



International Journal of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry



ISSN: 2456-2912

NAAS Rating (2026): 4.61

VET 2025; SP-11(5): 91-93

© 2026 VET

www.veterinarypaper.com

Received: 15-02-2025

Accepted: 21-03-2026

B Nikitha

P.G. Scholar, Department of
Animal Nutrition, Madras
Veterinary College, Tamil Nadu
Veterinary and Animal Sciences
University (TANUVAS),
Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

J Ramesh

Professor, Department of Animal
Nutrition, Madras Veterinary
College, Tamil Nadu Veterinary
and Animal Sciences University
(TANUVAS), Chennai, Tamil
Nadu, India

T Manju

P.G. Scholar, Department of
Animal Nutrition, Madras
Veterinary College, Tamil Nadu
Veterinary and Animal Sciences
University (TANUVAS),
Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

R Srinivasan

P.G. Scholar, Department of
Animal Nutrition, Madras
Veterinary College, Tamil Nadu
Veterinary and Animal Sciences
University (TANUVAS),
Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Management practices adopted for madras red sheep under field conditions: An overview

B Nikitha, J Ramesh, T Manju and R Srinivasan

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.22271/veterinary.2026.v11.i5Sb.3284>

Abstract

Madras Red sheep is an indigenous meat-type breed native to the northeastern districts of Tamil Nadu, valued for its adaptability, growth rate, and meat quality. The present study was conducted in Chengalpattu and Kancheepuram districts of Tamil Nadu to evaluate feeding and management practices followed by sheep farmers. Data were collected through questionnaires, personal interviews, and field visits. Most farmers practiced extensive and semi-intensive systems, depending mainly on grazing for 8–12 hours daily. Limited use of cultivated green fodder and imbalanced concentrate feeding in traditional systems resulted in inadequate nutrient intake. In contrast, commercial farms adopted better feeding strategies, including stage-wise concentrate supplementation and flushing. Deworming, vaccination and dipping were irregular in traditional systems but regular in commercial farms. Breeding management was also better organized in commercial systems with an optimal ram-to-ewe ratio. The study highlights the need for improved feeding, scientific management, and farmer awareness programs to enhance productivity and sustainability of Madras Red sheep farming.

Keywords: Madras red sheep, feeding, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram

1. Introduction

In India, small ruminants play a vital role in ensuring food and nutritional security for millions of rural people, particularly the landless, marginal and small farmers. For these economically weaker groups, rearing small ruminants holds significant socio-economic importance compared to other livestock species (Sahoo *et al.*, 2015) [5]. Sheep are often regarded as a “five-star” animal because they provide meat, milk, fiber, skin and manure, thereby supporting food supply, income generation and livelihoods (Rangamma 2020) [4]. They also function as a readily accessible financial resource, similar to a savings or current account. Furthermore, sheep are considered valuable assets for rural prosperity under climate change scenarios (Shinde and Sejian 2013) [6]. There is enormous demand for mutton due to globalization and for the fulfillment of the demand, improving the mutton quality become necessary (Kulkarni *et al.*, 2008) [3]. Sheep population in India is 74.26 million numbers in 2019 and increased by about 14.13 per cent as compared to livestock census 2012.

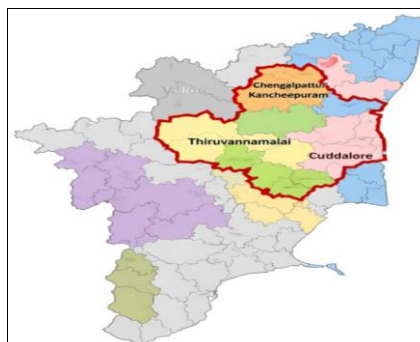


Fig 1: Madras red sheep -native breeding tract

Corresponding Author:

B Nikitha

P.G. Scholar, Department of
Animal Nutrition, Madras
Veterinary College, Tamil Nadu
Veterinary and Animal Sciences
University (TANUVAS),
Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

The country stands third in sheep population. Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka ranked first, second, third respectively in sheep population followed by Tamil Nadu ranks fourth in the country with 4.458 million sheep. Sheep in India contributes about 677.99 million kg of meat and 40.42 million kg wool (DAHD,2019) ^[2]. Madras red sheep is an indigenous breed of sheep native to the northeastern parts of Tamil Nadu (Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Villupuram and adjoining areas of Vellore, Cuddalore and Tiruvannamalai districts). Madras Red sheep is one of the recognized meat type sheep breeds of Tamil Nadu. These are medium -sized sheep with a distinctive reddish-brown coat, although some may have white markings on the forehead, inside the thigh and on the lower abdomen. Males are horned and ewes are polled. Ears are medium, long and drooping. The body is covered with short hairs. Tail is short and thin. They are hardy and well adapted to hot and dry climatic conditions of the region. Madras red sheep are known for their good growth rate and the quality of their meat, which is tender and has a desirable flavor. The average adult body weight at 12 months is 21.05 kgs (Balasubramanyam, *et al.*, 2012) ^[1].



Fig 2: Madras red sheep - Adult



Fig 3: Madras red sheep -Lambs

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Survey area

The study was carried out in villages in and around of Chengalpattu and Kancheepuram districts. These areas were selected based on potential for Madras Red sheep resources. The farmers were selected through simple random sampling.

2.2 Method of data collection

The data on feeding management were collected through questionnaires, direct interview, making frequent personal visits and direct phone call methods. Necessary consent was taken from the owner before collection of the data. The

objectives of the study were clearly explained to the farmers. Then the questions were asked in a simple manner with explanation whenever necessary.

2.3 Questionnaire design

The Questionnaire was constructed based on the recent rearing practice of Madras Red sheep of those selected areas, which consist of the data concerning grazing time, grazing area, grazing distance, green fodder feeding, concentrate feeding of different physiological stages of animals and mineral mixture supplementation.

3. Results and Discussion

Majority of the sheep farmers are following both extensive and semi-intensive system of rearing they offered the open paddock type of shelter to the animals. Most of the traditional farming system farmers allowed animals for grazing up to 8 hours to graze the roadsides and fallow land grasses. The grazing time was highest (12 hours) in summer and lowest in rainy season (10 hours) as observed by Thiruvankadan, (2007) ^[7]. Generally, sheep covering a distance of 5-6 kms. The mixed flock of sheep and goat were sent for grazing. In the present finding, lambs started grazing around 3 months of age. Most of the sheep farmers followed in zero input system to rear sheep flocks. The findings are in accordance with the observation of Usha *et al.*, (2022) ^[8] Only twenty percent of farmers cultivated some kinds of grasses and fed those grasses. The farmers of the commercial farming approaches cultivated required amount of green grasses and provided those by cut and carry system. Hundred percent farmers of commercial farming approaches chopped the green grasses before feeding but majority of farmers of traditional approaches did not process the grasses before feeding the animals. The commonly used green grasses are cumbu Napier hybrid grass (co-4 and co-5), tree fodder like *Leucaena leucocephala* (subabul). In commercial farming all farmers brought the readymade concentrate feed from market to meet their concentrate feed requirement whereas the farmers of traditional farming prepare the homemade concentrate and supplied to the sheep at evening. In view of concentrate feed supplied in traditional farming, sheep did not get their required amount of feed to fulfill the nutrient requirement. Total concentrate supplied by traditional farming approaches is twenty percent less feed when compared with commercial farming approaches. In commercial farming approaches, the concentrate feed was supplied based on the physiological stages of the animal for breeding animals-500g, pregnant animals -600g, lactating ewes-500g, lambs-70g and dry animals-300g were supplied. Flushing is commonly practiced in commercial farming approaches. Flushing means providing extra nutritious energy rich feeds to the breeding animals 2-3 weeks before mating to increase fertility and conception rate. Flushing ration contains concentrate mixtures, grains, oil cakes, good quality green fodder and mineral mixtures. The study revealed all the farmers (100%) offered the drinking water during the grazing. The source of drinking water in traditional rearing were tube wells, ponds and others whereas in commercial farming approaches sheep were provided tube well water which directly supplied to the animal through trough or automatic drinker. Regarding other management practices, deworming, vaccination and dipping were followed to varying extends among the farmers. In traditional farming systems, deworming was carried out irregularly, whereas in commercial farming systems, deworming was practiced at regular intervals usually every 6 months using closantel 15%

oral solution. Vaccination followed strictly by the commercial farmers against Foot and Mouth disease (FMD), Blue tongue, enterotoxemia and sheep pox. Dipping was carried out regularly for every 3 months using 0.2% Deltamethrin. Regarding breeding management, the breeding ratio followed varied among farmers. In traditional systems, rams were maintained without fixed ratio, whereas in commercial systems, an optimal breeding ratio 1:25-30 was generally followed to ensure better conception rate and reproductive efficiency.

4. Conclusion

Farmers largely depend on grazing with limited adoption of scientific feeding and management practices. The overall feeding practices were not fully aligned with recommended nutritional standards. Adoption of improved feeding strategies, scientific ration formulations and awareness programs is essential to enhance the productivity and reproductive performance of Madras Red sheep. Training, technical guidance and institutional support may further help the farmers to improve production efficiency and sustainability of sheep farming.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

References

1. Balasubramanyam D, Raja TV, Kumarasamy P, Sivaselvam SN. Estimation of genetic parameters and trends for body weight traits in Madras red sheep. *Indian J Small Rumin*. 2012;18(2):173-179.
2. Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD). 20th livestock census 2019. New Delhi: Government of India; 2019.
3. Kulkarni MD, Khanvilkar AV, Yadav GB, Khasnis W, Ambore BN. Sheep management for upliftment of marginal farmers. *Vet World*. 2008;1(12):378-379.
4. Rangamma B. Performance of Nellore Brown Sheep under different systems of rearing. Rajendranagar, Hyderabad: P.V. Narasimha Rao Telangana Veterinary University; 2020.
5. Sahoo A, Bhatt RS, Tripathi MK. Stall feeding in small ruminants: emerging trends and future perspectives. *Indian J Anim Nutr*. 2015;32(4):353-372.
6. Shinde AK, Sejian V. Sheep husbandry under changing climate scenario in India: An overview. *Indian J Anim Sci*. 2013;83(10):998-1008.
7. Thiruvankadan AK. Husbandry practices for Mecheri sheep in its breeding tract of Tamil Nadu. *Indian J Anim Sci*. 2007;77:489-493.
8. Usha S, Reena D. Feeding management adopted by sheep farmers in North Eastern region of Tamil Nadu. *Pharma Innov J*. 2022;SP-11(4):1594-1597.

How to Cite This Article

Nikitha B, Ramesh J, Manju T, Srinivasan R. Management practices adopted for madras red sheep under field conditions: An overview. *International Journal of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry*. 2026;SP-11(5):91-93.

Creative Commons (CC) License

This is an open-access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.