

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine factors influencing the development of dairy farms at Nong-Pho, Amphoe Photharam, Ratchaburi Province, focusing on farming patterns and techniques, farm labours, sanitation and cooperative spirit, including problems and obstacles of dairy farm management.

Both primary and secondary sources of relevant data were utilized in this study. The primary data were gathered by means of systematically interviewing 90 members of the Nong-Pho Ratchaburi Dairy Farm Cooperatives located in Ratchaburi Province. The secondary data came from several governmental agencies.

The findings are as follows:

1. The majority of dairy farm cooperative members were in the age-group of 36 - 45 years old. Average educational background was grade 4 of the primary level. Dairy farming was their major occupation, whereas their minor occupations were either wet-rice cultivation or cash-crops plantations.

Generally, operators of large-sized dairy farms had 11 to 15 years' dairy farming experience. Those who owned medium and small-sized farms had 6 to 10 years' dairy farming experience.

2. With regard to the patterns of the dairy farming, the farmers mainly raised their dairy cattle in the traditional way. The cowhouses

for dairy cattle were usually built near their houses. Each was located no farther than two kilometers from the farmer's house. Transportation was good all year round. Artesian wells were a major source of water. The type of dairy cattle that the farmers tended to raise most was the Holstein-Friesian. Grass and Corn were used as the main food for dairy cattle. There were two milking rounds a day. The first one in the morning, mostly between 05.00 a.m. and 06.00 a.m., and the second one in the afternoon, mostly between 16.30 p.m. and 17.30 p.m.

3. Most labor came from family members. The routine work included gathering grass, cleaning cowhouses and milk containers, feeding the cattle, milking, and transporting raw milk to the cooperatives' dairy plant.

4. The owners maintained high sanitation standard by applying many stringent measures relating to farm hygiene, milking method, and quality of raw milk itself.

5. Most farmers understood the cooperative system quite well and showed their cooperative spirit. They also realized that they could derive certain benefits from the cooperative system, especially in the selling of raw milk to their cooperatives.

6. The farmers' major problems and obstacles were, first, repeated failures of artificial insemination and, second, animal diseases.