Native Beef Cattle Production System: Case Study at Nakhon Si Thammarat and Surat Thani Provinces

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the current status of native beef cattle production systems (raising conditions, sources and quality of roughages and carcass quality) at Nakhon Si Thammarat and Surat Thani Provinces. Most farmers raised cattle as a supplementary occupation apart from their main agricultural work. They were small scale farmers with 7-8 heads/farm. The main purpose was to earn additional income; that is, they were sold as beef cattle or fighting bulls. The farmers let the cattle into the paddy fields or natural pastures or tied in the rubber plantation. In the rainy season, the cattle were brought to the higher places and the feed provided. Most farmers vaccinated their cattle to prevent foot and mouth disease. Most farmers had never kept any records of their cattle and most of their cows were naturally mated with the native bulls. The cattle were mainly fed with green forages and most belonged to grass family. The most important forage types for farmers in Nakhon Si Thammarat harvested as their cattle feed were Hemarthria altissima and Microstegium ciliatum. For the Surat Thani province, most belonged to Axonopus compressus, Ischaemum magnum, Ischaemum timorense, Paspalum atratum, M. ciliatum, and Digitaria ciliaris. The nutritive values of the forages consisted of 9.84% protein, 67.07, 39.74 and 4.36% of NDF, ADF and ADL, respectively. Two-year-old male cattle were studied for carcass quality. The result showed that the average live weight of the cattle was 212.69 kg, carcass yield was 50.66%, carcass length 37.67 inches, and loin eye area 9.62 square inches. The lean yield averaged at 71.43%, fat and bone percentage at 2.08 and 22.95%, respectively.

Key words: Native beef cattle, Production system

INTRODUCTION

Nakhon Si Thammarat and Surat Thani provinces have the most cattle production of upper south Thailand which has 164,606 and 73,772 head. (Office of Agricultural Economics, 2009), and most of them were native beef cattle. However, in recent years there were many economics and social changes that impact on raising condition of native cattle, especially the agricultural policy of government to expand the rubber and oil palm plantations. So the pasture areas for cattle decrease continuously. Thus, this research was to investigate the current status of native beef cattle production system at Nakhon Si Thammarat and Surat Thani Provinces. The target group was the farmers whose native beef cattle were raised by grazing on the natural pastures. The study focused on the raising conditions, sources and quality of roughages, traits, carcass quality and yield.