

## Conference Paper

# Grading System of Sonok Cattle at Cultural Contest of Madura Tribe based on Exterior Assessment in the Pamekasan Regency, East Java, Indonesia

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**Abstract.**

Sonok cattles are a type of female local Maduran cattle, concentrated on Madura Island. These cattle have special value for the culture and ceremonial events of the Maduran tribe due to the excellent exterior beauty appearance, which are determined during a contest. This study was conducted to describe the assessment system of the exterior characters of Sonok cattle during the contest to determine the winner. The study was carried out as a case study by observing the assessment of the Sonok cattle during the contest in August 2020. Observation and assessment of the Sonok cattle by judges was done in 1 to 2 m distant from the front, side and back sites. The most preferred exterior characters are: smooth shiny brick red color of skin; the shape of the horns curved like a banana; the tip of the muzzle is blunt; the shape of the head is relatively round; the shape of the forehead is flat; the neck is thick; the number of neck wattle is 3-5 folds; the shape of the eyes is slightly slanted to slanted with thick inner eye bags; the hump is straight (not curved up or down); the shape of belly is proportional (not fat and not thin); and the forelegs are long and look sturdy.

**Keywords:** Sonok cattle, cultural contest, Madura tribe

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## 1. Introduction

The geographic and topographic characteristics of Madura Island are hot temperature (27 – 34<sup>0</sup>C), 80% humidity level, dry soil condition, and 1600 mm/year of rainfall. This condition may affect the condition of production and forage quality. It also gives impact on the reduced population of cattle in Madura Island [1]

One of the cattle breeds mostly integrated with the community, especially farmers, is Madura cattle. They are integrated in social, economic, and cultural sectors of the farmers, which are used as workers for cultivating rice field, savings, and a means of sport and entertainment (hobby). For people in Madura, especially in Pamekasan, these

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cattle are not only used as workers and a means of entertainment and sport, but also used as a cultural icon of the community, namely *Karapan Sapi* or Bull Racing (for bulls) and cow exhibition/contest known as “Sonok Contest” [2];[3]. For Madurese people, Madura cattle have a special value for their social status, and even have considerable potential as a tourist attraction [4].

In addition to *Karapan Sapi* (Bull Racing), Sonok Contest is a culture of Madurese people, involving two cows beautified in such a way for a contest. The Sonok Cattle culture is actually a type of *Karapan Sapi*, but it only includes cows (female cattle), and what is contested is the beauty of the cows when walking and dressing. This contest is held as a way to introduce this tradition further to the wider community, generally to people outside Madura Island [5].

Sonok Contest has been existed since 1960 and first established by the community of Dempo Barat village, Waru district, which is included in the coastal area of Pamekasan [6]. The history of Sonok Contest started with the activity of farmers who bathed their cows every time they finished working (plowing the rice fields). After bathing the cows, they put their cows on a “*tancek*” pole. Other farmers also did this habit in a plot of land, so it looked crowded.

After then, this habit developed to compare cows with one another so that the farmers thought to choose and to compete for the cleanest and neatest cows. The pairing of cows was then beautified with other beautiful accessories. From this activity, the tradition of Sonok Contest was established as a culture of Pamekasan Community, and Madurese people in general [5]. The cows in Sonok Contest look charming, strung with pangonong, which is a connecting wood between pairing of cows to exhibit. Sonok Contest is held as a way to introduce the Madurese tradition further to the wider community, especially to people outside Madura. Superior cows from all places in Madura Island start to take part in Sonok Contest in the midst of the dry and barren geographical condition of Madura Island. However, with that geographic condition, Madurese people can still produce cows with good quality, which are able to raise the dignity of Madura cattle. Economically, the price of Sonok cattle is increasingly expensive, as the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia gave the patent approval in 2009 [6].

Until now, there has been no standard of assessment criteria for the exterior quality of cattle during the Sonok Contest. Thus, it has not been determined which pair of cows is the winner.

## 2. Materials And Methods

Grading system for Sonok Contest in the context of culture in Madura Tribe based on the exterior evaluation in Pamekasan, East Java, was held in August 2020 in Socah Center field, Waru district, Pamekasan Regency, East Java, Indonesia.

The total of 64 pairs of Sonok cattle used as the source of primary data, which were obtained from the Sonok cattle breeding in Pasean, Pakong, Baru Marmar, and Waru.

The locations were determined based on the following consideration: 1) the ease of measurement as well as question and answer process with the cow owners and/or people who raise the cattle directly; 2) cattle used as the data source are those that clearly participated in Sonok Contest; and 3) the sufficient number of cattle.

The data obtained directly were analyzed using descriptive analysis. the analysis include the qualitative characteristics of the Sonok cattle’s exterior, namely skin/fur condition, body’s color, shape of horns, curvature of horns, shape of muzzle, shape of the head, shape of forehead, neck, the number of wattle, hump, shape of belly, tail’s length, leg balance, category of body weight, shape of eye, and eye bags circle.

## 3. Result And Discussion

### 3.1. General Condition

The research locations are in Sonok cattle breeding areas consisting of 4 districts.

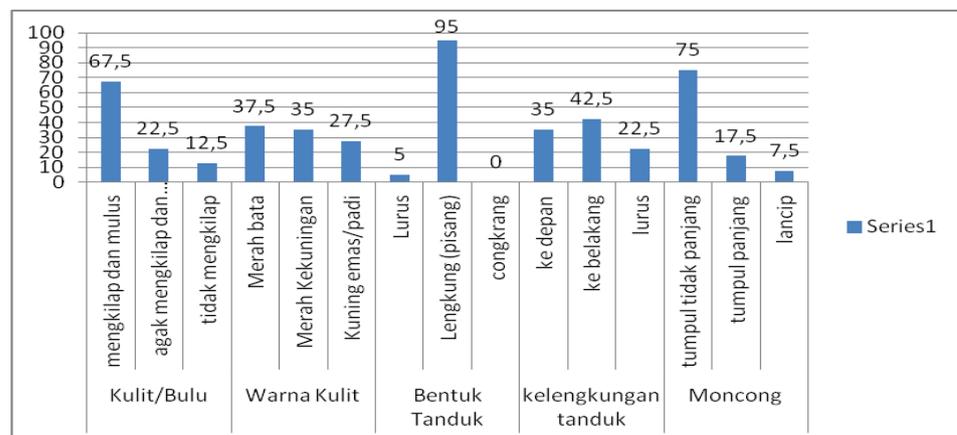
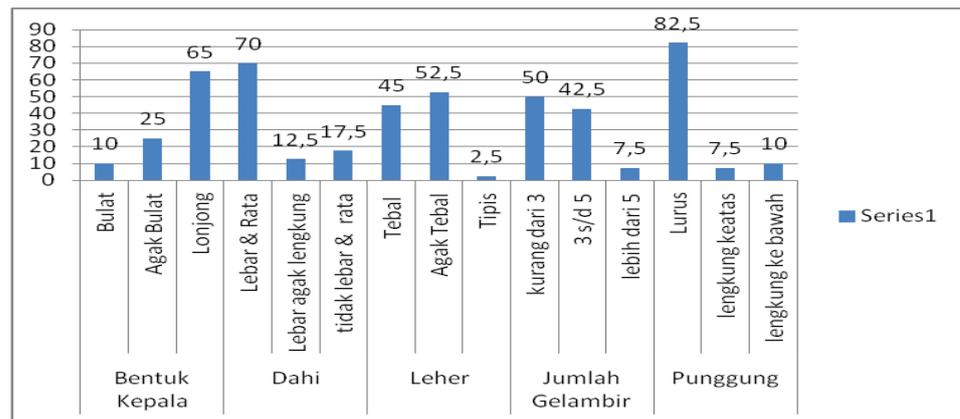
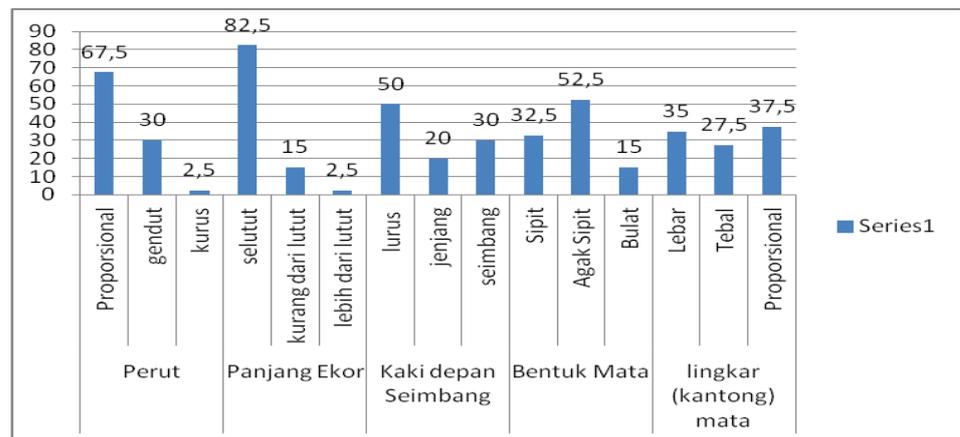


Figure 1: Percentage data of the exterior evaluation on skin, horns, and muzzle of Sonok cattle.

Based on the Table 1 above, the data shows that the category of exterior assessment of the horn shape is that 95% of Sonok cows have curved horns like bananas. This is caused by the horns of the cows which have been shaped since childhood by wearing slides made of metal that are shaped like bananas so that gradually the horns will follow the shape of the slides. Meanwhile, the condition of shiny and smooth skin is 67.5%. This is due to the treatment given by breeders in routinely bathing Sonok cattle every day and giving special ingredients, called herbal medicine [7].



**Figure 2:** Percentage data of the exterior assessment on the shape of head, forehead, and neck, the number of wattle, and hump.



**Figure 3:** Percentage data of exterior assessment on the shape of belly, forelegs condition, tail's length, and the shape of eyes.

Based on table 2 above, all observed categories are the exterior characteristics of Sonok cattle, which are influenced by genetic and environmental factors. The farmers, to produce Sonok cattle directly, have implemented performance selection. Furthermore, a program for mating cows with the selected bulls considered to meet the criteria has been carried out. In the genetic aspect, the superiority of Sonok cattle compared to

Madura cattle is generally assessed by strict selection systems, including the selection of parents, individual performance, and the testing results of their offspring. Meanwhile, the environmental aspect or cattle raising is classified as optimal by providing adequate quality feed, clean housing and supplementation, namely giving herbal medicine [8]. The selection carried out on Sonok cows includes the shape of body, cow health, growth rate based on age, behavior, family tree, fur color, shape of horns, and hooves [9]. The feeding of Sonok cattle is slightly different from that of Madura cattle in general, namely the feed is given 3-4 times with 2-3 times of forage and one time supplementary feed. The supplementary feed is given in the afternoon in the form of rice bran porridge and cord bran, added by a little salt and palm sugar, which is made like a dough of 1-3 kilograms/cow/day [10]. The breeders also provide herbal medicine to improve the performance of Sonok cattle. According to the breeders, herbal medicine can grow and strengthen bones, prevent fur loss, shine and smooth the skin, and maintain the cow's health. The herbal medicine is given by mixing it with a drink or directly feeding it using bamboo or paralon.

Ingredients for making herbal medicine include spices like turmeric, ginger, coconut, palm sugar, *temukunci*, eggs, and tamarind fruits. The potion and dosage of herbal medicine depend of the economic condition of the breeders. Another special treatment for Sonok cattle is that they are bathed and massaged every day. They are bathed every day by tying the cattle to the *tancek* pole (two poles on the right and left of the cow). Breeders are very easy to bathe cows that have been tied up because the way to bathe the cow is by rubbing and giving a little massage using warm water.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on the results, it can be concluded that to produce Sonok cattle with the exterior condition that match the assessment standard of the contest can be done through the criteria of good genetic by selecting the parents, individual performance test, and the testing result of the offspring. Meanwhile, in the environmental aspect, the breeders can produce Sonok cattle by providing good quality with supplementary feed, clean housing, and a special treatment called herbal medicine that contains special ingredients, as well as bathing the cows every day and giving routine massage to the cow's body.

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