

UMLACHERY CATTLE – A WET PLOUGHER

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Abstract: Umblachery is a breed of cattle which belongs to species *Bos indicus* known for its strength, sturdiness and wet ploughing capacity, widely distributed in Cauvery delta regions of Tamilnadu, India which is suitable for work in marshy rice fields of eastern districts of Tamilnadu, India. In this article the discussion about breeding tract, community, use of animals, Breeding, Feeding, Reproductive and hosing management were studied.

Keywords: Wet ploughing, indigenous draught breed, dehorning, castration, management.

Introduction

There are four registered draught breeds of tamilnadu , namely kangayam, Bargur, Pulikulam and Umblachery. Of these kangayam is used for sugarcane field ploughing, Umblachery is used for wet (Paddy field) ploughing and Pulikulam is used for Jallikatu. The total estimated population is 39050 (**source:** *Estimated Livestock Population Breed wise based on Breed survey 2013. Department of Animal, Dairying & Fisheries, Government of India, New Delhi*) This breed is closely related to Kangayam of Tamilnadu in appearance.

Synonym: Mottaimaadu, Jathimadu, Therkunthimaadu, Molaimaadu, Southern, Tanjore, Therkunthimaadu

Breeding tract:

- Name derived from name of village called Umblachery in Thalaigayam Union in Nagapattinam district. Breed also distributed in Thiruvarur district. All unions of Thiruvarur district: Keelalyur, Kelvelur, Nagapattinam, Thirumarugal and Vedharanyam unions of Nagapattinam district of tamilnadu
- Location: 10⁰18' and 10⁰54' N and 79⁰18' to 79⁰48' E
- The elevation of home tract ranges from 0 to 50 metre above the mean sea level. The mean maximum and minimum temperatures were 32.7⁰C and 25.1⁰C respectively.

Community:

All castes of farmers community in the area Deshmukh, Sirdeshpande, Nawabs etc.

Use

Main purpose of rearing of Umblachery bullocks is used for wet ploughing trait of marshy paddy fields for about 6-7 hours per day during peak season with high draught tolerance and heat tolerance. Umblachery breed being light weight is very well suited for working in alluvial type of soil available in this area.

Other purpose includes carting, ploughing, puddling, threshing and manure is used as fertilizer.

Milk from Female is of small quantity of about 2.058 litres per day with fat(%) 4.94 and SNF(%) 8.16. Lactation length of 245 days and lactation milk yield 494 kg. Dry period of Umblachery cattle is 220 days.

Morphology

Colour

1. Umblachery calves are red or brown in colour at birth



2. The red colour begins to change to grey at three to four months of age



3. Total grey colour is generally attained at six to eight months of age. Heifers and cows are grey



4. In majority of cows, the dark grey colour is present on the face, neck, pelvic regions. In young males, darkening of hump, fore and hind quarters of the body occurs at the age of two years. Bulls are grey in colour with dark grey on the head, back and pelvis.



5. After castration the darker part of the body begins to change to grey colour in about four months.

Skin colour: black

Muzzle: black

Eyelids: black

Tail: white or partially white (switch)

Hoofs: Black, White and Black, White.

Horns

Horns are curving outward and inward and sometimes spreading laterally. Those are thick in bulls and hind in cows. Horns are very small in size.

Ear: oriented horizontal

Head:

Forehead is slightly broad with a shallow groove in the middle. White star is present on the forehead. In bulls the face is dark in colour and reduced intensity in cows and bullocks.

Udder:

Shape	Tucked up
Fore-udder size	Small
Rear-udder size	Small
Teat shape	Cylindrical
Teat tip	Round
Milk vein	Small

Body weight

	MALE	FEMALE
Height (cm)	117	105
Body length (cm)	119	109
Heart girth (cm)	151	135
Birth weight (kg)	15.6	14.2

Management

Animal is maintained under semi-intensive system of management with grazing and feeding of concentrate. The animal houses were mostly of kutchha type with mud flooring and walls. In day time, the animals are tethered in the wood packs or tree trunks of the trees in the open area. The animals were generally housed in the sheds during the night. Paddy straws were main staple fodder fed to Umblachery cattle. The animals were usually taken for a distance of three to four kilometres for grazing. Most of the cows are not milked. Calves are allowed to suck their dams. Paddy straw is the main fodder. Bullocks and milking females are offered GNC/Sesame oilcakes. Rice bran and cotton seeds are also fed.. Herdsmen collect animals from various households in January or February and graze them for about 6 months. Usually herd strength of such groups ranges from 250 to 400 animals. They are herded together for manuring the fields.



The male calves were dehorned at about 10-12 months of age. During dehorning, pruning of ears was also practised. At the time of castration hot-iron branding was done across the face and gluteal region. The branding was done because of superstition among the farmers that it would increase the vigour or capacity of bullocks to work as well as disease resistance. Branding and pruning of ears were not done in females.

Pure breeding of Umblachery breed was done mostly by natural mating and artificial insemination in few animals. The bulls were allowed to breed at the age of 3 ½ years to 4 years. Males were castrated at the age of about 2 ½ to 3 years by burdizzo castrator or by country method by pressing the testicle using two wooden sticks and were put to work at the age of 3 years and above.

Vaccination against Black Quarter, Haemorrhagic Septicaemia, Rinderpest and Foot and Mouth disease were done.

Reproduction

Male

Age at castration (days)	24-30
Age at first mating (months)	42-48

Female

Age at first oestrus (months)	41.1
Age at first mating (months)	42.5
Age at first calving (months)	52.4
Service period (days)	177
Calving interval (days)	444

Breed improvement programme

The Government of Tamilnadu (Formerly Madras) established a farm in 1954 at Orathanadu (near Thanjavur) to develop this breed. A new farm was later started in Korukkai, near Umblachery village, especially to conserve Umblachery breed in its home region. The animals of this farm were sold to farmers to maintain the availability of the genetic resources the Department of Animal Husbandry, Government of Tamilnadu has also stored semen of the Umblachery breed in the Exotic Cattle Breeding Farm, Eachenkootai, Thanjavur district.

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