

The effect of lactation number and lactation stage on the lactation of crossbred Sahiwal Friesian cows in selected dairy cattle farm of Sabah

ABSTRACT

Lactation is defined as the process of the production of milk. This process normally occurs in all mammalian species (Boniface et al., 2007). Milk is the nutritious food product made by the lactating animals and it is rich in carbohydrates, protein, fats, vitamins and minerals (Blowey and Edmondson, 2000; Sinha, 2000). Milk is synthesized by the secretory cells in the mammary glands of the mammalian species. For the first four days post calving, the milk that was produced by milking cow is known as colostrum and it is used to feed the newborn calves. Milk production rises until peak production for about 35-50 days after calving and the most ideal lactation period is 305 days or about 10 months. Milk production per lactation will increase until the fourth lactation or when the cows are at the age of six years old, this is when the cows were calved at the age of two. When the cows reach the age of eight years old, the milk production will decrease. Some of the studies suggested that the highest milk production is when the cows are at the age of seven (Boniface et al., 2007). A report by Epaphras et al. (2004) stated that most milk producers understand that the milk production fluctuates up and down from one lactation to the next.