

Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme

APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the latest edition of our monthly newsletter, which summarises activities carried out under the Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme (ZDTP) in April 2021.

Left: Gilbert and Mary Mweemba on their farm in Central Province.

From programme participant to Extension Officer

Gilbert Mweemba and his wife, Mary, started working with the ZDTP in 2017 and were “early adopters”, according to Programme Country Manager Tania Thomson, showing enthusiasm for learning and trying new farming practices from day one.

The couple’s property in Central Province soon became one of the ZDTP’s chosen ‘Focus Farms’ – used to demonstrate changes in farm management that are realistic for other farmers to adopt. In 2020, Gilbert was invited to join the ZDTP staff as an Extension Officer – allowing him to share his knowledge with other farmers in a more official capacity.

Gilbert says he enjoys the role because, despite now being an advisor, he is still learning new skills all the time. Changes he and Mary have made to their farm since 2017 include:

- Introducing new feeding regimes, including making silage to feed to their animals in the dry season;
- Building a ‘model’ silage pit, using concrete supplied by the ZDTP and bricks provided from their own resources;
- Hosting demonstration plots, showcasing different crops such as buffalo grass, Rhodes grass, sorghum and sun hemp;

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- Growing a new variety of sunflower seeds to show farmers how sunflowers can be ground and combined with crushed maize to produce home-made concentrates that are cheaper than locally-available options; and
- Making hay, which can be baled and stored to provide an added source of roughage during the year.

Programme Country Manager, Tania Thomson, says: “Gilbert is a great addition to the team and helps to keep our advice farmer focused. He is always quick to speak from a farmer’s point of view. We hope farmers in Chibombo and Liteta will be able to pay for Gilbert’s advisory and support services beyond the term of the ZDTP.”

Farmer’s innovation impresses



The good rains were welcomed by many this year; however, they proved a challenge when making silage. Maize crops were at the milk stage – the ideal time to make silage – during February and March. This meant that for some farmers, it rained heavily when silage making was taking place. Kenneth Kalimoto, the host of a co-funded ZDTP demonstration plot in Kwanshama, decided to combat this by building a roof over his pit. “It really worked because it actually rained heavily the day after,” said ZDTP Extension Officer Linda Moono. It was motivating to see farmers coming up with useful innovations that were also “simple and cheap”, she said. As part of the demonstration plot arrangement, the ZDTP supported Kenneth with inputs such as seed and fertiliser – and supervision from land preparation until harvesting. Kenneth provided the labour and worked closely with Linda to prepare the silage pit, with guidance from ZDTP Field Extension Manager Kelvin Mulusa. Kenneth has five animals – 1 bull, 1 heifer and 3 cows. He has been farming for more than 10 years and, like other farmers in his region, has faced challenges in relation to animals with mastitis and feeding during the dry season. “With the silage, he is [now] well prepared for the dry season,” said Linda. The demonstration pit is expected to produce 5,200 kilograms of silage and Kenneth ensiled an additional 1,400kgs of maize crop in silo bags. This should be able to give him three months of feed for his three female animals, assuming they eat 20kgs of silage a day each. For more information on the ZDTP’s annual feeding plan, see fact sheets F06 and F06A at zambiadairy.com.



Spreading the word

We were pleased to be able to support officers from Lactalis and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Kabwe recently to carry out two different silage demonstrations using a ZDTP-owned forage chopper. The demonstration at Mrs Muhango's farm (see left) was organised by Lactalis Extension Officer Wankie Miyoba. After the chopper left, farmers used their own machetes to finish chopping the herbage.

New partnership launched in Zambia to support food processors

Food processing firms play a vital role in economies and food systems due to their position at the centre of supply chains. They provide a stable and profitable market for crops grown by smallholder farmers, generate employment for workers and produce nutritious, affordable food for local consumers. In Zambia, about 1,500 food processing businesses generate approximately 60% of the country's total manufacturing output. Most of these food processors are small and face challenges in relation to manufacturing processes, marketing, sourcing of raw materials, access to finance and adopting technology. As a result, the sector still has significant untapped potential for growth. The COVID-19 pandemic has also created an array of disruptions to these businesses' operations, threatening the survival of many firms. To support growth in the food processing sector, international non-profit organisation TechnoServe is implementing the Food Enterprises for a Developed Zambia (FED) programme from 2020 to 2023. The project, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), will work hand-in-hand with 100 food processing firms, delivering tailored assistance to address the firms' most significant technical and business challenges. It will also work to provide sector-wide training and help improve access to finance for food processors. It is expected the programme will increase participating firms' revenue by 25-40% and the volume of certified, safe foods sold by the firms by 25%. It will also have a strong focus on creating economic opportunities for women. For further information on the programme, or if you are adding value to milk and feel you would benefit from the programme's support, please get in touch with FED's Senior Food Processing Specialist Aaron Nkondo on ankondo@tns.org or +260 977659657.

Keeping calves healthy with suitable housing

Female calves are your future milking animals, so it is important – and good business – to look after them properly. By looking after them you aim to stop them dying, help them grow well and maximise your profitability (lifetime milk volumes and their own calves who will in turn produce more milk and more calves). Keeping calves warm and dry in a 'house' means they can use their energy to grow strong and healthy instead of using it to keep warm.

It also means you can:

- Know how much they are eating and drinking;
- Monitor their growth rate;
- Allow their immune systems to fully develop whilst stopping them from getting infections from other animals;
- Prevent them from catching parasites from older animals;
- Prevent them from wandering and eating things which may make them sick, e.g., pieces of plastic, rotten food; and
- Stop them having an accident, e.g., being trampled by a bull, being strangled by a tether rope.

A good calf house or pen should be clean, dry and protected from the weather (i.e., direct sunlight, rain and wind). It should also be well ventilated to allow air to circulate (this helps prevent pneumonia), big enough for the calf to move around in and have clean comfortable bedding. For more tips on how to look after your calves with proper housing, check out fact sheet H05B at zambiadairy.com.

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.