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Tropical dairy systems

This chapter:

Introduces the major features of tropical dairy systems and quantifies the development of dairying in South-East Asia and some of the world's large dairy industries.

The main points in this chapter:

- dairying provides a regular income by converting low value forages and crop residues, and using family labour, into a valued market commodity
- unlike in other tropical and subtropical areas of the world, dairying has only become established recently in South-East Asia
- the emphasis in dairy production is changing from rural development to a business-minded approach to farm management
- by 2020, South-East Asia will supply only 25% of its total milk demand, requiring importations of 9 million MT milk/yr
- for fresh milk to remain competitive with the product reconstituted from imported ingredients, farmers should expect to receive no more than the equivalent of US 30 c/L milk
- small holder farmers in Malaysia and Thailand currently receive in excess of US 30 c/L as a base price, whereas those in Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam receive less than this threshold milk return.

Geographers have categorised the tropics into four climate zones, with all months warm or hot, and the zone varying with rainfall and evaporation, as follows:

1. rainy (or humid) tropics, with at most one or two dry months and no winter, with the coolest month above 18°C
2. wet and dry tropics, with a well-developed dry season, with one or two rainy seasons