

I'm not a bot



1. Introduction The country's milk production primarily relies on cows (Table 1), but smaller quantities come from goats and camels in specific regions, mainly pastoral areas. Ethiopia has four major systems of milk production: a) Pastoralism b) Highland Smallholder c) Urban and peri-urban d) Intensive dairy farming. a) Pastoralism About 30% of the country's livestock are found in pastoral areas, which account for approximately 10% of the human population. Pastoralism is significant in lowland regions, but due to rainfall patterns and feed shortages, milk production is low and heavily dependent on seasonal changes. b) Highland Smallholder milk production The Ethiopian highlands have considerable potential for dairy development, covering about 40% of the country's land (around 490,000 km²). The areas are characterized by mixed farming systems with both crops and livestock managed together. Most cows in these regions are indigenous breeds with lower productivity, resulting in average lactation yields of around 524 litres over 239 days. c) Urban and peri-urban milk production This system focuses on major cities and towns with high demands for milk. It relies mainly on industrial by-products (e.g., Oil Seed Cakes, Bran) and purchased roughage as feed sources. The primary goal is to sell milk for additional cash income, often generated through homegrown feeds. d) Intensive Dairy Farming A more specialized dairy farming practice, primarily undertaken by the state sector and a few individuals on a commercial basis. Most intensive dairy farms are located in and around Addis Ababa, relying heavily on exotic purebred stock. The urban, peri-urban, and intensive dairy farming systems together contribute significantly to the country's milk production. High milk production in Ethiopia remains a challenge due to low contribution to national income. The livestock sector, including dairy, faces various constraints that hinder its growth. Poor animal health, low disease resistance, and fertility issues in Ethiopia's livestock are largely caused by the interplay between technical and non-technical constraints. Poor grazing management systems lead to high mortality and morbidity, while inadequate funding for veterinary measures and poor nutrition exacerbate the problem. In highland zones, a lack of grazing land hinders smallholder livestock production, forcing farmers to trek long distances in search of food during the dry season. Similarly, the quality of feed deteriorates during this period, affecting both mixed farming and pastoral systems. The genetic makeup of Ethiopia's livestock has been shaped by natural selection and environmental factors, making them better adapted to withstand feed and water shortages, disease challenges, and harsh climates. However, their production capacity remains relatively low.

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