



**BUSITEMA  
UNIVERSITY**  
*Pursuing Excellence*

**ASSESSMENT OF THE FEEDING PRACTICES OF LACTATING COWS AMONG  
SMALL HOLDER DAIRY FARMERS IN NAMANYONYI SUB COUNTY, MBALE  
DISTRICT.**



**BY**

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AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OF  
BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY**

**JUNE, 2014**

**DECLARATION**

I **AMUGE FELICITY**, declare that this dissertation is original and has not been submitted to another university or any other institution of learning for the award of any degree

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**APPROVAL**

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.....

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, brothers, sisters and friends

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to thank the almighty God, for providing me with his grace and opportunity to finish this academic program and secondly, I thank my dear parents, Sister Ms Jenifer Atiti for all their support and courage that they gave me when I was pursuing the course. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to all friends who have contributed towards the successful completion of this dissertation.

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## **LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS**

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SPSS	Statistical Package for the social Sciences
UBOS	Uganda bureau of statistics
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NGOs	Non-Government Organisation
DDA	Dairy Development Authority



## ABSTRACT

A cross sectional survey was carried out in Namanyonyi sub county Mbale district in the month of march to assess the feeding practices of lactating cows among small holder dairy farmers, the specific objectives of the study were; to identify the common feed resources used for feeding lactating cows, to determine the feeding regime of lactating cows among small holder dairy farmers and to determine relationship between milk yield of lactating cows per day and feed supplementation among farmers. Data was collected from 98 respondents selected randomly from the study area using a pre-tested questionnaire with both open and closed questions. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 16 and excel and results presented using tables, graphs and pie charts. The study revealed that majority of the farmers depended on majorly natural pastures (81.6%) and home planted fodder majorly Napier grass (*Pennisetumpurpureum*) (67.3%) during rainy season followed by crop residues during the dry season. Crop residues used for feeding were maize stovers and potato veins (33.7%), followed by maize stovers only (29.6 %), with only 44.9% of the respondents who supplemented milking cows at a constant rate of mostly 2kg throughout the lactation period with maize bran in both rainy and dry seasons. The respondents did not have any feeding régime, the amount and frequency of feeds given to animals depended on the availability of feeds throughout the year. Milk production in the study area was relatively low with most of the farmers (32.7%) obtaining 8-10 litres of milk per day per cow. This was attributed majorly to feed scarcity and the fact that farmers were not aware of feeding lactating cows for production. The farmers should therefore be trained on small scale feed conservation strategies such as tube silage and box baling of hay to ease dry season feed shortages, farmers should also be trained on the requirements of lactating cows at the various stages of lactation to ensure that their nutrient requirements are met.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

In Uganda, agriculture is dominated by small holder farmers who occupy most of the land and produce 80% of the livestock and crop products (Salami *et al.*, 2010). Livestock production in particular dairy production plays an important role through the provision of milk for the household consumption, for sale, manure that supports crop production. Dairy animals are also provided for insurance hence improves household livelihood (Chinogaramombe *et al.*, 2008). The dairy sector contributes about 50% which is half of the total livestock national gross domestic production GDP (Grimaud *et al.*, 2007).

However, small holder dairy farmers encounter a number of challenges, which contribute to their low milk production (Wozemba and Nsanja, 2008). The major constraints faced by these farmers include feeding, diseases and inadequate operating capital with nutrition being highlighted as the major factor limiting increased and sustainable milk production in dairy production systems ((Kinambuga *et al.*, 2012 ;ILRI,1995).

There is seasonal availability of feed resources in terms of quality and quantity, especially during dry season this has continued to hinder milk production (Kavana and Msangi,2005; Gilliah *et al.*, 2013), since the farmers do not know the feed conservation practices that can help to avail feeds during periods of scarcity and further more the quantity of feeds that should be given to the animals and the farmers still face problems on how to feed dairy animals at different stages of growth(Nakiganda *et al.*,2005).

Small holder dairy farming in Uganda is majorly concentrated in the western region which produces the highest volume of milk in the country amounting for about 33.7% of the national milk production This is attributed to the relatively increased improved breeds in this region and some farmers also practice pasture preservation (Dairy Development Authority,2008).The central region produces 31.6%,northern 9.6% while in mbale and other districts in the eastern produce 18.1% of the national milk and this does not meet the market demand and thus there's milk deficit in the region(Balikowa, 2011;Kasirye, 2003).

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