

# Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme

JULY 2019 NEWSLETTER



*Welcome to the latest edition of our monthly newsletter, which summarises activities carried out under the Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme (ZDTP) in July 2019.*

*Left: The next generation of dairy animals at Berringtone Musonda's farm in Fisenge.*

## Farmer reaps the rewards of affordable, homemade concentrates

Extra income from increased milk production is helping a Chibombo farmer pay his children's school fees.

Goodfel Mwiinga has three jersey animals, four heifers and a bull on his farm, which supports a household of nine. Like many farmers in Chibombo and Liteta, he has benefited from ZDTP advice and training delivered by Extension Officer Beatrice Mwilima.

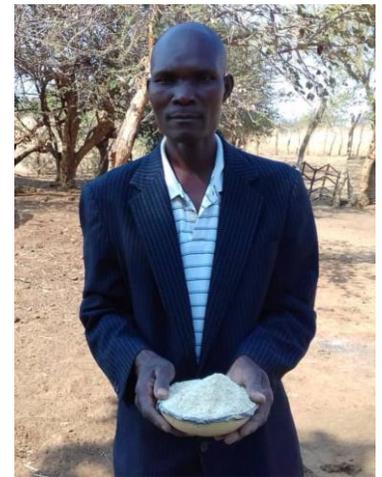
In particular, Mr Mwiinga says he has noticed a substantial increase in milk production after feeding his animals home-made concentrates, as well as silage and hay.

Mr Mwiinga's home-made concentrates are made from soya beans and maize grown on his Focus Farm as a way of demonstrating the benefits to other farmers. He says the extra income from increased milk sales is helping him pay for his children's school fees.

"My cost of production has reduced because I have not bought anything [extra] to produce the [extra] milk – it's all grown and made at my farm. The results from the home-grown feed [trial] are very encouraging. Next year I am planning to plant more soya beans and maize so that I can formulate more of my own feed. I hope that my fellow farmers will also adopt this technology."

ZDTP Country Programme Manager Tania Thomson says Mr Mwiinga's experience is a great example of the "affordable, easily implementable advice we are showcasing through the Focus Farms".

"What's also exciting is that as time progresses both Mr Mwiinga and the ZDTP will be able to track the effectiveness of our interventions in improving the quantity and quality of milk produced through our monthly and annual monitoring."



*"The results from the home-grown feed [trial] are very encouraging. Next year I am planning to plant more soya beans and maize so that I can formulate more of my own feed."*  
- Chibombo farmer  
Goodfel Mwiinga

## Farewell to Ngolwe Sikazwe

Last month we said farewell to Ngolwe Sikazwe, who joined the ZDTP in March 2018. Through his role as a Senior Business Support Officer with the ZDTP, Ngolwe provided the Dairy Cooperative Unions we're targeting with valuable, pragmatic advice. All of us involved in the ZDTP wish him well in his new role as Project Manager for a four-year World Food Programme-funded project.

## Pausing for reflection; change takes time...

**Tania Thomson**  
Programme Country  
Manager



*"We know that change takes time and that farmers in Zambia are challenged with wet and dry seasons; however, we're already impressed by the changes that farmers have made."*

**By Tania Thomson**

Although the ZDTP has been running since January 2017, we've worked with farmers through just two agricultural seasons (October 2017 to April 2018 and October 2018 to April 2019).

During the first agricultural season, we demonstrated the concept of silage making to farmers whilst simultaneously promoting the concept of 'more milk, less cost' as the cornerstone of any successful dairy business.

By June 2018, a number of farmers were given the opportunity to start feeding silage to their animals.

The silage was produced on 29 farmer-hosted demonstration plots, where the ZDTP paid for seeds and other inputs, including labour to dig silage pits. Following this, we were impressed by the number of farmers who started calling our Extension Officers for support to make silage from maize stover, a residue which is traditionally wasted through burning.

By October 2018, a good number of farmers were interested in growing crops for silage production on their own farms, rather than relying on the small amounts shared between farmers from the demonstration plots. However, the challenge was that many farmers lacked sufficient funds to buy inputs.

This agricultural season (2018 to 2019), we reduced our number of demonstration plots to 10 and allowed the host farmers to use all the silage produced on the plots on their farms. This had a bigger impact on milk production than the previous years when farmers shared the silage. We also added the concept of producing on-farm concentrates to the demonstration plots.

As we plan for the coming year, we'll be focusing on supporting farmers to start planning for their fodder and concentrate needs well in advance of the start of the growing season.

One way of doing this is through our Real-Time Monitoring (RTM) initiative, where we're helping farmers to better understand key aspects of their dairy businesses such as income, expenditure, herd structure and milk production. We will host some demonstration plots this year; however, we're confident that a good number of farmers will now be growing crops for silage and concentrate production on their own. We look forward to being able to continue to track changes from this through the RTM initiative.

We know that change takes time<sup>1</sup> and that farmers in Zambia are challenged with wet and dry seasons; however, we're already impressed by the changes that farmers have made and the growth and development of our ZDTP team. We are hopeful that in Year 4 of the programme we'll be hearing more stories like Mr Mwiinga's (on page 1). It appears that the low-cost approaches we have introduced are allowing farmers to realise 'more milk, less cost' is more than achievable on their dairy farms.

<sup>1</sup> A paper printed in the European Journal of Social Psychology by Philippa Lally found it took between 18 to 254 days for people to form a new habit.

## Kwanshama farmer hopes herd management will be the way forward



*Above: Kwanshama dairy farmer Godwin Muhalu is making several changes on his farm after suffering some setbacks.*

Kwanshama dairy farmer Godwin Muhalu has learnt a valuable lesson faced by dairy farmers and business owners around the world: sometimes less is more.

Mr Muhalu started dairy farming in 2011 with one dairy cow. It went well, so he got a loan and bought four more. Unfortunately, this time around, things didn't go so well.

Mr Muhalu lost nearly all of his animals to disease or injury and says he was disappointed to learn that his workers had not told him what was going on with his animals before it was too late.

He now hopes that working with a small herd size – of two animals – will help improve the overall profitability of his business. He is also pledging to take a more hands-on approach to his farming.

“When an animal is not well, you as a farmer are also not well,” Mr Muhalu says. “People are telling me I am having these challenges because I am managing my farm from a distance, so I have taken that advice on.”

Mr Muhalu plans to move to his farm in 2020, so he can better supervise his workers and keep an eye on his animals. In the meantime, he is planning to introduce “zero grazing”, which he hopes will lead to better milk production.

He is also hoping that growing fodder and making his own feeds and concentrates will help him save money.

Linda Moono, the ZDTP's Extension Officer for Kwanshama, says zero grazing will give Mr Muhalu confidence that his animals have enough feed, since everything he gives to his animals will be measured and recorded.

Because his animals will be confined to one place, they will conserve energy and be easier to manage in terms of on-farm hazards. The restricted area will also prevent the spread of diseases or ticks from communal grazing.

Ms Moono says sometimes, with dairy farming, less is more.

“It is better to maintain a small herd which you are able to manage. You can get good volumes of milk even from two animals compared to when you have more animals and are failing to manage them well.”

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**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.**