Abstract No: *ASRS 11*

APPROACH OF LIVESTOCK FARMERS IN REGARDS TO ADAPTING THE SEXED SEMEN IN BATTICALOA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA (DRY ZONE) DURING THE PERIOD OF 2015-2016

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The production performance of the livestock sector is mainly based on the reproductive performance of the cow which ultimately leads the country in profitable way while maintaining the successful cow-calf operation, annually. As the highest economic return, quality and the quantity can be enhanced with the support of proper animal breeding techniques incorporated with the best quality sexed semen in the cow herd. Even though farmers are used to adapt the Artificial Insemination (AI) Techniques, there is a gap between adapting the conventional semen and Sexed Semen in most of the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka. Therefore, present study was focused in the selected veterinary ranges of Batticaloa District (Dry Zone) in order to understand the present status and influencing factors in regards to adapting Sexed Semen as well.
According to the results obtained through the study, nearly 21,889 cattle farms have been registered under the total of 15 veterinary ranges of the study location where 114,270 animals are cows and 63,807 animals are as heifers (38,209) and calves (25,598). In the present study, more than half of the respondents (55.3%) knew well about sexed semen while 44.7% of the total do not. Among the total farmers who knew well about sexed semen, only 18.7% of them adapted AI on their cow with the sexed semen while rest were not having much awareness on it. As the results of using Sexed Semen in Sub Urban areas, 19.5% of the total were supported with the pregnancy diagnosis of the Cow/ Heifer while 80.5% of the total mentioned as it is in the Non-Pregnant status, during the study period. Among the 19.5% of the Pregnancy Diagnosis, 9.8% of the responses were succeeded with its female calves while the rest were not recognized with the calves, as well. However, while the animals are totally under the intensive rearing system (Urban) around 73% of the animals showed the pregnancy via the sexed semen usage. Moreover, there was a positive significant relationship ($p<0.01$) observed between the time of insemination ($r=0.527$), climatic condition ($r=0.456$), physiological status of the animal ($r=0.801$), age ($r=0.532$) and the success rate. However, willingness was scaled towards the respondents where 35.3% of the respondents mentioned that they will practice AI with sexed semen in order to optimize the production performance in future.

Keywords*: Animal breeding, Artificial Insemination, conventional semen, Sexed Semen, environmental and physiological factors*

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