

# Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme

DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER



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

*Left: Liteta farmer Gravity Hamwenda testing milk for mastitis using the Sunlight detergent Rapid Mastitis Test (RMT).*

## Work continues to improve milk quality and reduce rejections

As usual our team have been working with Milk Collection Centres (MCCs) and the farmers who supply milk to them to improve overall milk quality and reduce milk rejections. One way of ensuring good milk quality is to follow good hygiene practices. This can be supplemented by regularly testing animals for subclinical mastitis using the Sunlight detergent Rapid Mastitis Test (RMT), detailed in fact sheet M03C available at [zambiadairy.com/fact-sheets](http://zambiadairy.com/fact-sheets). One aspect of milk quality that is sometimes forgotten is safe storage. As milk is a fragile food product it needs to be cooled to 4°C within two hours of leaving the cow and stored safely. Options for safe storage include at a MCC or on the farm in a suitable fridge or freezer. If it's not possible to keep milk cool overnight before taking it to the MCC, we recommend feeding it to calves, consuming it at home or distributing it within your local community. We've put together a fact sheet on safe storage of milk overnight (see M06). Another option to prevent the need of storing milk overnight is to milk animals once per day. We've also put together a fact sheet on this (see M06A).



## ZDTP Extension Officer gains new role at Dairy Gold

At the end of 2020, we farewelled Chrispine Banda who had been an Extension Officer for the ZDTP in Mufulira since the start of the programme. Chrispine provided invaluable extension support to farmers across an area with a 40-kilometre radius. We will miss having Chrispine in our team but look forward to interacting with him in his new role for Dairy Gold in the Copperbelt.

## Covid-19 update

Covid-19 is on the rise in Zambia, with large gatherings banned, most schools closed and the need to limit the spread by taking precautions such as wearing face masks in public places and regular hand washing. Our team members are committed to keeping themselves, their families and everyone they work with safe. We acknowledge that irrespective of Covid-19, dairy farming is a 365-day business. Dairy cows still need to eat and be cared for, farmers need to prepare for making silage to feed their animals later in the year, and milk still needs to be delivered so they can get paid. As such, we are continuing to operate our programme with precautions in place, such as regular hand washing, physical distancing and holding any small gatherings or meetings outside. Communication with farmers and the wider industry continues through WhatsApp groups and phone calls, plus in person visits. Support from international experts is being provided remotely. We have also prepared a guidance document to help Milk Collection Centres (MCCs) and dairy farmers keep staff, cooperative members and visitors safe. We will continue to keep updated on case numbers and any new Government directives and make any changes to operations if needed. Meanwhile, keep up the hand washing and physical distancing and stay safe out there.

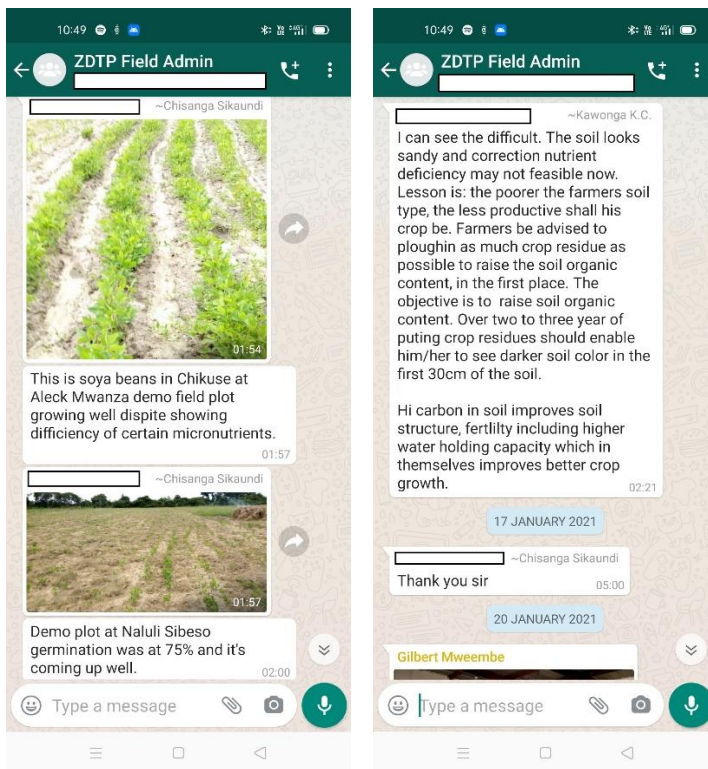
## Monitoring visit by members of our Programme Technical Committee

We were happy to host farm visits in December for members of our Programme Technical Committee (PTC), who were keen to see some of the things farmers have achieved through adopting the low-cost practices the ZDTP is promoting. The visit was led by PTC Chairperson Mr. Cosmore Mwaanga, who is the Director of Policy, Planning and Information for the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MFL), accompanied by MFL's Chief Livestock Production Officer Mr. Vincent Simmongwe, MFL's Assistant Director of Fisheries and Livestock Marketing Mr. Kennedy Mulenga and Mr. Choongo Mutelo, who is the Dairy Association of Zambia's Field Facilitator for the Copperbelt Region. The team visited farmers in Mufulira, Kwanshama and Fisenge and met Board members from these three cooperatives. They had the opportunity to see some of our demonstration plots, hear how farmers are planning to produce silage and home-made concentrates to feed to their animals during 2021 and how farmers have reduced their Cost of Production and improved their finances by adopting these simple practices.



# Demonstration plots well underway

To say we're excited by the good rains we've had this year may be an understatement. This is partly because, after three years of demonstrating and working with farmers on silage making, we are hearing so many stories of farmers who are planning to make silage. For some, this will be their first time. For others, this will be the year when they make more having already seen the benefits silage can bring to their animals during the dry season. During December, our extension staff worked closely with nine farmers who are hosting our co-funded demonstration plots. This work included making sure that land was prepared, seeds were planted, the necessary nutrients were added, and weeding was carried out. We are hopeful the good rains will continue into February and March and are also ensuring farmers are ready to make silage when the time comes. The key things required for that are: a pit (or silage bags), plastic, a forage chopper, labour and something heavy to compress the crops. See fact sheet F01 at [zambiadairy.com/fact-sheets](http://zambiadairy.com/fact-sheets) for more information about silage making.



*Left: Technical advice in relation to ZDTP demonstration plots is provided by our Feed and Fodder Conservation Expert, Kalipochi Kawonga, by way of photos and comments posted on our team WhatsApp groups.*



*Right: Extension Officers carry out regular visits to review the progress of plots and provide up-to-date advice as necessary. This photo was taken by ZDTP Extension Officer Gilbert Mweembe while visiting a farm in Chibombo.*

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](mailto:tania@primeconsultants.net) or +260 96 456 4206.