

## THE HOUSING SYSTEM OF PIGEON (*COLUMBA LIVIA*) FARMING IN SELECTED AREAS OF SRI LANKA

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Pigeon farming is an emerging enterprise in Sri Lanka. It is one of the beneficial sectors for poor and unemployed but educated youth as an income generation method and as a hobby. A study was conducted to assess the pigeon housing system practiced by the farmers in Gampaha district, where pigeon farms are prominent with rearing different types of pigeon breeds. Preliminary survey was conducted to identify the key locations of pigeon farms in study area. Following, fifty-five pigeon farms were visited in five veterinary ranges, namely Mahara, Kadawatta, Welisara, Minuwangoda and Gampaha. Data were collected through structured interview, unstructured interview and field observations. Prominently, three types of housing systems were identified: (1) Metal mesh single tier type (7.3%) (2) Wooden multiple tier type (83.6%) (3) Wooden + metal mesh multiple tier type (9.1%). The standard shelf size required for a pair of pigeons, 60 x 60 x 60 cm<sup>3</sup>, was provided by 61.8 % of the farmers. The mean cost to build a pigeon house with the dimensions of 2.25 m length, 1.75 m width and 2.13 m height is estimated to be Rs. 51,936 ± 6,778. Commonly practiced wooden multiple tier type housing system was in low hygiene as farmers did not practise cleaning of the excretes in the shelves for long time. Thus, farmers in the region need to be aware of hygienic housing systems for pigeon farming to be profitable.

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