EAST JAVA SOP RAWON

(BLACK SOUP)

An ACIAR 'best diet' project in Indonesia is helping smallholder farmers improve profitability through the development of improved feeding strategies. Included are ongole and crossbred cows, shown here consuming fresh rice straw at the Malang village project site.

PHOTO: DI MAYBERRY

ABOUT THE DISH

The dish is served as a main course in Indonesia. This recipe is from the wife of Lukman Affandhy, a senior scientist at the Beef Cattle Research Institute in Grati, East Java. Lukman supervises junior scientists at the villages of Probolinggo and Malang. Whenever the project team travels to East Java, it has a group lunch at the Nguling Rawon Hut, which has the best rawon in East Java.

FEEDING STRATEGIES FOR SMALLHOLDER CATTLE IN INDONESIA

Beef is in high demand in Indonesia and population growth and the growing middle class mean its consumption is rising rapidly. There is substantial trade in cattle feedstuffs, but the growth rates of cattle in villages and in small-to-medium-scale feedlots are low (about 0.2 to 0.5 kilograms per day). Diets are based on the cheapest available feed rather than a combination of the most cost-effective and feed-efficient diets. This is due to a lack of understanding of the benefits of improved diets (in other words, increased growth rates and decreased cost/weight gain), the aversion to risk and a lack of tools for formulating a simple diet based on nutritional principles.

A 'best' diet in a previous ACIAR project has shown that growth rates of 0.9 kg per day could be achieved and this greatly increased financial returns. There is a large range of high-energy food processing wastes that could be incorporated into cattle diets but there are limited data on the benefits of using these ingredients in cattle diets. There is a need to customise diets for different regions in Indonesia as each region has a different range of feed resources, both on-farm and purchased feeds.

THE PROJECT

The project's overall goal is to improve the profitability of beef cattle production of small-scale beef producers through the development of simple cost-effective feed rations. It is hoped that the project will benefit smallholders, landless cattle producers and small-to-medium-scale feedlots by improving reproduction and growth of cattle. The project is also aimed at building capacity of a new generation of ruminant nutritionists across Indonesia who will be skilled in farmer-relevant research to facilitate the continued development of local cattle production systems.

The Indonesian smallholder cattle feeding project is led by Dr Dennis Poppi from the University of Queensland and is commissioned through ACIAR's Livestock Production Systems Program.

While this project is still in its infancy, its predecessor (LPS/2008/038) has had good success, namely demonstrating greater efficiency and productivity through the use of crop residues and improved animal management.

Pak Ketut is a farmer at Seputih Banyak in Lampung and produces Brahman and Bali cattle. He says that if he were not involved in the project he would have sold all his Brahman cows already. By improving the cattle's nutrition and his understanding of cattle reproduction, the project has helped Pak Ketut to manage his cattle to be more productive, allowing his business to become more successful. He has recently purchased an additional 11 Brahman cows. He has also started buying sweet-corn waste from neighbouring farmers. This product was previously destroyed, so by incorporating it into his cattle's diet he is also contributing to other farmers' incomes. ■

ACIAR PROJECT LPS/2013/021

Profitable feeding strategies for smallholder cattle in Indonesia.

MORE INFORMATION

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East Java Sop Rawon (black soup)

Ingredients

1 kg kluwek/keluak nuts, cooked*
250 g fried garlic
1 kg onions, white or brown
50 g turmeric
100 g ginger
50 g galangal
50 g shrimp paste
50 g coriander
50 g cumin
1 kg beef, cubed
10 L water

* Available in Asian supermarkets as nuts or as paste. The nuts need to be boiled before use and only the meat inside used. The flavour is intense so adjust volume to taste.

Method

1. Combine kluwek, garlic, onion, turmeric, ginger, galangal, shrimp paste, coriander and cumin. Fry in pan until onion is cooked and spices are aromatic.
2. Boil water in a saucepan and add uncooked beef and spice mixture.
3. Boil until beef is tender (about 45 to 50 minutes) and then take off heat. Add salt to taste.
4. Serve with plain white rice, salted egg, bean sprouts, sambal and shrimp crackers.

Serves 4

Sop rawon from a restaraunt in Jakarta. Kluwek nuts are used in many Indonesian dishes and give the sop rawon its signature black colour. The dish can still be made if the nuts are not available, but it appears yellow due to the powerful colour of the turmeric. PHOTOS: ACIAR