

Dairy Value Chain: Assessing the Inter Linkage of Dairy Farm and Small-Scale Dairy Processing in Tigray: Case Study of Mekelle City

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Abstract : Dairy services are considered as sources of income, employment, nutrition and health for smallholder rural and urban farmers. The main objective of this study is to assess the interlinkage of dairy farms and small-scale dairy processing in Mekelle, Tigray. To achieve the stated objective, a descriptive research approach was employed where data was collected from 45 dairy farmers and 40 small-scale processors and analyzed by calculating the mean values and percentages. Findings show that the dairy business in the study area is characterized by a shortage of feed and water for the farm. The dairy farm is dominated by breeds of hybrid type, followed by the so called 'begait'. Though the farms have access to medication and vaccination for the cattle, they fell short of hygiene practices, reliable shade for the cattle and separate space for the calves. The value chain at the milk production stage is characterized by a low production rate, selling raw milk without adding value and a very meager traditional processing practice. Furthermore, small-scale milk processors are characterized by collecting milk from farmers and producing cheese, butter, ghee and sour milk. They do not engage in modern milk processing like pasteurized milk, yogurt and table butter. Most small-scale milk processors are engaged in traditional production systems. Additionally, the milk consumption and marketing part of the chain is dominated by the informal market (channel), where market problems, lack of skill and technology, shortage of loans and weak policy support are being faced as the main challenges. Based on the findings, recommendations and future research areas are forwarded.

Keywords : value-chain, dairy, milk production, milk processing

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