

Monthly Newsletter – February 2018

Key highlights:

- Eight field days at fodder demonstration plots in Chibombo, Liteta, Bamakasi, Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira;
- Planning and preparation to turn forage crops grown on the demonstration plots into silage;
- Helping farmers to understand and develop their dairy business through information collection and analysis (Real Time Monitor Farms);
- Increased extension support available for Fisenge farmers.

Overview of activities carried out this month

Field days on demonstration plots

In February we held eight 'Field Days' on fodder demonstration plots within Chibombo, Liteta, Bamakasi, Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira Dairy Cooperatives. These were an opportunity for farmers to showcase their efforts to others and to ask questions of our Fodder Conservation Expert (Kalipochi Kawonga) and the ZDTP field team. The days were very well attended, despite some slight disruption by heavy rain showers, and in total were attended by 365 smallholder farms and representatives from other organisations such as the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, milk processors and Dairy Association of Zambia. The days were well received, and the team gathered lots of positive feedback with a number of farmers keen to replicate such plots on their farms during the next growing season.



Figure 1: Farmers in Jele Primary Cooperative (Fisenge) attending a field day facilitated by Kalipochi (Fodder Conservation Expert (left with white hat)) and Kelvin (Senior Extension Officer (left in black T-shirt and hat)).

What next with the demonstration plots?

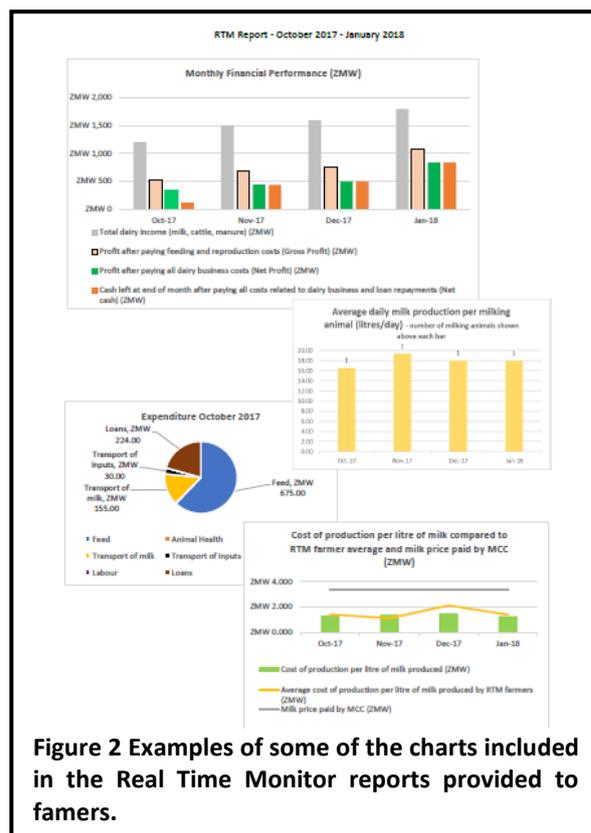
As we plan to turn the fodder crops into silage, as a way of demonstrating a 'seed to feed' concept, the team collected samples from plots in Kwanshama, Liteta and Bamakasi which have been sent for dry matter analysis at UNZA (University of Zambia). The results of this analysis have been used to estimate the quantity of silage which we believe can be produced from each plot and to use this to estimate the number of days the resulting silage can be used to provide feed for a dairy animal. This calculation leads us to believe that the thirty plots will produce an estimated total yield of 64,314 kg of dry matter, which we plan to turn into 537m³ of silage. This silage will then provide 3,776 feeding days' worth of fodder, which will be distributed to the cows of community members who have been involved in this demonstration initiative. As would be expected, the yield varies between plots, with the best producing plots in Kwanshama and Liteta producing 290 and 237 feeding days respectively and the poorest performing plots in Bamakasi and Kwanshama producing between 11 and 22 feeding

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days' worth of fodder. We'll be reporting more on the silage making demonstrations in the March and April editions of the newsletter once they are underway and, later in the year, the positive effects we expect feeding silage to have on milk production.

Real Time Monitor Farms – helping farmers to understand and improve their dairy businesses.

Since October forty five farmers across the six cooperatives have been providing us with information on their dairy related income, expenditure and milk production through completing a simple recording form on a monthly basis. Using the four months of data provided, we developed a simple reporting format which provides farmers with an overview of their financial progress, breakdown of expenditure, information on average total herd and individual animal milk yields and their cost of production which is benchmarked against other farmers. The business and extension teams started delivering and explaining these reports to farmers during February and this process will continue into March. The information appears to be well received and many farmers indicated that this type of information will be very useful in helping them to make business management decisions. As we further develop this process we plan to closely link the reports to the extension messages and support we also provide to farmers in the six cooperatives.



Welcoming a new member to the ZDTP team

This month we've welcomed Wesley Chilambe to the team. Wesley will be providing extension services to farmers associated with Fisenge. He takes over from Kelvin Mulusa who has been promoted to Senior Extension Officer. The two major parts of Kelvin's role are supporting all ZDTP extension officers and promoting collaboration with other stakeholders. However, in his 'spare time' he will also continue to provide extension support in Fisenge, thus increasing the extension support available to farmers.

*We hope you've found this thirteenth 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.