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PREVALENCE OF *CRYPTOSPORIDIUM* INFECTION AMONG GOATS IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN THREE AGRO CLIMATIC ZONES OF SRI LANKA

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Cryptosporidium, an enteropathogenic protozoan parasite that multiplies on the brush border of enterocytes, causes diarrhoea in man and many domestic animals. This parasitic infection has been reported in children, calves and goats in Sri Lanka. The present study describes the prevalence of *Cryptosporidium* infection among goats in selected locations in three agro climatic zones (dry, intermediate and wet zones) of Sri Lanka.

Single faecal samples collected from a total of 600 goats (mixed breeds: age 1 week - 4 years) from selected locations in three climatic zones (200 from each zone) were subjected to parasitological examination. This included the isolation of *Cryptosporidia* from faeces using the Sheather's concentrated sucrose solution and identification of the parasite using the modified Ziehl Neelsen staining technique.

Cryptosporidium oocysts were detected in 55%, 18% and 24.5% of the faecal samples collected from the dry, intermediate and wet zones, respectively. The finding of *Cryptosporidium* in goats in these areas provides evidence of the widespread distribution of this parasite in Sri Lanka. Studies are in progress to investigate the prevalence of the infection in different age groups of goats in these climatic zones and to elucidate the role of the parasite in the pathogenesis of neonatal diarrhoea in goats.

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