

Monthly Newsletter – March 2018

Key highlights:

- Seven demonstration days to show farmers how to make silage from the fodder crops produced on the pasture / fodder demonstration plots, using a ‘pit silage’ technique;
- Following up on the natural Napier grass transplantation being trialled in Mufulira;
- Introductory Human Resources Workshop for Board members from Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira; and
- Welcoming a new Cooperative Business Support Officer to the team, who will provide tailored business related support to Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira.

Overview of activities carried out this month

Silage demonstrations

On 20 March, the ZDTP team worked with farmers in Liteta to turn one of the fodder / pasture demonstration plots into silage. Maize, sorghum, pigeon pea and sun hemp were cut up using mechanised choppers and are being ensiled in a pit which had been dug by local labourers. The pit method was selected due to estimated dry matter yield of each of the demonstration plots, the fact that once dug, pits can still be used in future years and because it is a way to provide substantial amounts of silage for more than one animal. Some farmers have previously made silage in barrels, but this tends to only last one animal for 30 days and farmers often comment on the high cost (250 – 300 ZMW) and limited local availability of barrels. Following this initial ‘pit silage’ demonstration, the field team carried out demonstrations on six other plots in Chibombo, Liteta, Bamakasi and Fisenge during March.



Figure 1: Local labourers digging the silage pit in Liteta.



Figure 2 Farmers harvesting the fodder crops in Liteta.



Figure 3 Compressing the chopped crops in the silage pit before covering with plastic.

Supported by the New Zealand Aid Programme

Demonstrations will be carried out on the other 22 plots during April. The silage making was aided by use of the motorised forage choppers owned by ZDTP, the hand operated chaff cutter which we mechanised last year, or by hiring machines from farmers. The effort which has gone into producing silage has reinforced our belief that all farmers need access to a mechanised means of chopping forage in order to help them prepare and conserve food for their animals and in doing so, decrease their cost of production. We'll keep you informed of the outcomes of the silage pits once they are opened later in the year.

Transplantation of naturally occurring Napier grass in Mufulira

Since January, Chrispine Banda, our Extension Officer in Mufulira has been working closely with 30 farmers to support them to transplant, grow and harvest naturally occurring Napier grass on their farms. Some of the farmers have started harvesting the grass and feeding it to their animals, who seem to be enjoying access to fresh fodder in their kraals. This is another way in which we hope to improve the availability of low cost nutrition to cattle.



Figure 4 Cows in Mufulira enjoying fresh Napier grass.

Introductory HR Workshop in the Copperbelt

On 6 March, four Board members from each of the ZDTP target cooperatives in the Copperbelt (Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira) attended an introductory HR workshop in Kitwe. By the end of this participatory and practically oriented workshop, each Board had developed an organogram of their organisation, started to develop their organisation's HR procedures, been involved in developing draft job descriptions for key positions in a Milk Collection Centre and discussed the contents of a code of conduct. ZDTP's Cooperative Business Support Officer (Copperbelt) will be supporting each Board over the coming months to further develop the items covered during the workshop.

Welcoming a new member to the ZDTP team

This month we've welcomed Ngolwe Sikazwe to the ZDTP Cooperative Business Support team. Ngolwe will be providing business support services to Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira in coordination with Marvellous Chansa, our Cooperative Business Support Officer (Central Province) who is working to provide similar services to Chibombo, Liteta and Bamakasi. Areas of focus at the moment are governance, record keeping, financial and general management.

*We hope you've found this fourteenth edition of the ZDTP newsletter informative and welcome any questions or comments you may have,
With kind regards, The ZDTP Team*

For further information, please contact: Tania Thomson (Programme Country Manager):

Email: tania@primeconsultants.net

Phone: +260 96 456 4206