

**Milking hygiene and prevalence of dairy cattle mastitis in Pannala  
veterinary surgeon division**

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In North Western Province (NWP), there is considerable potential to rear improved dairy cattle, which can contribute greatly in increased volumes of milk to enhance the total milk production in Sri Lanka. There are a large number of small scale dairy farmers in Pannala veterinary surgeon (VS) division in NWP. A survey was conducted to review the milking hygiene and the prevalence of mastitis of dairy cattle in the VS division. Therefore, a cross sectional study was carried out at Bopitiya, Hamangalla, Pannala, Welpalla, and Yakwila villages in the Pannala VS division involving 30 small scale dairy farms, where artificial inseminations were practiced. A questionnaire was used to assess milking practices while clinical examination of animals and California Mastitis Test (CMT) were used to ascertain the status of mastitis. Only eight farms showed the incidence of clinical mastitis at the time of farm visits and all 4 teats were missing in some animals. Based on the CMT at farm level, the prevalence of subclinical mastitis was considerably high in dairy cattle (66.67%). The hygienic practices during milking were exceptionally poor in most of the farms (95%) so that there is a significant relationship between hygienic practices about subclinical and clinical mastitis. Improper hygiene, traditional beliefs, poor knowledge on diseases, additional cost for treatments and lack of government support were known to be the major causes for high prevalence of mastitis. Efficient awareness programmes and government intervention are vital to overcome this provision in small scale dairy sector in Pannala VS division.

**Key words:** Cattle mastitis, Milking hygiene, California mastitis test

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