



A Comparative Study and Profitability Analysis of Different Crossbred Dairy Cattle in Milk Pocket Areas of Bangladesh

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author SS designed the study, wrote the protocol, analyzed data and wrote the manuscript. Author MYAK helped in questionnaire preparation and pretesting. Author DN helped in data collection. Authors SI and MAI helped to complete the research work, data analysis and writing the manuscript. Author RK provides support and guidelines to write this article. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The Present research was conducted in Sirajgonj district to know the socio-economic status of dairy farmers; to investigate the feeding practices, productive and reproductive performance of different crossbred dairy cattle and to assess the cost and return of dairy farmers in the areas of Bangladesh. A field survey was carried out with a total of 127 crossbred dairy cows under 3 Crossbreds studied from July to September 2022. Data were collected through direct interviews and careful observation of different dairy crossbred rearing farmers. The studied parameters were the major socio-economic condition, seasonal feed allowances, productive and reproductive traits and the profitability of different dairy crossbred rearing farmers where data were analyzed by using SPSS version-25. The average age of puberty of Holstein Friesian (HF), Jersey and HF×Jersey crossbreds was 21.28 ± 0.20 , 23.40 ± 0.29 and 22.42 ± 0.15 months where the age at first calving was found 44.42 ± 0.21 , 43.96 ± 0.19 , and 44.51 ± 0.16 months respectively. The highest Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) was observed at 1.43 in the case of HF crossbreds and HF×Jersey crossbreds ranked second where the BCR of 1.41 was found for the overall dairy crossbred rearing farmers. The present results would be helpful for the farmers to compare and select the high-yielding dairy crossbreds as well as to understand the profitability of rearing among these three crossbreds of dairy cattle in the selected areas. From these findings, it may concluded that the productive and reproductive performance of the HF cross is higher than the Jersey cross and HF×Jersey crossbred dairy cows in the milk pocket area of Bangladesh.

Keywords: Crossbreds; dairy cattle; feeding practice; performance; benefit-cost ratio.

1. INTRODUCTION

Livestock plays a crucial role in the development of the traditional economy of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a densely populated agricultural-based sub-tropical country. Though we are now sufficient in meat production (demand and production of 76.08 Lakh Metric Tons and 87.10 Lakh metric Tons) we have an acute shortage of milk with the demand and production of 158.50 Lakh Metric Tons and 140.68Lakh Metric Tons respectively [1]. Forecasting the demand for milk production, Bangladesh requires at least 10 years to be independent. The prediction says milk production in 2030 will be 18.1 million tons and the demand will rise by 17.22 million tons [2]. Dairy generates more regular cash income and dairy production, processing and marketing generate more employment per unit value added compared to crops [3, 4]. Production of milk and meat should increase substantially. According to the report of [1], the contribution of livestock to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 1.85% with a GDP growth rate is 3.23% and the share of livestock in agricultural GDP is 16.52%. Livestock is an important subsector of agriculture that plays an important role in promoting food security, human health and poverty alleviation as well as the economic development of Bangladesh. Livestock is also an integral component of the complex farming in Bangladesh as it's not only a source of meat and milk production but also a major source of farm power services and the major income generation

of the farmers. About 20% of people directly and 50% of people partly depend on the livestock sector [1]. Dairying is an efficient farming system that contributes as a potent tool for developing the national economy and sustainable food production systems [5]. The profitability of dairy farms mainly depends on high milk yield and optimum reproductive efficiency [6]. Regular breeding of female animals is an economically crucial trait as it affects the calving interval, calf crop, and milk production [7]. The success of dairy farming relies remarkably on the calving regularity of each cow within the normal physiological range [8]. However, repeat-breeder cows are a major constraint to the efficient and profitable reproductive management of dairy farms [6].

In Veterinaria Digital, an article published on 15th June 2022 by Dr. David Díez Arias, Veterinary Technical team of Biovet S.A. he said that Bangladesh is currently ranked among the 25 largest milk-producing and 12th meat-producing countries in the world. Production is spread throughout the country and has grown practically year after year in recent decades, since the '70s'. Then, the annual production was approximately 1 million tons of milk, while current production is around 11 million tons. The growth of the sector since 2010 is remarkable, where national milk production has been multiplied by five [9]. Production growth of dairy products was large due to a mutual effect of the government's importance as well as the activities of the

governmental organizations. Generally crossbred cows under village conditions yield from 600 to 800 liters per lactation of 210 to 240 days [10]. The low productivity of milking cows in the country is due to a shortage of feeds and fodder, poor genetic potentiality, and widespread diseases. For better performance, suitable breeds of cows have to be developed in our country through proper selection, planned breeding, and upgrading together with improved management practices. Despite all these problems recently some people in the rural areas of the low-income group are very much more interested in small-scale dairy farming than those other professions. Dairy farming is a profitable business in milk pocket areas of Bangladesh. There were few studies regarding the profitability of cross-breed dairy cattle. So this study is taken to know the dairy farming pattern and which crossbred dairy cattle are more suitable and profitable for dairy farming in the milk pocket areas of Bangladesh.

1.1 Objectives

1. To know the socio-economic status of dairy farmers in the milk pocket areas.
2. To investigate the feeding practices, productive, and reproductive performance of different crossbred dairy cattle.
3. To assess the cost and return of crossbred dairy cattle-rearing farmers.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Area Selection

The study area was selected based on the availability of dairy farms especially from the milk pocket area namely Sirajgonj district. Sirajgonj district is located between 24°01' and 24°47' north latitudes and between 89°15' and 89°59' east longitudes under the Rajshahi divisions of Bangladesh.

2.2 Data Collection and Sampling Techniques

A baseline survey was conducted with a pre-designed questionnaire to know the socioeconomic status of the dairy cattle farmers, their average annual Cost and Return from dairy farming in the study areas. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure the availability and accuracy of the data collection process. Primary

data were collected from the Sirajgonj district under the Rajshahi division of Bangladesh. Data were collected from Baghabari village of Sahzadpur upazila under Sirajgonj district. Data were collected both from primary and secondary sources from November to December 2022. Primary data were collected randomly by questioning the dairy farmers directly with a pre-tested questionnaire. The method used for sampling in this research study is random Sampling techniques. Random sampling is one of the simplest forms of collecting data from the total population. Under random sampling, the heterogenous number of the subset carries the opportunity to be chosen as a part of the sampling process. A total of 45 Holstein Friesian x Local cross (50%), 30 Jersey x Local cross (50%) and 52 from Holstein Friesian x Jersey crossbred (50%) dairy cows data were collected from 31 farmers' households who were reared with different dairy crossbreds. All the dairy cows of 31 selected farmers were considered during data collection that's why the sample size was different. Data were collected through field survey by direct observation and face-to-face interviewing of the farmers where they answered the questions from their rearing experience of different dairy crossbreds in the selected areas. Secondary data were collected from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and various sources like books, thesis papers, reports, journals, official records, and statistical yearbooks of Bangladesh. Information regarding the demographic characteristics of farmers, feeding practices in different seasons, productive and reproductive performances and Cost-Benefit Analysis of different dairy crossbreds was also taken into consideration.

2.3 Statistical Analysis

Collected data were entered, sorted, compiled, tabulated and organized into a Microsoft Excel sheet. Then data were statistically analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version-25 and performed Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Post Hoc Multiple Comparison by using Duncan. All data were then tabulated using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentage, mean and standard error value for further interpretation.

2.4 Analytical Technique

Data-collection techniques allow us to systematically collect information about our

objects of study and the settings in which they occur. The equation was used to analyze the Cost-Return and benefit-cost ratio of different dairy crossbreds in the study areas.

$$\pi = \frac{PF \cdot QF + PS \cdot QS + PR \cdot QR - \sum (PX_i X_i)}{TFC}$$

Where,

π = net profit (BDT./cow/year)

PF = per unit price of milk (BDT./liter)

QF = milk yield (liter/year)

PS = price of cow dung (BDT./kg)

QS = quantity of cow dung (kg)

PR = no. of calves sold (nos./year)

QR = Price of sold calves (BDT.)

PXi = per unit of i-th inputs used

Xi = quantity of i-th input used, i = (1, 2, 3...n); and

TFC = Total Fixed Cost

To calculate the benefit-cost ratio we used the following formula

$$\text{Benefit-Cost ratio} = \frac{\text{Total Return (TR)}}{\text{Total Cost (TC)}}$$

Total return includes the average return from the main product and by-products of dairy cows. Total cost includes average variable and fixed costs involved in the rearing of different dairy crossbreds. The benefit-cost ratio was a relative measure that was used to compare benefits per cost and helped to analyze the financial efficiency of the farms.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Socio-economic Parameters of the Farmers

The age of the farmers was categorized into four categories where the maximum 51.61% of farmers' age ranged between 31-40 years with the minimum 3.23% of farmers being 18-30 years of age. About 22.60% of farmers were illiterate where 48.40% of farmers had only primary education and 29.0% of farmers had a secondary level of education. Farm size was categorized into small (2-5), medium (6-9), and large (10 to above dairy cows) categories where 41.90% of farmers had large-sized farms with 35.50% small and 22.60% of farmers having medium-sized farms. About 54.80% of farmers got the training facility on livestock production from different Govt. and Non-Govt. the institution where 45.20% of farmers didn't get any training facility. Table 1 shows some socio-economic parameters of the farmers who mainly reared different crossbreds of dairy cattle in the study areas.

3.2 Dairy Cattle Rearing Experience and Fodder Production of the Farmers

Farmers mainly reared Holstein cross (50%), Jersey cross (50%) or both as well as Holstein Friesian x Jersey crossbred cattle (50%) for dairy purposes in the study area. The maximum 51.60% of farmers reared different crossbreds and they weren't aware of the breed selection for dairy purposes rather they preferred cattle based on body size. About 38.7% of farmers reared Jersey crossbred cattle and 8.70% of farmers reared Holstein cross (50%) cattle for dairy purposes. About 29% of farmers had farming experience of 21-25 years and the same percentage was observed for 16-20 years of cattle farming experience. Farmers cultivated fodder an average of 1.22±0.22 hectare land and their annual productivity was 161.85±4.25 tons/hectare. Table 2 shows the rearing experience of different dairy cattle and fodder production of the farmers in selected areas.

3.3 Feeding Practices and Daily Allowance per Dairy Cow in the Sirajonj Area

Farmers supplied feed for dairy cattle based on availability, season and the price of feed ingredients. In the rainy season, they supplied only straw and concentrate feed but in the summer and winter seasons, farmers provided different fodder with straw and concentrate feed. Farmers provided the highest 6.44±0.25kg/day concentrate and 12.26kg/day straw for Holstein cross cow (50%) in the rainy season. In the summer and winter seasons, farmers supplied a maximum of 5.35±0.18kg concentrate and 5.82±0.15kg straw with 21.33±0.33kg fodder per day in the study areas. On the other hand, farmers supplied comparatively lower amounts of concentrate feed (3.33±0.09kg/day) and straw (9.76±0.23kg/day) to their Jersey cross cow (50%) in the rainy season whereas in the summer and rainy season they supplied concentrate feed (2.40±0.09kg), straw (3.30±0.08kg) with fodder (11.80±0.25kg) per day. Significant differences were observed in per day allowance of feeds for three different crossbreds of dairy cattle in the Sirajonj area. Table 3 shows the feeding practices and feed allowance per dairy cow in different seasons in the Sirajonj area.

Table 1. Major Socio-economic characteristics of different dairy cattle-rearing farmers

Farmer's Age (years)	Percentage (n=31)	Level of Education	Percentage (n=31)	Farm size	Percentage (n=31)	Training facilities	Percentage (n=31)
18-30	3.23 (1)	Illiterate	22.60 (7)	Small (2-5)	35.50 (11)	Yes	54.80 (17)
31-40	51.61 (16)	Primary	48.40 (15)	Medium (6-9)	22.60 (7)	No	45.20 (14)
41-50	22.58 (7)	Secondary	29.00 (9)	Large (10-Above)	41.90 (13)	-	-
Above 50	22.58 (7)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2. Different dairy crossbred rearing experience and fodder production of the farmers

Cattle genotypes	Percentage (n=31)	Rearing experience (years)	Percentage (n=31)	Parameters	Mean±SE (n=31)
Holstein cross (50%)	8.70 (3)	10-15	19.40 (6)	Fodder land (Hectare)	1.22±0.22
Jersey cross (50%)	38.70(12)	16-20	29.00 (9)	Fodder productivity (Ton/hectare)	161.85±4.25
Different Crossbred (50%)	51.60 (16)	21-25	29.00 (9)	-	-
-	-	26-above	22.60 (7)	-	-

Table 3. Seasonal feeding practices and daily allowance per dairy cow

In Rainy season	Holstein cross (n=45)	Jersey cross (n=30)	Holstein×Jersey cross (n=52)	Overall (n=127)	P value
Concentrate, kg/d	6.44±0.25	3.33±0.09	4.63±0.15	4.96±0.15	≤0.001
Straw, kg/d	12.26±0.17	9.76±0.23	10.36±2.21	10.89±1.99	≤0.001
In Summer and Winter season					
Concentrate, kg/d	5.35±0.18	2.40±0.09	3.17±0.11	3.76±0.13	≤0.001
Straw, kg/d	5.82±0.15	3.30±0.08	4.19±0.16	4.55 ±0.12	≤0.001
Fodder, kg/d	21.33±0.33	11.80±0.25	15.11±0.30	16.53±0.38	≤0.001

(P<0.05= Significant at 5% level)

Table 4. Productive parameters (Mean±SE) of different dairy crossbreds

Parameters	Holstein Friesian cross (50%), n=45	Jersey cross (50%), n=30	Holstein Friesian×Jersey cross (50%), n=52	Overall (n=127)	P value
Age (year)	5.77±0.17	5.16±0.14	5.30±0.16	5.44±0.10	0.040
Body weight(kg)	668.88±9.95	560.00±10.41	579.80±14.39	606.69±8.35	≤0.001
Number of calves produced/farm/year	2.77±0.17	2.13±0.14	2.38±0.14	2.46±0.09	0.027
Peak milk yield (Lit.)	20.15±0.30	15.03±0.30	15.51±0.42	17.04±0.29	≤0.001
Lactation Length (days)	213.55±0.72	215.00±0.92	243.84±2.23	226.29±1.62	≤0.001
Lactation yield (Lit.)	2767.11±47.15	2306.66±29.62	2119.61±82.82	2393.22±45.93	≤0.001
Average milk yield/day (Lit.)	13.40±0.15	10.40±0.29	10.26±0.32	11.41±0.20	≤0.001
Dry period (days)	134.88±1.92	132.66±2.34	118.65±2.07	127.71±1.38	≤0.001

*(P<0.05= Significant at 5% level)***Table 5. Reproductive parameters of different dairy crossbreds in the study area**

Parameters	Holstein Friesian cross (50%), n=45	Jersey cross (50%), n=30	Holstein×Jersey cross (50%), n=52	Overall (n=127)	P value
Age at puberty (months)	21.28±0.20	23.40±0.29	22.42±0.15	22.25±0.13	≤0.001
Weight at puberty (Kg)	318.00±2.68	292.66±3.42	293.65±2.85	302.04±1.99	≤0.001
Age at 1 st calving (months)	44.42±0.21	43.96±0.19	44.51±0.16	44.35±0.11	0.147
Service/conception (nos.)	1.31±0.06	1.33±0.08	1.30±0.06	1.31±0.04	0.970
Calving Interval (months)	12.15±0.10	12.00±0.13	11.96±0.11	12.03±0.06	0.426

(P<0.05= Significant at 5% level)

Table 6. Expenses/Costs involved in crossbred dairy cattle rearing farmers

Annual Cost Items In taka (BDT.)	Holstein Friesian cross (50%)	Jersey cross (50%)	Holstein xJersey cross (50%)	Overall
A. Fixed cost with 10% depreciation				
Housing cost	1767.33	1276.00	1707.11	1626.61
Cow buying cost	21246.66	13316.33	17626.92	17891.33
Tools and equipment cost	882.66	886.00	875.96	880.70
Total fixed cost	23896.66	15478.66	20314.80	20441.57
B. Variable cost				
Hired Labor	22404.76	20466.66	21025.00	21392.85
Feed cost:	16866.66	14333.33	14192.30	15173.22
• Fodder	15755.55	14400.00	13384.61	14464.56
• Straw	27177.77	24633.33	23423.07	25039.37
• Concentrate				
Veterinary services and medicine	2288.88	2250.00	2169.23	2230.70
Artificial Insemination	1017.77	1056.66	1030.76	1026.77
Total variable cost	84017.78	77140.00	70373.07	76800.78
Total Cost (A+B)	107914.44	92618.66	90687.88	97242.36

Table 7. Annual returns and BCR of crossbred dairy cattle rearing farmers

Parameters In taka (BDT.)	Holstein Friesian cross (50%)	Jersey cross (50%)	Holstein xJersey cross (50%)	Overall
Return from selling milk (cow/year)	123548.44	103693.33	101789.23	109948.79
Income from cow dung (cow/year)	4077.77	3908.00	3128.84	3649.21
Income from selling calves	27302.22	21243.33	22050.00	23720.47
Total Returns (cow/year)	154928.44	128845.00	126968.07	137318.66
Net Returns (cow/year)	47014.00	36226.34	36280.19	40076.30
Benefit-cost Ratio (BCR)	1.43	1.39	1.40	1.41

3.4 Productive Performances of Different Dairy Crossbreds

Farmers reared an average of 5.44 ± 0.10 years cattle for dairy purposes with an average body weight of 606.69 ± 8.35 kg/cow and a no. of calves produced 2.46 ± 0.09 . Comparatively highest milk yield/day (13.40 ± 0.15 Lit.), Peak milk yield (20.15 ± 0.30 Lit.) and Dry period (134.88 ± 1.92 days) were observed for Holstein Friesian cross where the lowest average Milk yield/day (10.26 ± 0.32 Lit.) with the Lactation yield (2119.61 ± 82.82 Lit.) were found in Sahiwal cross but the Lactation Length (215.00 ± 0.92 days) and Peak milk yield (15.03 ± 0.30 Lit.) were lower in Jersey crossbred cattle. Significant differences were observed for body weight (kg), Peak milk yield (Lit.), Lactation length (days), Lactation yield (Lit.), average milk yield (Lit./day) and dry period among those three crossbreds of dairy cattle. Table 4 shows the productive performances of dairy cattle available in the study area. The average milk yield and lactation yield of different dairy crossbreds was overall 11.41 ± 0.20 Lit/d and lactation yield was 2393.22 ± 45.93 Lit.

3.5 Reproductive Performance

The reproductive performances were also considered for different crossbreds of dairy cattle in the study areas. The maximum age at puberty of 23.40 ± 0.29 months was observed in Jersey-crossed cattle whereas the minimum 21.28 ± 0.20 months in Holstein Friesian cross with 22.25 ± 0.13 months was in the overall dairy Crossbreds. The highest body weight at puberty was 318.00 ± 2.68 kg and a calving interval of 12.15 ± 0.10 months was observed in Holstein Friesian crossed cattle where the overall 1.31 ± 0.04 nos service required for conception in those three different dairy crossbreds in the selected areas. However, the maximum age of 1st calving 44.51 ± 0.16 months was observed in Holstein Friesian x Jersey crossed cattle. On the other hand, a comparatively lower body weight of 292.66 ± 3.42 kg at puberty and age at first calving of 43.96 ± 0.19 months were found in Jersey crossed. Significant differences were observed for age of puberty (months) and weight at puberty (kg) among those three different dairy crossbreds. Table 5 shows the reproductive performances among three crossbreds of dairy cattle.

3.6 Benefit-Cost Ratio Analysis

The costs/expenses involved in dairy farming in the selected areas were divided into two

categories such as fixed cost (with 10% depreciation) and variable cost. The maximum fixed cost of 23896.66 BDT. and variable cost of 84017.78 BDT. was observed for the rearing of Holstein Friesian crossbred cattle where the minimum fixed cost of 15478.66 BDT. and variable cost of BDT. 70373.07 were involved in the rearing of Holstein Friesian x Jersey crossed cattle. The overall depreciation (10%) is 15008.74 BDT. on housing, 17891.33 BDT. on purchasing cows with 880.70 BDT. on buying tools and equipment for the rearing of those three different crossbreds of dairy cattle. Moreover, the highest feed cost of 16866.66 BDT and cost of 2288.88 BDT. for veterinary services and medicine was found for rearing the Holstein Friesian cross. Farmers required an overall 21392.85 BDT. for hired labor and 1026.77 BDT. for artificial insemination in the different crossbreds of dairy cattle rearing. Table 6 shows the cost/expenses required for the rearing of different dairy crossbreds in the study area.

The maximum total return of 154928.44 BDT./cow/yr. was observed in Holstein Friesian crossbred rearing farmers with minimum total returns of BDT.126968.07 in Holstein Friesian x Jersey cross-rearing farmers. Moreover, the highest Net return 47014.00 BDT. was found for Holstein Friesian crossbreds with the lowest 36280.19 BDT. in Holstein Friesian x Jersey cross-rearing farmers. The overall returns from milk selling, cow dung and selling calves were 109948.79 BDT., 3649.21 BDT. and 23720.47 BDT. per cow per year respectively. The highest Benefit-Cost-Ratio 1.43 was found for the Holstein Friesian cross and the lowest 1.39 for the Jersey cross with the overall 1.41 observed for those three dairy crossbred rearing farmers in the study area. Table 7 shows the annual Returns and benefit-cost ratio of different crossbreds of dairy cattle-rearing farmers.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of [11] indicated that the highest proportion (58.34 percent) of the respondents in the Sirajgonj area were in the young aged (≤ 35) category which was nearly similar to the present study but the maximum (100%) farmers had primary level of education which was relatively higher than the present study.

About 40% of farmers in Sirajgonj district had livestock farming experience of 11-20 years was mentioned in the findings of [12] which were slightly higher than the present study. The

variation in results was observed due to the difference in sample size and different dairy crossbreds considered in the present study.

The results of the present research were significant with the study of [13] who surveyed 300 households in 60 northern districts where they mentioned that farmers provided 2.50kg concentrate with 7.25kg straw in the dry season, 2.30kg concentrate with 8.26kg straw during monsoon and 2.50kg concentrate with 8.50kg straw in winter to their crossbred dairy cow. A slight difference in feed supply per cow per day was observed in the present findings due to the high milk yield of the present study cows.

A field survey was carried out by [14] at Savar Dairy Farm, Dhaka where they reported that the highest milk yield was 11.57 ± 0.32 L/day in the case of Friesian cattle which was nearly similar to the present finding. Another study was conducted by [15] where they stated that the average milk yield per day for Local×Friesian cattle was 13.9 liter which was similar to the present study but a comparatively higher dry period and lower lactation length were observed in the present study than the findings of [15] where they mentioned that the average dry period for Local×Friesian cattle was 87 days and the lactation length was 277days. The findings of [16] revealed that the average milk productivity was 6.48 liter per cow per day in crossbred cows which shows a lower result than the present findings. In the research of [17] where they estimated the productive performance of Holstein-Friesian cattle and mentioned that the lactation length (LL) of 314.19 ± 0.91 days which was comparatively higher than the present study but relatively maximum dry period was observed in the present research compared to the findings of [17] in which they found the dry period of 87.06 ± 1.63 days in case of Holstein-Friesian cattle. On the contrary, the study of [18] revealed that the average milk production for Holstein-Friesian× Local Crossbred cattle was 15.90 ± 0.72 liter/day/cow and lactation length 9.67 ± 0.72 months which was relatively higher than the present findings. From the findings of [19], they stated that the average test day milk production of Jersey×Deshi crossbred cows was 7.86 ± 0.12 liters which was lower than the present study but they mentioned the average lactation length of 234.76 ± 1.60 days in their findings which was slightly higher than the present study. The variation in results was obtained due to the location, sample size and time being different in the present study.

From the survey data, comparatively lower age at puberty and service/conception was observed in the case of Holstein Friesian crossed cattle than the findings of Islam [14] in which they stated that the higher age of first calving was found in 1779 ± 20.76 days and the maximum number of services per conception was 3.36 ± 0.31 in case of Holstein-Friesian. The average service per conception of Local×Friesian crossbred cattle were 1.61 mentioned by [15] which is supported by the result of the present study but a higher result was found in the findings of [17] where they stated that the service per conception was 2.80 ± 0.10 . A relatively lower calving interval (410 days) but lower age at first calving (33.3 months) was found in their study than the findings of the present study. In the study of [17], they mentioned that they estimated the age at maturity (625.40 ± 14.65 days) for Holstein-Friesian cattle which was nearly similar to the results of the present findings. In the research of [20], they found that the age at puberty age and age at first calving of Jersey×Local cross cow was 20.44 ± 1.60 months and 31.08 ± 1.75 months which were lower than the present study. They also mentioned that the calving interval and service per conception of Jersey×Local cross cow 14.08 ± 0.62 months and 1.25 ± 0.13 nos. Comparatively lower calving interval (months) but slightly higher service per conception was observed in the present study than in the above findings. Those differences might have arisen due to the location, sample size and study period being different for the present research than the above studies.

In the study of [21], they revealed that dairy farming under commercial management was more profitable than traditional farming. The benefit-cost ratio of commercial farmers was on an average of 1.34 which was nearly similar to the results of present research. In the findings of [20], they reported estimated that the rearing cost of dairy cows was Tk. 67.5/cow/day and return from rearing dairy cows was Tk. 85.2/cow/day. The net return was Tk. 17.7/cow/day from crossbred in the study area and the cost-benefit ratio was 1:1.26. Comparatively higher results were found in the present study than the above findings where the overall rearing cost of the crossbred dairy cow was 266.41Tk/cow/day with the return from rearing dairy cow 376Tk/cow/day and the net return was 109.79Tk/cow/day. In the present study, variations in results may arise due to the location, study period, sampling

population, feeding and management practices being different from the above studies.

5. CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that the productive and reproductive performance was superior in Holstein-Friesian crossbred (50%) cattle. Holstein Friesian×Jersey crossbreds (50%) ranked second and the performance of the Jersey cross (50%) was comparatively lower than the two breeds. The production performance of Holstein-Friesian crossbreds was superior to other crossbreds. The profitability of Holstein Friesian cross-rearing farmers was higher although the variable cost remained higher. From this study, we can conclude that Holstein Friesian cross cow rearing is profitable in the Sirajonj district known as the milk pocket area of Bangladesh.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- As the literacy level of the farmers is poor, therefore, functional literacy may be induced by hands-on training among the farmers for greater adaptation of dairy technology to increase productivity.
- Higher production and profitability from dairy farming might be encouraged by the government, NGOs, and private entrepreneurs by providing improved technologies and extension services.
- An efficient attempt needs to be made to raise milk production by the readjustment of feed inputs in all seasons.
- Ensuring good quality Holstein-Friesian bull semen for artificial insemination to improve the crossbreds for increasing the productivity of next-generation dairy cows.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have declared that there is no competing interests exist.

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