

## Monthly Newsletter – December 2017 – January 2018

### Key highlights:

- Selected fodder demonstration plots fenced and ongoing management (weeding, fertiliser application) of all plots;
- Trial transplanting of natural grass at 30 sites in Mufulira;
- Visit by Milk Quality Expert, who held a capacity building workshop for the ZDTP Extension Team;
- ZDTP Cooperative Business Support Services being strengthened, with officers dedicated to the Central and Copperbelt Provinces;

### Overview of activities carried out this month

#### **Fencing of fodder demonstration plots**

During December and January, nine fodder demonstration plots measuring approximately 60 x 70 metres were fenced to protect them from animal and human incursion. In order to make the ZDTP budget go as far as possible, only the most vulnerable (remote, or at high risk of human or animal incursion) were fenced. The fencing work was led by an experienced Zambian contractor who involved community members and local labour in the exercise. In addition to protecting the crops, this activity also exposed farmers to new ways of fencing and some have already expressed an interest in fencing their own farms. The extension team are liaising with interested farmers and identifying ways in which ZDTP can support this process.



**Figure 1: Cattle grazing next to a fenced demonstration plot (right) in Chibombo.**

#### **Management of fodder demonstration plots**

As I'm sure all of you are aware, the rainfall so far has been less than expected. This has had an impact on the growth of some of the demonstration fodder crops and grasses. It has also made the process of weeding some plots quite challenging due to the hardness of the ground. In order to support the farmers in Chibombo, Liteta, Balaka (recently renamed Bamakasi), Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira with the management of the plots, given the farmers themselves have their own crops to manage, the programme hired local labour to help weed the plots.



**Figure 2 A farmer weeding at the demonstration plot in Twashuka, Fisenge**

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As some of the crops are now starting to mature we are looking forward to supporting the farmers to turn them into nutritious cattle feed. Alongside this, we are holding a number of 'Field Days' on selected plots in the six cooperatives during February, to promote learning and sharing between farmers. For more information on the dates of the Field Days, or if you are interested in attending, please contact [Tania@primeconsultants.net](mailto:Tania@primeconsultants.net).

### **Establishing natural grass on farmers' fields**

In addition to our 'demo plot' activities the field team have been working with farmers and Kalipochi, our Feed and Fodder Conservation expert, to identify affordable, local solutions to improving cattle nutrition during the dry season. One suggested innovation is seeing how we can enhance production of pastures growing naturally. Chrispine, our Extension Officer in Mufulira, has been trialling transplantation of naturally occurring Napier-type grass. Thirty farmers are involved in this trial and have been busy during December and January preparing and planting plots. We'll keep you updated in future editions of the newsletter on progress with this innovation.



**Figure 2 Farmers in Mufulira harvesting natural grass for transplantation.**

### **Business development activities in Central and Copperbelt Provinces**

To support ZDTP's desire to work closely with our six target cooperatives to develop their dairy businesses, we now have two Cooperative Business Support Officer (BSO) positions, one based in Kabwe and the other in Luanshya. It had been challenging for Kapeza, our previous BSO to provide timely support to all six given the distances between Mufulira (northern most cooperative) and Liteta (southernmost). More on these activities in future editions of the newsletter.

### **Improving milk quality**

At the end of a busy first year, the ZDTP field team received a support visit from Greg Braggins, our Milk Quality Expert. He spent this first visit familiarising himself with the current milk supply, receiving and storage practices at each of the six target cooperatives. This involved watching farmers milking, following milk to the Milk Collection Centre (MCC) and reviewing handling and storage practices at each MCC. There was also time for him to hold a two-day training course in the Central Province for ZDTP's field staff. We'll be working closely with Greg over the coming months to improve practices on farms and at the MCCs and to support farmers and collection centre staff to comply with the updated ZABS (Zambia Bureau of Standards) milk quality standards.

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

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*The views expressed in this publication are those of the implementers of ZDTP and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Zealand Government.*