

Grass is scarce, say farmers

Cows allowed to roam freely due to constraints

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MALACCA: Livestock owners here cited the lack of grazing areas on their farms as one of the reasons cows are allowed to roam free.

Malacca Dairy Corporations secretary B. Bacha Lal, 57, from Ayer Molek in Malacca, said not all farmers had enough grazing land on their farms.

"So they allow the cows to roam freely.

"Some also don't want to cut grass for their cows," he said at the corporations' office in Jasin here yesterday.

He was commenting on letter by *The Star* reader on an accident along

the North-South Expressway caused by cows.

Bacha Lal noted that most of the cows that were let out to roam freely are reared for their beef and not milk.

"They are not attended to like dairy cows," he said, adding that there were about 2,500 dairy and an estimated 10,000 beef cows in the state.

Bacha Lal also pointed out that some of the plantations owners cut off cow access to their land.

The Department of Veterinary Services (DVS), he said, should keep a list of livestock owners and the number of cattle, and educate them on the importance of keeping their animals away from roads

and highways.

He said the owners rarely came forward after an accident as they were afraid of being charged with negligence.

Experienced dairy cow farmer Kapt P. Jagannatham from Gadek, Alor Gajah, here said it was usual for small-scale farmers to let their cows roam due to budget and manpower constraints.

"They might not have enough money to build a proper feedlot or hire farmhands to cut the grass for the cows," he said yesterday.

The highway authorities should ensure proper fencing is constructed and repair any damage to prevent untoward incidents, said Kapt Jagannatham.



Roaming freely: A herd of cattle grazing beside the highway in Alor Gajah, Malacca.