COPA disclose that the number of closed farms in this country exceeds 14000

Date : 19-01-2024

- **The amount of milk received by Milco company on a daily basis has greatly decreased - Minister Mahinda Amaraweera**
- **The committee emphasizes the importance of keeping the data system of the department up-to-date**
- **Focus on Implementation of Artificial Insemination Programme**
- **Focus on progress in formulation of National Policy on milk production**
- **Concerns raised regarding the death of 104 goats imported from Australia for breeding**

The Committee on Public Accounts (COPA) revealed that more than 14000 farms in Sri Lanka have been closed and this has been identified according to the data received from the provinces. The officials pointed out that most of these farms are small-scale farms and most of these farms have been closed due to animal theft.

COPA pointed out that it is not acceptable to say that farms are closing down only because of the frustration of small-scale farmers due to animal theft. Officials pointed out that the destruction of pastures needed for cattle and land-related problems have also caused this. Thus, the COPA pointed out that the Department of Animal Production and Health should maintain accurate and clear data.

Moreover, the Committee emphasized the importance of actively maintaining the data system by updating the existing data.

This was discussed at the COPA meeting held recently (Jan. 11) under the Chairmanship of Hon. Lasantha Alagiyawanna, to consider the progress of the recommendations given to the Department of Animal Production and Health on July 06, 2023 by the Committee on Public Accounts.

Hon. Mahinda Amaraweera, the Minister in charge of Agriculture, was also involved for this at the invitation of the Committee. The Committee discussed at length the need for local milk in this country and the Minister thus pointed out that the amount of milk received by the Milco company on a daily basis has greatly decreased.

Furthermore, attention was also paid to the preparation of the national policy related to milk production, which was discussed in the previous Committee meeting, and the officials present pointed out that this national policy has now been prepared and it has been forwarded to the Cabinet for approval.

Moreover, the Committee drew attention regarding the death of 104 goats imported from Australia in Embuldanda and Thelahera goat breeding centers. As this was discussed at the last Committee meeting, it was necessary to inquire about the progress of releasing these goats into the field. Thus, the officials pointed out that within a month these remaining animals are ready to be released into the field. The Committee Chair also recommended that a report be given to the Committee in this regard.

The implementation of the artificial insemination programme was focused on at length.

State Minister Hon. Diana Gamage, Members of Parliament Hon. Tissa Attanayake, Hon. A.L.M. Athaullah, Hon. Ashok Abeysinghe, and Hon. Weerasumana Weerasinghe were present at the Committee meeting held.