



Hon Minister for Agriculture – Dr Mahendra Reddy

Parliamentary

42/2022 -Written Question

Thursday 10th February, 2022

Written Question

- **42/2022 Hon. Inosi Kuridrani to ask the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment – Can the Minister update Parliament on the progress of the embryonic transfer (ET) programme and the percentage of cattle infected with tuberculosis in particular –**
 - a) **the total number of farms by Division which have benefitted from the ET programme annually since 2018; and**
 - b) **the total number and percentage of cattle infected with tuberculosis annually since 2018.**

The ET program was designed in 2 phases. The 1st phase involved establishment of nucleus herd at government stations. The second phase involves mass replication of these genetics.

The first phase which commenced in 2017/2018 financial year, whereby nucleus herd was developed at Sigatoka Research station for Senepol [Beef Breed] and Brown Swiss [Dairy Breed]. The embryo's were implanted in our local recipients. These surrogated mothers (local recipients) have delivered the calves which are now been reared as nucleus herd on research station. This program targets rapid multiplication of stock on pure breeds as a source of genetic material for breeding and distribution to farmers. It takes 2 to 2 ½ years for cattle to be ready for breeding from time of birth. Elite stock are bred to produce quality genetic that are well

adapted, produce superior growth traits and are resilient under the natural environment conditions.

The Waidradra Station has been developed for breeding and multiplication of pure Brown swiss breed. In addition, Senepol breed multiplication is carried out at Dobuilevu Research Station. Further to this Senepol bulls were also cross bred with local beef cows and the offspring which will also be distributed to farmers to improve the genetic of local beef.

Subsequently, the second phase which involves mass replication will start in 2022 whereby farmers will start benefiting through this program. This will ensure pure breeding program continues, research and development will be carried out to improve the production and performance of beef and dairy industry in terms of meat and milk production.

Further to that above, the Biotechnology laboratory will also be established for genetic preservation, storage and distribution of genetic materials to farmers.

The current stock ready for distribution is as follows:

Pure Brown Swiss Breed – 5 Bulls

Pure Senapol Breed – 7 Bulls

F1 Beef Breed - Senepol Bull cross with local Cows – 30 [1 year bulls]

- The total number and percentage of cattle infected with tuberculosis annually since 2018.

A total of 3012 cattle were infected with tuberculosis from 2018 to 2021.

- i. In 2018, 1681 cattle which is 5% of the total number of cattle tested, was infected with tuberculosis.
- ii. In 2019, 1117 cattle which is 3.1% of the total number of cattle tested, was infected with tuberculosis.

- iii. In 2020, 900 which is 2% of the total number of cattle tested, was infected with tuberculosis.
- iv. In 2021, 387 cattle which is 1.6% of the total number of cattle tested, was infected with tuberculosis. In 2021, the total number of cattle tested was significantly low due to Covid restrictions.
- v. As widely recommended worldwide, the Ministry is currently practicing routine testing on farms at 90 days interval and removal of infected animals.

Finally, as a standard requirement, the farm is given free status from TB once the Ministry has completed 3 clear tests on the farm.

END
