

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A 20/01/2026) - IRSA 05 - FAMILY FARMING IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

DAIRY CATTLE FEEDING PRACTICES IN A DROUGHT CONTEXT IN THE MEXICAN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Ruben Manuel Zepeda Cancino (ruben.zepeda@fmvz.unam.mx)

Randy Alexis Jiménez Jiménez (randy-alexis@fmvz.unam.mx)

Armando Martinez Rosales (armandomrmx@gmail.com)

In Mexico, family dairy farming contributes 21% to national milk production. This livestock activity has been impacted by severe droughts resulting from climate change. The objective of this study was to analyze feeding practices for dairy cattle from a location perspective in a drought context in Aculco, State of Mexico. The research was qualitative, involving interviews with dairy farmers, cheesemakers, and milk collectors, as well as participant observation in areas where this livestock activity takes place. The farmers are, on average, 55 years old, milk four cows, and produce 64 liters of milk per day, which they sell for US\$0.55 per liter. Feeding practices for dairy cattle are based on the use of improved forages from the Holstein model such as oats, alfalfa and concentrated feed that are combined with local knowledge of the farmers such as the use of corn stubble and grazing in the "besana" showing a localization process with the

use of cultural repertoires and peasant rationality. However, droughts have led to a scarcity of these forage resources within the production unit and a rise in their market price. For example, the price of a bale of oats went from US\$4.37 to US\$8.74. Consequently, various strategies have been employed, the main one being the sale of animals to purchase feed, which has reduced herd size and milk yields. Family dairy farming is vulnerable to droughts; however, this activity is part of the strategies that contribute to the subsistence of the peasant family in the face of climatic and economic crises. We consider it necessary to design public policies in a participatory manner that place peasant families at the center and propose strategies that promote productive diversification, as well as adequate management of water and fodder, in addition to raising awareness of the problem of global climate variation.

Palavras-chave: climate variability; cultural repertoire family; dairy farming; peasant rationality.