

Tropical milk production systems and milk quality: a review

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Abstract

We reviewed information on dairy cattle production systems in the tropics, the factors involved, and their influence on milk composition. Genetic factors had greater influence on milk production; specialized breeds produced more milk, and there was an inverse relation between the content of fat, protein, total solids, and the amount of milk produced. Season was related to the availability of forage, and the type of grazing system. Greater pasture area increased individual production, while a greater supply of feed concentrate did not increase milk production. The number of calvings positively affected milk production through the fifth calving, with subsequent declines in production. Milk production increased to a maximum and then declined as lactation progressed. Specialized systems had higher production and better hygienic milk quality; milking and container equipment are critical for maintaining milk sanitary quality. Factor interaction is highly complex, preventing the generation of specific recommendations and general principles applicable to the specific conditions for each system.

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