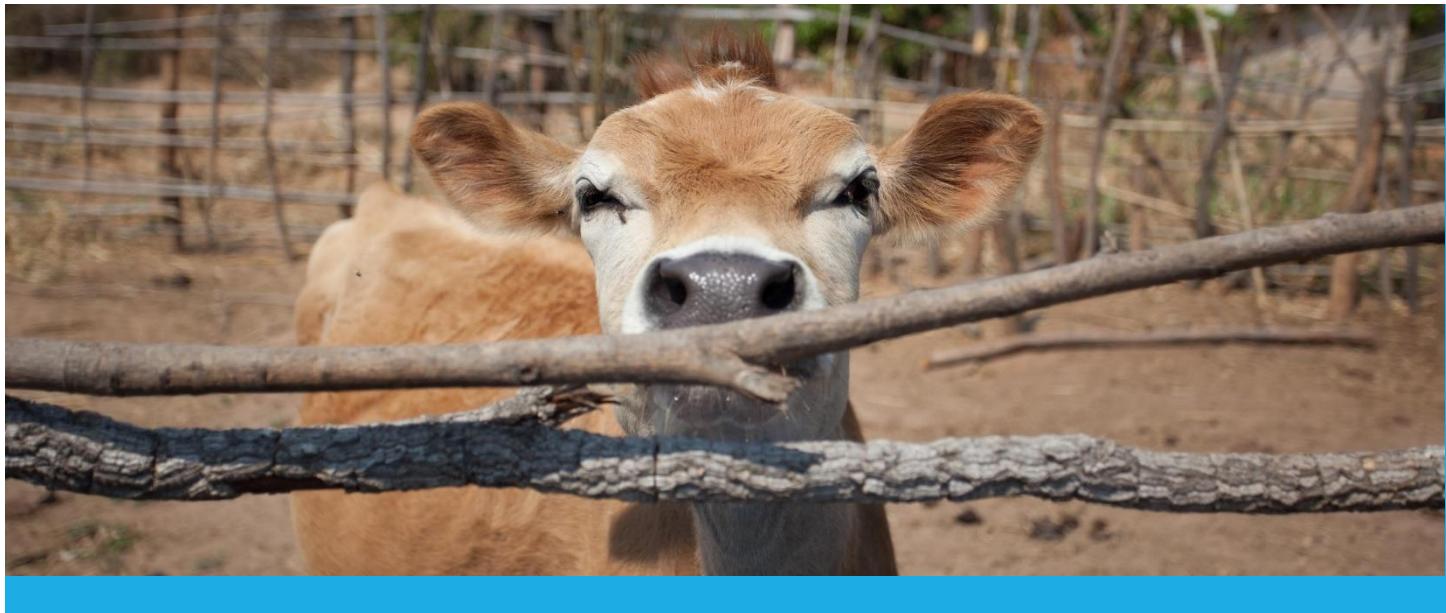


Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme

MAY 2018 NEWSLETTER



Farmer awareness of efficient milk production

A major focus of the Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme (ZDTP) is to improve the profitability of milk produced by smallholder farmers for commercial sale. Over the past year, we've been working with farmers in the six ZDTP target cooperatives (Bamakasi, Chibombo, Liteta, Fisenge, Kwanshama and Mufulira) to improve their knowledge of affordable nutrition and minimise their cost of production, whilst optimising milk yields. To do this we've held a range of practical training and demonstration events, supported 'seed to feed' production of conserved fodder (silage), carried out farm visits and worked intensively with 45 farmers to improve their record keeping and understanding of the operation of their dairy business. We hope the results of the Year Two Annual Benchmarking Survey will provide information on changes that have occurred as a result of our support.

IN BRIEF

Supporting cooperatives to hold AGMs

Strengthening governance is one of the areas we're working on with our target cooperatives. On discovering that Annual General Meetings (AGMs) were not an annual occurrence, Marvellous, our Cooperative Business Support Officer in Central Province, supported Liteta to hold an AGM and is supporting Bamakasi and Chibombo to hold AGMs in June and July. AGMs are a key mechanism for effective governance and farmer engagement.



Annual Benchmarking Survey

We've started our Annual Benchmarking Survey for Year Two of the ZDTP, with help from the programme's six Extension Officers and one hired enumerator. Data collection is proving easier than in Year One as many farmers are now aware of the importance of keeping accurate financial and production records (the basis of our Real Time Monitoring initiative). Our team will finish collecting data from almost 600 farmers across all six of the ZDTP's target cooperatives by the end of June. We look forward to sharing some results in August.

Thank you for reading the latest edition of our monthly newsletter, which summarises activities carried out under the Zambia Dairy Transformation Programme (ZDTP) in May 2018.



Monthly overview

We've had a great month in the field with the opening of silage pits made using fodder grown on demonstration plots in the ZDTP's six target areas, the start of data collection for our Annual Benchmarking Survey and exhibiting alongside colleagues from the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MFL) at the Mufulira and Luanshya District Agricultural Shows. We're also in the midst of drafting a series of fact sheets which can be used by extension staff as 'aide memoires' and distributed to farmers. Twenty-eight titles have been identified and 19 are in the final stages of completion. Activities planned for June include starting the quarterly feedback process of reports to farmers collecting monthly data under the Real Time Monitoring (RTM) initiative and exhibiting at the Copperbelt Provincial Show in collaboration with MFL.

Decreasing production costs through improving farmer awareness of the performance of their dairy business.

Silage making

It was satisfying to open the six silage pits made using maize and sorghum grown on demonstration plots and find silage of good quality. The exact system of distribution of the silage is being agreed by farmers who were involved in activities on each demonstration plot. It is hoped that farmers will feed the silage collected to their cattle over the coming months – ideally selecting animals at the start of their lactation period, in order to maximise overall lactation milk yield. Four farmers have been selected to collect daily data on feeding regimes and milk production and we are hoping to see improved milk yields from those animals receiving silage in their daily ration. The data collected will be used to underpin the ongoing promotion of silage feeding for improved nutrition and milk production.



Farmer spotlight

Goldfrey Kombe, of Mufulira, says his farming practices have changed as a result of advice he has received through the ZDTP, particularly in relation to on-farm nutrition. After taking part in farm visits and learning more about pasture and fodder production, he decided to grow two plots of maize (20m by 30m) for his two animals. Mr Kombe recently harvested and ensiled his maize, which was the first time he had made silage on his farm. He says the process was easy to understand and not too technical; however, the preparation of the pit and chopping the maize was labour intensive. Mr Kombe has now also planted Napier grass and Leucaena and is planning to expand both plots this year. His goal is to eventually move from dependence on full grazing for his animals to zero grazing. Mr Kombe has two staff on his farm, which supports a family of seven.



Exposing farmers to new dairy farming practices and technologies

As a means to improve farm profitability, the ZDTP field team has been working hard to expose farmers to new dairy farming practices and technologies, which we hope they will use on their farms. As of May 2018, the programme has:

- Trained and supported 45 farmers (25 females and 20 males) in record keeping through the introduction of RTM techniques
- Involved 218 farmers (87 females and 131 males) in barrel silage demonstrations
- Involved 37 farmers (10 females and 27 males) in a natural Napier grass trial in Mufulira.
- Shared information on fodder/pasture planting and production with 365 farmers (240 females and 125 males) during eight field days
- Exposed 165 farmers (124 females and 41 males) to the crop cycles of fodder/pasture crops through involvement in demonstration plots
- Trained 361 people (167 females and 194 males) in pit silage production using mechanised choppers
- Carried out in-depth assessments of 'on farm' milk quality and hygiene for 46 farmers (22 female and 24 male)
- Exposed 75 farmers (50 female and 25 male) to good practices in calf rearing
- Held courses on feed formulation and good nutrition for 106 farmers (66 females and 40 males)

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.