



Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme

OCTOBER 2019 NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the latest edition of our monthly newsletter, which summarises activities carried out under the Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme (ZDTP) in October 2019.

Left: ZDTP Extension Officer Linda Moono: "We are focusing on increasing quality milk production for increased incomes while on the other hand working on how best we can reduce the cost of production through promoting fodder production and use of home-made concentrates amongst farmers."

Team member spotlight: Linda Moono

After six years in the agriculture industry, ZDTP Extension Officer Linda Moono has enjoyed swapping her office clothes for work boots. Ms Moono has had a diverse range of roles in Zambia's smallholder dairy sector to date, from Administration Manager for a Milk Collection Centre to Business Manager for a Dairy Cooperative Union. Many of her past roles have been office-based and Ms Moono says she is enjoying the hands-on side of being an Extension Officer. "What I like about my role is that I interact with farmers a lot on a one-to-one basis. It has helped me in my professional development because I do a lot of practical work, which helps me practice what I learnt at school and I am now further motivated to continue studying." Ms Moono has a Diploma in General Agriculture and is now also pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness Management, with hopes of one day owning her own diversified farm. "It will be a mixed farm with different enterprises, for example dairy, poultry, crops, horticulture and a garden park. Once established, I will turn it into a practical learning centre where farmers will visit and learn about farming as a business, especially women and youth." For now, Ms Moono says she is soaking up everything she can.

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ZDTP launches new messaging service for farmers

As usual it has been a busy month whilst our ZDTP staff and the farmers we work with await the onset of stable rains. We're thrilled with the enthusiasm of a large number of farmers ensuring their crops are planted on time (see the story on page 2). Many are prioritising a portion of land to grow crops to make silage or home-made concentrates, which they can then conserve for use in the dry season. We held a number of field days in October and were really impressed by the turnout (see the story on page 3). We're now planning further field days later in the season and would like to let as many farmers know about them as possible. In order to facilitate easy communication, we are in the process of launching three WhatsApp messaging groups, one for farmers in Central Province, one for around the Luanshya/Kitwe area and another for Mufulira. Farmers will be alerted to upcoming field days via WhatsApp and it will also allow us to engage more closely with those who do not have internet access. If you are interested in being added to one of the groups, please send a text or Whats App to Tania Thomson on 0964564206 (Whats app number) or 0978730455 with your name and the area where you are located.

Preparing for this year's precious precipitation

It is probably fair to say many farmers in Zambia are anxiously awaiting the rains following patterns of drought and poor rainfall in the past few years. One farmer, in particular, is not only waiting but has made sure that when the rain does come, he'll be ready to make the most of it.



Stanslous Ngosa is a Focus Farmer in Mufulira and, based on advice from ZDTP Extension Officer Chrispine Banda and Senior Extension Officer Kelvin Mulusa, has already hired labour to help him till more than two hectares of land for planting. Part of the prepared land will be used to plant maize for silage, as well as sunflower and soya beans – all for the benefit of Mr Ngosa's four dairy animals.

Mr Banda, who advises and supports more than 120 farmers in Mufulira, says Zambia has experienced drought and poor rainfall in the past few years, particularly in Southern and Central Provinces and some areas of the Copperbelt.

He says crops planted earlier or with the first rains stand a greater chance of missing the droughts that can sometimes occur during the rainy season and negatively impact vegetative growth and crop yields.

If droughts do occur, Mr Banda says, they'll at least have better yields if they are planted early because most of the field will have already matured. "Early planting should start with early land preparations at the beginning of September so that in the month of October to – at the latest – the first week of November all the land is ready for planting with the first rains."

ZDTP Programme Country Manager Tania Thomson says at the start of the ZDTP, it appeared many farmers in the programme's target areas were waiting until the onset of the rains to start preparing their land. Others were simply waiting to access seeds and fertiliser from the Zambian Farmer Input Support Programme or donors, which was resulting in many farmers planting late or not at all.

"We never know exactly when the rains are coming but being prepared for them in advance means that farmers have the opportunity for better yields."

Mr Banda says it's pleasing to see changes in behaviour because it means farmers are taking ZDTP advice on board. He says Mr Ngosa, in particular, likes to practice what he learns.

"When we started working with Mr Ngosa, he had no proper farm structures and didn't know how to make silage or Dairy 19 on his farm. Now he makes his own fresh and dry stover silage as well as home-made Dairy 19."

Mr Ngosa has also introduced Napier grass to his farm, developed excellent farm structures for sheltering his animals and improved his record keeping.

Mr Banda says working with Mr Ngosa and other farmers from Liteta, Chibombo, Bamakasi, Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira has been "a very interesting and encouraging journey" – and it's not over yet.



Audience members listen attentively as Wesley Chilambe, the ZDTP Extension Officer for Fisenge, presents information from one of the programme’s practical farm advice sheets during a Focus Farm field day.

ZDTP encouraged by impressive turnout at Fisenge field day

More than 70 people attended Fisenge’s second Focus Farm field day on 28 October 2019, which ZDTP Senior Extension Officer Kelvin Mulusa says was almost double the last field day’s turnout. “I think most people came as a result of the first experience and spread the story to others who did not attend the first one,” Mr Mulusa says. “It was so amazing and motivating to see farmers coming on their own and arriving on time to learn more – and for the first timers to come and experience learning.”

Mr Mulusa says the great turnout “shows that the ZDTP message is reaching more people” and that the programme’s “practical” methods such as the distribution of fact sheets for reference and on-farm use are resonating well with farmers. For example, Extension Officer Linda Moono recently assisted Mrs Sheba, a local farmer, to make silage in Kwanshama. Mrs Sheba used the maize stover fact sheet (available at www.zambiadairy.com) as a guide to help her give instructions to her farm workers. The ZDTP extension team held twelve field days on the Focus Farms located in the six target cooperatives between 17 September 2019 to 29 October 2019, plus one field day in Chikuse (approximately 30 kilometres from Kabwe), where Aleck Mwanza (featured in the September newsletter) had been supported by the ZDTP Extension Officer to make silage. A total of 340 people attended these Focus Farm events and attendees included farmers and members of farming households, farm workers, and extension staff from organisations we collaborate closely with (i.e. MFL, Zammilk, DAZ, Parmalat). Topics covered included: weighing animals; heat detection; reducing the cost of milk production; and milk quality/mastitis. Each topic was based on one of the practical farm advice fact sheets developed by the programme. Some of the topics were delivered by farmers or extension officers from other organisations because ZDTP officers have started to move away from delivering the topics themselves. They now take a more supportive role in encouraging knowledge sharing, discussions and critical thinking amongst others.

Team member spotlight, cont.

As an Extension Officer, Ms Moono is exposed to a lot of different people, from farmers to technical experts, consultants and the programme’s senior management team. “What I like about the programme and its approach is the way we deliver services to farmers through one-on-one advice, farm visits and demonstrations. When farmers have challenges, we are readily available and find solutions together. Where necessary, farmers are able to call on me for further clarification and advice.” Ms Moono says she joined the ZDTP at a time when most of the farmers she is working with had already seen the benefits of ZDTP activities. “They are willing to learn and improve on their dairy farming businesses. However, there are still some farmers who are hesitating to take our advice, adopt new innovations or change their way of doing things. I think it could be due to their past experiences, so the key point is just to have patience and perseverance. They will eventually change, take our advice and come on board.” Ms Moono also values the trainings and workshops given to both ZDTP staff and farmers “because not only is the programme giving practical farm advice but also capacity building staff as well as farmers”. She says this will ensure continuity and sustainability of ZDTP activities even after the programme ends as will involving youth such as younger farm workers, farmers’ children and grandchildren. “The staff will have gained knowledge and experience, which they can still pass on to farmers and the farmers can use the knowledge to continue developing their farming businesses. Involving youth will help us ensure that ... information will also have been passed on to other people on the farm and not just the farmers themselves.”

The ZDTP is focused on supporting dairy farmers to improve their productivity, milk quality and linkages to urban markets. The views expressed in this publication are those of the implementers of the programme and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Zealand Government. For further information, please contact ZDTP Country Manager Tania Thomson on tania@primeconsultants.net or +260 96 456 4206.