

Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme

JUNE 2018 NEWSLETTER



IN BRIEF

Silage making demonstrations prove popular

Following the success of the ZDTP's 'seed to feed' initiative regarding silage making on demonstration plots, our Extension Officers have received multiple requests from farmers for silage demonstrations on their farms. Farmers are happy to provide silage material, barrels and pre-dug pits and the ZDTP team is providing additives such as urea and molasses, as well as plastic for keeping the silage airtight. In June, a total of 14 'on farm' demonstrations were carried out in Liteta, Chibombo, Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira.

IN BRIEF

Annual Benchmarking Survey

We're in the final stages of data collection for our Annual Benchmarking Survey (ABS). All data collected will be reviewed and 'cleaned' before being analysed at the end of July. The ABS report will be available in mid-August.

Financial management training

In addition to training individual farmers in record keeping, we are also promoting better financial management at the cooperative level. Our two Business Support Officers, Marvellous and Ngolwe, have been collecting information from cooperatives on a monthly basis such as income, expenses and amount of milk sold. They have been entering this information into Xero, a global small business platform, to calculate gross and net profit and milk volumes. Sharing these results is proving to be a great way to promote the benefits of record keeping to individual farmers and cooperatives. The long-term goal is for cooperatives to take over the collecting and reporting of monthly data.

Welcome to the latest edition of our monthly newsletter, which summarises activities carried out under the Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme (ZDTP) in June 2018.



Monthly overview

Much of the focus this month has been on finishing data collection for the Year Two Benchmarking Survey. However, alongside this activity the extension team has also found time to carry out silage demonstrations and exhibit alongside our Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock colleagues at CAMINEX and ZITF in Ndola. Business activities have continued to focus on improving the governance and sharing of information in our six target cooperatives, through preparations for Annual General Meetings in Bamakasi and Chibombo and the development of annual plans and activities which link to the work we are doing with farmers to improve the profitability of their dairy businesses.

Improved planning and management on individual farms is essential for the sustainability of dairy cooperatives and increased incomes for farmers.

Focus Farm selection process underway

Leith Pemberton, our Dairy Farm Development Specialist, has been working with our Extension Officers to finalise the selection process for our programme's Focus Farms, which will become 'hubs' for other farmers – hosting activities such as demonstrations, discussions and field days. "These are farms where we will work intensively with farmers to demonstrate good practices and show other farmers what is possible within their local area," says ZDTP Programme Manager Tania Thomson. "We are planning to have 15 Focus Farms across the ZDTP's six target cooperatives and we'll be working with the owners of these farms to determine their visions for the future and develop plans alongside them to improve production and management on their farms," Tania says. In implementing agreed on-farm improvements, ZDTP staff will provide advice, capacity building support and technical assistance. Farmers will provide labour and the majority of funds; however, the ZDTP will make sure the agreed improvements fit into the 'four As' – available, affordable, appropriate and accessible – in the Zambian context. "We really want to ensure the changes are sustainable beyond the length of the programme so are taking our time during selection and implementation to make sure farmers are on the journey with us," Tania says.

Farmer spotlight

Michael Mukopamali, of Liteta Co-operative, says he and his wife (pictured) have benefited from ZDTP activities such as farm visits, advice and demonstrations. They have two dairy cows and their farm supports a family of eight. Mrs Mukopamali says since taking part in ZDTP activities, such as learning how to make silage, they have increased their farm's total daily milk production from 8 litres to 17 litres. This has enabled them to finish building their house and pay school fees for their children. Mr Mukopamali says the ZDTP has given him a fresh perspective on his dairy farm business.



Why do we work with farmer groups?

As is already well documented, the ZDTP is working with six existing dairy cooperatives in Central and Copperbelt Districts. There are numerous benefits to working with existing farmer networks. For example, there is more chance of knowledge dissemination and technology transfer in a group setting. So far, through leveraging existing farmer structures, we have improved silage technology through the use of demonstration plots and a mechanised forage chopper. This has improved on-farm nutrition and increased milk production, which will in turn increase incomes for farmers, something we are evidencing in the Real-Time Monitor data we collect on a monthly basis. Our hopes for our six cooperatives are that they will achieve good governance, with regular Annual General Meetings already in process in Liteta, Chibombo and Bamakasi – and have a clear vision for their future. We'll be advocating for strong management (i.e. systems and procedures) and transparent and open communication. In an ideal world, farmer groups strengthen value chains. But there needs to be a realisation that value addition comes with its own costs and challenges.

We hope you have found this edition of the ZDTP newsletter informative and welcome any questions or comments you may have. For further information, please contact ZDTP Country Manager Tania Thomson on tania@primeconsultants.net or +260 96 456 4206.

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.