry were highlighted in these educational programs.