

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

CHARACTERIZATION OF HEIFERS REARING IN FAMILY OWNED DAIRY FARMS IN PRESIDENTE OLEGÁRIO - MINAS GERAIS

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The rearing of females is one of the most important activities of dairy cattle and has as main objective the replenishment of matrices and genetic improvement of the herd. However, this activity has not received the necessary attention. Most of the negligence is related to the non-immediate financial return, due to the expenses obtained with the heifers until the first lactation. The objective of the present work was to characterize the rearing of bovine females in milk producing households. The data collected came from 12 properties, located in the Northwest region of Minas Gerais, in the municipality of Presidente Olegário, Minas Gerais, in the community of Cachoeirinha / Boa Vista; in the period between May and June 2016. The data were recorded in Sphinx® software spreadsheets and the responses were grouped by means of their categorization and frequency. It was possible to show low schooling of the producers, with 86.36% having incomplete primary education, a predominance of family labor in 91.67% of the farms, and a low percentage of lactating cows in all farms. Several deficiencies have been identified that begin on weaning of heifers and pass through the entire period up to the first heifer coverage. The lack of zootechnical notes observed in all properties contributes to the persistence of errors. Most of the producers make supplementary offers of voluminous and concentrated foods, however, the lack of technical criteria for the division of lots and feeding of heifers causes loss of technical and economic efficiency. Weight and age at first coverage are not adequate to the racial pattern, varying from 270 to 300 kg at 18 to 20 months of age, which together with the lack of correct sanitary management observed, may jeopardize the productive life of the females, as well the genetic improvement of the herd. In this way, we can conclude that the analyzed properties are characterized as low technology, with needs for improvements in nutritional, sanitary and reproductive management in the rearing phase of bovine females destined to milk production.

Keywords: Dairy business; heifers breeding; replacement females

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