

Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme

MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the latest edition of our monthly newsletter, which summarises activities carried out under the Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme (ZDTP) in May 2020.

Left: A family member pounding sunflower cake into smaller pieces, for easy mixing, while making home-made concentrates for feeding dairy animals. The owner of the farm, Gilbert Mweemba, has seen a lot of benefits from growing and producing his own feed. His cost of production or 'COP' is lower because he no longer has to buy as much No 3 meal. Instead, he makes his own using a smaller amount of No 3 (120 kilograms in this instance), combined with home-grown sunflower cake (40kg), DCP (2.5kg) and salt (1.5kg). Milk production has increased, and with a reduced COP, Mr Mweemba is making more profit, which enables him to feed his family well and pay for his children to go to school. Photo: Beatrice Mwilima.

Ensuring sustainability of the ZDTP

Participants' visions for life after the programme

As of May 2020, the Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme (ZDTP) continues to work closely with farmers, family members and workers linked to approximately 600 farming households in Bamakasi, Chibombo, Liteta, Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira. Earlier this year, from January to March, we held workshops across the six dairy cooperatives to understand more about these cooperative's plans for their dairy enterprises beyond the term of the ZDTP, which is scheduled to end in December 2021. Participants at each workshop (i.e. Board members of either dairy unions or affiliated primary cooperatives) were asked to develop a vision for their cooperative in December 2022, i.e. twelve months after the ZDTP finishes. Many had silage and low-cost feed approaches at their core, which aligns with the ZDTP's approach of getting 'more milk for less (or the same) cost'. For example, Kalinidini (a primary cooperative in Mufulira) wanted "a silage pit for every farmer", Tigwilizane (a primary cooperative in Fisenge) wanted "to expand our fields of maize and fodders by December 2022" and Mazzieli, one of three primary cooperatives in Kwanshama, would like "every farm to have constructed a silage pit and be formulating their own feed by December 2021". Diversification of income sources was another key feature. For example, some cooperatives said they wanted to open agro shops to support Milk Collection Centre (MCC) activities through the sale of inputs such as salt, molasses and teat dip and other items like solar lights and bicycles. Such shops could also provide services such as hiring out choppers or tractors so cooperatives/MCCs are not solely reliant on milk incomes. Other ideas for income diversification included the establishment of enterprises that could meet community members' needs, such as acting as an agent for Airtel money, as a community service centre or by offering secretarial services (i.e. photocopying and printing). Participants also expressed a desire for continued access to dairy-specific, needs-based extension services from an independent Extension Officer (EO).

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Celebrating and sharing innovations in Zambia's dairy industry

Normally at this time of year, we'd be busy promoting low cost dairy production to farmers at District and Provincial shows and trade fairs. However, due to the restrictions placed on all of us by COVID-19, this has not been possible. Instead, we approached a range of organisations working in the dairy sector and asked them to share some innovations they've been involved in to create the supplement included in this month's newsletter. We hope you find it of interest. And if you have a 'dairy related' innovation, you would like to share with our 700+ readers, please get in touch.



Clement Sinyinza, his wife and their two workers making green maize silage recently; photo: Chispine Banda.

Farmer spotlight: Mr Clement Sinyinza

Mr Clement Sinyinza has been dairy farming for more than seven years; however, he was unfamiliar with fodder and pasture production and conservation techniques until he started working with the ZDTP in 2017. He first experimented with silage making in 2018, with members of his primary dairy cooperative – Kafue – and “when he saw the changes in milk production and animals’ body condition, he decided to make his own”, says ZDTP Extension Officer Chispine Banda. “He noticed consistent milk production, even during the dry season, because the silage was of good quality and the animals enjoyed grazing on it.” This year, Mr Sinyinza has doubled the size of his silage pit to 3m by 7m by 1m and has made an estimated 8.4 tonnes of silage. “He is positive he will have enough to feed his four animals in the next five months,” says Chispine. In addition, he now knows how to make home-made dairy concentrates using whole soya beans or sunflower mixed with corn, cob maize and other additives. And as a committee member for the Mufulira Milk Collection Centre, Mr Sinyinza has benefited from advice on leadership, governance and the importance of good planning. “Trainings in governance and leadership by ZDTP Business Support Officers have given Mr Sinyinza confidence as a leader.” By completing Real Time Monitoring (RTM) forms, he has also been able to see how his dairy business is performing in terms of profit and loss. Chispine says Mr Sinyinza is encouraging farmers in his community to consider dairy farming as “a serious business” if they want to progress. “He is keeping close track of his monthly dairy incomes and expenses. This is helping him plan how he will use the money generated from the business.”

Ensuring sustainability of the ZDTP

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ZDTP Programme Country Manager Tania Thomson said some great ideas sprung forth from the workshops, including around future access to EOs. The programme was now working with cooperative members “to put some of these ideas in place to ensure they can achieve their visions”, Tania said, adding it was encouraging to see many of the visions reflected an understanding of the importance and effectiveness of using silage as a basis for nutrition, specifically during the dry season – one of the ZDTP’s key messages. Other practices that continue to be promoted through the ZDTP are: providing animals with free access to potable water; reducing feed wastage through use of silage/hay racks; good milking practices; improving reproductive performance; and better business management through the Real Time Monitoring (RTM) initiative. Tania said the ZDTP was also encouraging and supporting cooperatives to identify other funding opportunities “to leverage from the support being provided by ZDTP and thus enhance the programme’s impact and value for money”. Examples included supporting several cooperatives to submit proposals for funding from the World Bank-funded Zambia Agribusiness and Trade Programme (ZATP). Discussions were also being held around making the ZDTP fact sheets available beyond December 2021 on a “web portal” currently under development by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

Questions from the field

Question: Anonymous

Is it legal in Zambia to sell unpasteurised milk? I have a number of clients that come and buy milk from my place and they prefer raw milk directly from the cow. Further to my question is that can I in this case package the raw milk and put in supermarkets for sale? Will that create a problem with the law?

Answer: National Milk Quality Specialist Friday Sampa

This is a very thought-provoking topic, with overlapping legislation involved. There is no specific law that prohibits the sale of raw milk to the public in Zambia. However, under the Food and Drugs Act, Chapter 303 part (ii), there is a general prohibition of products “unfit for human consumption” which is echoed in the 2019 Food Safety Act. Though vague, this rests all power in health authorities/officers to deem a product fit for consumption or otherwise.

I would not encourage someone to package and sell raw milk in shops for the simple reason that the local health authorities will stop it and even prosecute. They may subject milk to microbiological tests and should it contain *E. coli* (a bacteria harmful to human health) for example, then it qualifies as an unsafe food.

The catch is that you never know how safe unpasteurised milk is, especially on a microbiological level. I know of a case in the Southern Province of Zambia where a supermarket and farm were fined for selling raw milk.

Despite this formal advice, we are very aware that many farmers sell raw milk (of varying qualities) and that there are many consumers / consumer groups that prefer raw milk to that sold in the shops.

Informal sale in small containers to local communities is possible, so long as you have a ‘purveyors of milk’ license (through your local health authority) as well as the correct food handling certificates.

If you are going to sell raw milk, I’d recommend you have all your animals tested annually for Brucellosis and TB, and also suggest to your customers that they boil the milk before consuming it.

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.