IN THIS ISSUE……

⇒ Enumerators trained in AKVOFLOW data collection system
⇒ Advisors conducts planning meetings for newly targeted cooperatives
⇒ Fact about the dairy Industry
⇒ GIZ/ BMZ Visits project sites
⇒ Planned activities for this Month
⇒ The Choma District Dairy Cooperative Union fact file

VALUE CHAIN ADVISORS KICKSTART ACTIVITIES FOR NEW TARGETED COOPERATIVES

The Value Chain Advisors carried out their first meetings with the newly targeted dairy cooperatives in the second phase of the implementation of the project.

10 out of 24 new targeted cooperatives were captured. The field activity meetings were convened to appreciate the current state of the newly targeted cooperatives and to identify the gaps in their management and operations.

In order to familiarize themselves with the state of the cooperatives, the team of Advisors visited Kaumba, Nteme, Bweengwa, St. Mary’s, Kazungula, Bbelo, Chitongo, Nchole Mungaila and Simonga Dairy Cooperatives’.

Once the gaps have been identified, specific tailored training will be done to address each cooperative context challenges. Training will also be tailored towards developing the organizational, governance and business management capacity of the targeted cooperatives. Strategic plans and corresponding capacity development plans will be implemented to empower cooperatives implement their strategies.

Fact about the dairy industry....

Did you know that small scale dairy farmers produce about 70 – 80% of total raw milk, while commercial farmers only produce about 20 – 30%?
During the month of May 2018, the project hosted a delegation from GIZ and BMZ.

The delegation visited Choma Dairy Cooperative Union and Choma SACCO, which are both supported by the BMZ through GIZ and SNV.

The delegation leader Ms Heike Poersken was impressed with the project achievements and commended the cooperative and SACCO on the activities they are engaged in.

GIZ/ BMZ VISITS PROJECT SITES

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THE CHOMA DISTRICT DAIRY COOPERATIVE UNION FACT FILE

BACKGROUND: Choma District Dairy Cooperative Union (CDDCU) was formed in 2005. The union was formed from two primary cooperatives, namely Bwacha and Choma dairy Cooperatives respectively. Before the formation of the union, most dairy farmers were taken advantage of by milk brief case buyers/processors who bought the commodity at cheap prices, thereby disadvantaging the farmers.

It was against this background that government through the Ministry of Agriculture came in and engaged farmers to form a dairy cooperative union where they would supply bulk milk as a small dairy association to milk processors such as Parmalat and Finta.

Initially, the union started with 10 members from Bwacha and Choma dairy cooperatives. The union now holds a membership of 8 cooperatives with 600 individual members.

INCENTIVES: In order to entice more farmers to join and stay in the union, the union leadership partnered with Choma milling and Zambia sugar to be supplying maize bran and molasses for farmers use. This was done with the view of combating feed shortages especially during the dry season when there is less feed for animals. The union also gave drugs to farmers for treating their animals which was payable at the monthened.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED: Farmers suffered setbacks as Poor rainfall patterns affected their crop yields thus affecting the availability of feed for their animals, this in turn impacted negatively on milk production.

ASSISTANCE RECEIVED FROM STAKEHOLDERS: Seeing the immense potential of the dairy business and the demand from milk processors. In the past three years, SNV assisted the cooperative in the following areas;

- SNV provided support to the union by introducing a new feeding regime which allowed farmers to continuously feed and milk their animals even in the dry period.
- Farmers were trained as Artificial Insemination Technicians.
- SNV facilitated the establishment of a commercial fodder project where farmers where trained to grow improved fodder so that they would have enough feed for their animals during the dry season.
- SNV provided trainings on animal hygiene, record keeping, and also improved techniques on animal production.
- SNV also met the running costs of the union and empowered the boards with board management skills, practices and provided a systematic way of running the union.

ACHIEVEMENTS: In spite the challenges encountered, the union has an interesting emerging success story as it is one of the very few cooperatives that has ventured into milk value addition. With the assistance of government and stakeholders, the union purchased a lacto and yoghurt production equipment.

Since the venture, the union has been able to produce and sale yogurt and lacto to the community at a reasonable price as compared to other processors. From the yoghurt and lacto sales, the union is now able to meet its running costs.
AN EMERGING YOUNG SUCCESSFUL DAIRY FARMER-

NOKUTULA’S STORY

Dairy Farming and farming, in general, is one occupation that is frowned upon by most people as it is associated with the uneducated and the poor in society. It is often looked upon as an activity reserved for those who failed to make it into formal employment and is sometimes seen as a past-time activity.

This is, however, changing as government and the private sector are vigorously championing job creation in the agriculture sector. People are being encouraged and empowered to venture into full time farming as an occupation as well as a source of income.

Therefore, SNV is one of the organizations that has been encouraging and supporting farmers through various dairy cooperatives. As one of its objectives SNV seeks to promote dairy farming as a full-fledged business that can provide farmers with a sustainable income.

Monze Dairy Cooperative is one of the stakeholders that has been benefiting from SNV through the provision of technical and financial services in order to help improve the cooperatives’ operations and services.

The goal is to help dairy farmers improve their dairy farming techniques, thereby increasing milk production, and in turn, increasing their income from milk sales.

29-year-old Nokutula Mtishya, is a farmer and a member of the Monze Dairy Cooperative who has undergone a series of trainings in short dairy courses offered by the Cooperative through SNV.

“I have benefitted a lot from the training and workshops organized by SNV. I learnt how to better manage my farm that is by keeping track records of my cattle and the various activities on managing a farm,” says Nokutula. “During the same training, I also learnt different techniques like zero grazing where cattle is confined in one area so that they do not lose energy roaming around.

This helps in increasing their milk production.”

Nokutula, who was certified as an artificial insemination technician by the SNV experts after completion of the course, also offers his services to other dairy farmers in the area at a fee.

“Because of the training, I now have an opportunity to help other farmers observe better hygiene practices and I also provide artificial insemination services to farmers. This is good for me because it also provides me with another source of income,” he says.

Seven out of his 35 herds of cattle are currently being milked with each giving out about 21 liters of milk per day and an additional of three expectant cows will be added as they are expected to deliver soon.

With the income he earns from his services and the milk production from his cattle, Nokutula has been able to pay his workers on time as well as saving and providing for his family.

Being a father of one, Nokutula has been able to sponsor his two younger sisters to colleges while he is also planning to sponsor his wife to do a tertiary course.

Nokutula has big dreams for the future. He hopes to buy a tractor that would enable him to carry out farm operations efficiently. He also plans to buy 30 more dairy cows so that he can be able to increase milk production.

“I am grateful to SNV for the good work they are doing, and I urge them to do the same for other farmers throughout the country as dairy farming is a sure way of sustaining one’s life,” Nokutula adds.

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