

# PRODUCE CLEAN MILK

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IN comparison with other countries, Ceylon is a small consumer of fresh milk. This can be attributed to a number of reasons, the chief of which are :—

- (1) The poor quality and quantity of milk due to poor feeding.
- (2) The practice of adulterating milk with water.
- (3) Unhygienic practices in dairying.
- (4) The convenience of tinned milk.

We are becoming more and more dependent on tinned milk foods obtained from foreign countries and in these uncertain times it may not always be possible to maintain supplies. Tinned milk is not so good as pure cow's milk, but the majority of people prefer tinned milk because they feel that fresh milk is a carrier of disease. This is true, but it applies only in cases where milk is produced under unhygienic conditions. In this country, producers of clean, pure milk are unfortunately the exception rather than the rule.

What is clean, fresh milk? Clean milk is milk of full flavour from healthy cows, unadulterated with added water, free from dirt and containing no harmful bacteria.

The importance of pure fresh milk as an article of diet cannot be overstressed; it is in itself a complete food, containing proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins and carbohydrates that are essential for body building, both in adults and children. But because it is a complete food, it is also a very dangerous breeding ground for bacteria, and when carelessly produced and improperly handled milk becomes an almost certain means of spreading disease.

No consumer is interested in a food from which he is likely to contract diseases, such as simple diarrhoea, typhoid fever, septic sore throat, dysentery and even tuberculosis. It is necessary, therefore, to build up public confidence by following hygienic practices. In the first place no one can produce clean milk without proper care and management of his herd.

## Health of Cattle

The closest attention must be paid to the health of the cattle. A cow suffering from a disease such as tuberculosis will endanger the lives of many, especially children; in this country the bulk of animals suffering from this disease are almost all of foreign origin and the indigenous Sinhala are not so prone to it. Cows should be tested for T.B. and other diseases. Milk that comes from a sick animal should under no circumstances be sold for human consumption.

The herd must be adequately fed with grass and concentrates (*e.g.* poonac) if full rich milk is to be obtained and the animals are to remain in a healthy condition.

### **Clean the Cow**

It is essential to have all cows clean at milking time. The body of the cow, especially the belly, flanks and udder should be well cleaned before milking. Loose hairs, manure, straw, body lice and other foreign material can all find their way into the milk pail from these sources. Cows on pastures are more clean than those kept in stalls, nevertheless although they appear clean, they too require to be brushed and washed before milking. In long-haired animals it is a good practice to clip off excess hair from the udders, flanks and tails. After grooming, the udders, belly and tail should be carefully wiped with the clean damp cloth to remove dust and loose hairs.

### **Milk Shed Hygiene**

The dairy should be situated on high ground, with good natural drainage. Such buildings as poultry houses, pig sties, urinals, and manure pits should be well away from the milk sheds. The shed should have a water-proof stone floor which can be washed easily. A concrete floor is easy to clean and there is no loss of liquid manure, the only disadvantage being that it may sometimes be too cold for the cows to lie down; this could be remedied by giving the animals a good layer of bedding. An abundance of light is also necessary. Adequate ventilation should be provided, but at the same time the possibility of a cold draft blowing straight through must be avoided. Cob-webs and dirt should on no account be allowed to accumulate.

### **Water Supply**

Water must be pure. Contaminated water will spread disease and attention must be paid to the water with which milk pails and other utensils are washed. On no account whatever must milk be adulterated with water. This is a vicious custom for which there is no excuse other than the desire to defraud the public.

### **Disposal of Waste**

All animal waste products must be regularly removed and should not be left long exposed to attract flies, rats or birds, all of which are agents in spreading disease bacteria. Flies form the major menace; they breed in human excreta and rotting filth. Accumulations of manure, spilled milk and other wastes such as spoiled feeds all attract flies which move from the filth to the milk and so spread the germs of disease.

### **Health of Milk Handlers**

All handlers of milk must be healthy, because diseases like, typhoid, tuberculosis, septic sore throat, dysentery and diphtheria can unknowingly be introduced into the milk by the milker, or the man handling the milk if he is unwell. They must always wash their hands and brush their nails before beginning work. They should wear white caps to keep their hair in place, and to prevent loose hairs from falling into the pail.

### **Care of Utensils**

Dirty milk utensils are one of most important sources of milk contamination. All dairy utensils should first be washed and then sterilized thoroughly soon after use. First rinse the utensils with cold or lukewarm water, then wash them with hot water and a washing powder using a stiff brush, and finally sterilize them with steam. Do not use soaps, rags or towels for cleaning and drying utensils.

*(To be continued)*