Government of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe AGRICULTURAL GROWTH Programme

Funded by the European Union

ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

ISSUE 13: **MAY 2020**

EDITORIAL

We welcome you to the May 2020 issue of ZAGP News, giving you an update of the programme's activities This issue also comes against the background of the 70th anniversary of Europe Day which was commemorated on the 9th of May 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic is still upon us and has put us all in uncharted territory, confronting organisations with the challenges of keeping their activities on-going and finding innovative ways to conduct their work. Following the government's designation of the agriculture sector as an essential service under the lockdown, ZAGP continued with several activities across the different value chains and support projects bearing remarkable results.

This month, our focus is on "Working under COVID-19", highlighting the achievements that have been made by the implementing partners despite scaling-down on certain activities due to the national lockdown.

A major milestone was achieved in the procurement and importation of livestock breeds. The VALUE and TranZDVC projects imported high quality pig breeds and in-calf heifers respectively from South Africa. We cover the journey taken so far, paving the way for improving genetics in the pork and dairy value chains to boosting production.

We also share progress that has been made in the construction of infrastructure, particularly by the VALUE and ZAKIS projects. VALUE is steadily progressing with the construction of pig housing facilities at the Integrator sites, whilst ZAKIS covered good ground in the drilling of boreholes at the District Centres of Excellence (DACEs).

Under the BEST project, we cover the successes that have been achieved by the farmers who have seen their fodder production activities come to fruition to ensure good body conditions for their livestock during the lean period.

Despite agriculture being an essential service, farmers are facing challenges in accessing inputs and moving their produce to distribution hubs, markets and ultimately consumers under the national lockdown. We feature the interventions by the IPVC project to assist poultry producers faced with this dilemma.

We welcome feedback on this, and future issues of the publication. Thank you, and enjoy reading!

Stay safe and continue with the good practices which can halt the spread of COVID-19.

(Cover picture: Recently imported in-calf heifers under quarantine at Reddane Farm in Marirangwe, Mashonaland East province).

COVID-19 AWARENESS

ZAGP has started to produce a series of COVID-19 awareness videos for livestock farmers. The first video on cattle dipping in Shona is now out. Follow the link: ***Kudhibhisa Mombe Panguva yeCOVID-19***

IN THIS ISSUE

CONTACT DETAILS

Technical Assistance to the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (TA – ZAGP)
18 Borrowdale Road, Harare, Zimbabwe | Tel: +263 242 790 904 | Mobile: +263 718 243 243
E-mail: nqorchardson@zagp.co.zw; tnyathi@zagp.co.zw ; admin@zagp.co.zw; projects@zagp.co.zw
www.zagp.org.zw

@ZAGPInfo @ZAGPInfo

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

ISSUE 13: MAY 2020

WORKING UNDER COVID-19

TRANZDVC IMPORTS IN-CALF HEIFERS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

In February 2020, the Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future (TranZDVC) project procured 200 in-calf heifers from South African to help boost and improve Zimbabwe's livestock genetics as an effort to resuscitate the local dairy industry which is currently operating below capacity.

According to the Zimbabwe Association of Dairy Farmers (ZADF), the country requires at least 130 million litres of milk per annum, yet the local dairy industry is only able to supply about 80 million litres with the balance being imported.

Zimbabwe's dairy herd currently stands at 34,124, yet the ideal is around 50,000 dairy cattle.

Through the importation of the heifers, the journey has begun to boost the dairy herd and double milk production by 2022 and increase number of small scale farmers from the 530 to 4530.

The first batch of 105 in-calf heifers arrived in Zimbabwe on 26 April 2020 via the Beitbridge Border post. The animals will undergo quarantine for the next 30 days at two Integrator sites at Coetzee Farm in Kwekwe, Midlands province and Reddane Farm in Marirangwe, Mashonaland East province.

Chief Director of the Department of Veterinary Services in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, and Rural Resettlement Dr Josphat Nyika said the initiative a is a positive step towards the revitalisation of the dairy sector in Zimbabwe.

"As a department, we are excited about the importation of the dairy cows as a move towards increasing the national dairy herd and ultimately increasing milk production in Zimbabwe. I would also like to commend the TranZDVC project for initiating the heifer matching facility. We will begin to see the full benefits when the heifers reach the beneficiaries through the processors. As Government we are committed to seeing our national dairy herd grow," he said.

Through TranZDVC's heifer matching facility (buy-one get-one for free model), the animals will be distributed to small-scale dairy producers through large-scale processors who include Dairibord Zimbabwe Limited, Dendairy, Kefalos, Nestle Zimbabwe and Prodairy.

Under the facility, the small-scale farmer buys one heifer and they also receive another heifer paid for by the processor.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Invitation to Submit Applications for In-Calf Heifers and Semen Facility in the Dairy Value Chain (DVC) in Zimbabwe.
- Invitation to Submit Applications for Matching Grant Funds for Investments in the Dairy Value Chain (DVC) in Zimbabwe.

TranZDVC on Facebook

TranZDVC on Twitter

ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

ISSUE 13: MAY 2020

245 TOP QUALITY PIG BREEDS IMPORTED FROM SOUTH AFRICA BY VALUE

The Value Chain Alliance for Livestock Upgrading and Empowerment (VALUE) project completed the importation of 245 pig breeding stock consisting of grandparent and parent stock of Duroc, Landrace and Large white breeds. The breeding stock was delivered on 5 April 2020 and was in quarantine for 21 days at the Pig Industry Board (PIB) before part of it was transferred to Braford farming in Chegutu district, Mashonaland West province. The pigs were imported from Danbred one of the leading pig genetics company globally.

"We are grateful to the Government of Zimbabwe and the European Union for supporting this noble initiative. The top-quality genetics are coming in at a time when the majority of small-scale farmers have expressed interest in accessing improved genetics" said VALUE Team Leader, Newton Chari.

Prevalence of tired pig genetics amongst small and medium pork producers has resulted in poor feed conversion ratios and increased susceptibility to diseases resulting in lower carcass weight and poor-quality meat thus affecting profits.

"The breeding stock will largely address breeding level system constraints that have otherwise affected our farmers in attaining the desired productivity, organisational efficiencies and market competitiveness" added Chari

After the quarantine period, the pig breeding stock will be housed at Shamiso Farm (Mashonaland East Province Integrator) and Bradford Farming (Mashonaland West Province Integrator) while the other pigs will remain at the PIB (Public Integrator). Farmers can access the genetics through these institutions in the form of boars and gilts or through artificial insemination services.

"The recent importation of new progeny and genetics is a key investment for competitive and comparative capacity being inbuilt into the small-scale pig production sector and its evolution and mainstreaming into the commercial pig production industry," said Samson Chauruka of Shamiso Farm.

Managing Director of Braford Farming, George Mudanga said, "Initially we are going to breed the pigs and avail semen as well as the progeny to farmers in our pork producer business syndicates in order to boost production." The project is receiving after sale remote extension support from Danbred through the Pig Vision mobile application and some visits are scheduled by the supplier.

A health schedule was developed together with Danbred and the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS). The breeding plan is also in place.

To address inclusion issues, the progeny from the breeding stock will also be channelled to 600 women and young farmers through a weaner to finisher programme.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Watch the video explainer with details on the various challenges being experienced in the pork value chain and how VALUE is addressing these constraints.

VALUE on Facebook

VALUE on Twitter

ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

ISSUE 13: MAY 2020

Construction of Appropriate Animal Housing at Pork Value Chain Integrators

Following government's pronouncement that agriculture is an essential service and farms are by nature, self-containment areas, a number of activities were carried out during the lockdown period with minimal disruptions. Construction of appropriate pig housing was initiated at both integrator farms namely Braford Farming in Chegutu and Shamiso Farm in Ruwa with strict adherence to the regulations stipulated by the Government of Zimbabwe and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The new state of the art buildings will house the top-quality genetics imported from South Africa on the 5th of April 2020. At Braford Farming, the dry sow and growers' unit is nearing completion and will be ready to accommodate the pigs that were transferred from the quarantine facility at the Pig Industry Board. At Shamiso Farm, construction has also commenced and is expected to be completed in time for breeding which is scheduled for the third quarter of the year. Construction work at both sites continues during the extended lockdown period. The project will be continuing with the construction of farrowing, weaner and grandparent houses.

Cross sections of the dry sow unit at Braford farm nearing its completion.

Feed Plants Imported for Goat Value Chain Integrator

The VALUE project imported a feed plant (Diamond brand) from South Africa for use at Zvikomborero Farm. The plant has three main functions - cutting, mixing and feeding. The plant will process huge volumes of feed at any given time, reducing the time spent in processing goat feed. In addition, the plant will make it possible for the integrator to formulate on-farm feed to supplement the goats which will boost production and productivity as a result of improved body condition of the goats.

The plant has a capacity to process 1.8 tonnes of feed in 15 minutes. The plant is tractor driven and is suitable for any farm set up. Anchor and small-holder farmers will be trained on farm feed formulation and have access to the plant to process their own feed.

The integrator is also able to produce quality goat feed at an affordable price that can be accessed by goat farmers individually or at Goat Improvement Centres (GICs). This will go a long way in addressing system level constraints related to goat feeds.

The feeding plant to be used for feed production at Zvikomborero Farm

ONLINE RESOURCES

Learn how VALUE is working to address constraints faced by small-scale goat farmers hampering their efforts at commercialisation.

ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

ISSUE 13: MAY 2020

IPVC FACILITATES ACCESS TO INPUTS FOR POULTRY PRODUCERS

Farmers are facing challenges in accessing inputs and markets due to restricted movement from the national lockdown set in place by the Government of Zimbabwe in response to curbing the spread of COVID-19.

Poultry farmers across the country have been hit hard by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in the scaling down of operations and reduced sales. While the government has given farmers an essential service status under the lockdown, they are unable to operate efficiently due to movement restrictions and the collapse of markets.

To counter these challenges being faced by small to medium scale producers (SMPs) in accessing inputs, the Inclusive Poultry Value Chain project (IPVC) is facilitating bulk purchasing and bargaining for farmer groups.

Golden Chickens Enterprises, a farmer group in the Masvingo cluster, is one such farmer group currently benefiting from this initiative. The project has linked the group with feed companies and other input suppliers, and negotiated discount purchasing on behalf of the farmers.

"We have approached a hatchery for day old broiler chicks, which are currently selling at US$ 0.47 cents each on the market, but for us, we are buying at US$0.42 each, making us save US$0.05 on every chick" said Mrs. Manyeruke, a member of the Golden Chicks Enterprises.

"We have also started collective bargaining and buying on feed and we are managing to save US$5.00 on every 50kg millet bag, making us smile all the way home", Mrs. Manyeruke continued.

As a result, the farmers have managed to purchase day old chicks and feed through collective action, while also minimising movement and observing the rules under COVID-19. Farmers remotely place their requirements to the chairperson through the WhatsApp platform, who then goes to purchase the supplies and in-turn the farmers collect their supplies from the chairperson.

IPVC continues to work with the poultry producers to ensure minimum disruptions to their production activities. Within IPVC's five clusters (Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Mutare and Masvingo) the project is encouraging farmers to join farmer groups for collective action when purchasing inputs. The project is also working with Agritex, to assist with the movement of farmers.

To further assist the poultry farmers, IPVC is encouraging the utilisation of digital innovations such as social media platforms to market and sell their produce and access new markets.

Access to information is critical under the pandemic. IPVC has set up a bulk SMS platform for extension services, to allow sending of messages to farmers across all the clusters. The messages are centred around COVID-19 and safe poultry practices during this time of the pandemic.

In addition, the project is offering technical assistance to farmers through the WhatsApp platform. The main problems being experienced by farmers include diseases like suspected fowl cholera and Newcastle disease, malnutrition and poor chick quality. To date, IPVC's information outreach activities have reached at least 1,700 poultry producers across the five clusters.

IPVC continues to offer extension services and is also referring farmers to the nearest Department of Veterinary Services offices in their areas for further assistance.

IPVC on Facebook IPVC on Twitter

ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

ISSUE 13: MAY 2020

Creating Enabling Environment at ZAKIS Project Sites

Borehole drilling in progress at the Chegutu DACE.

The Zimbabwe Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Services (ZAKIS) project has established four District Agricultural Centres of Excellence (DACE) sites established are centres where best agriculture practices are going to be demonstrated. At each of the sites in Mhondoro-Ngezi, Chegutu, Matobo and Insiza districts, five hectare plots have been fenced and reserved for demonstrating and showcasing best practices in agriculture through different projects to surrounding farmers. The DACEs also showcase agriculture extension, education and research linkages.

This is part of the project's thrust to have market-led and evidence-based pluralistic extension services that are responsive to the needs of farmers. ZAKIS is working with Agritex to coordinate a pluralistic extension system to communicate with farmers and demonstrate new technologies.

To ensure the success of this initiative, the project is in the process of installing solar-powered boreholes as most of the sites had no available water to run their activities. Recently, during the national lockdown, the project managed to install a high yielding borehole (8,500 litres per hour) at the Mhondoro Ngezi DACE. At the Chegutu DACE a high yielding borehole was drilled and installation work is on-going.

The borehole water will be used for various income generating projects, trials and demonstrations at these sites. Work will continue to install solar systems to power the water pumping systems.

ZAKIS on Facebook

Fodder Production Reduces High Cost of Stock Feeds for Makoni Lead Farmer

The establishment of fodder demonstration plots as knowledge transfer hubs by the Beef Enterprise Strengthening and Transformation (BEST) project has seen a rise in the number of farmers venturing into production of fodder for supplementing beef cattle during perennial dry spells.

With the knowledge gained from the project's trainings and demonstration plots, Jeremiah Mukuwamombe, a 35-year-old lead farmer from ward 35 of Makoni district in Manicaland province, became one of the ten pioneers of fodder production in the district. Despite the drought this year, fodder production is set to save Jeremiah money in supplementary feeding costs.

"This was a new territory for me given that this was my first time to grow fodder. Previously, we relied on maize and groundnuts stover which I sourced from my harvested crops and also through buying from neighbouring farmers", said Jeremiah.

When the 2019/2020 rains commenced, Jeremiah planted 0.7 hectares of velvet beans and a small portion of sun hemp. While the fodder crops did not produce seed due to a crippling dry spell during the season of below normal rainfall, he still harvested 27 hay bales of velvet beans, totalling 0.46 tonnes. He intends to use the fodder to supplementary feed six lactating cows from his herd of 34 animals from the end of August going towards the end of the year. This will save the farmer around US$ 250 in stock feed which he would otherwise have had to buy in to feed the cows to save his calf crop.

ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

ISSUE 13: MAY 2020

Jeremiah and his wife holding one of his velvet bean hay bales

#

"Through assistance from the BEST project, in October 2019, we were trained on fodder production and good animal husbandry practices. The five-day course gave me a new perspective on beef cattle production. In the coming 2020/21 agricultural season, I intend to increase hectarage for sunhemp and velvet beans to at least 2 hectares. This is the new way of doing business for me, and there's no going back".

Private sector players, government extension workers and BEST staff generated technical bulletins which were conveyed to farmers through podcasts, electronic pamphlets, SMS messages, and short videos.

These were shared via WhatsApp, Kurima Mari mobile application and SMS. One on one supervision by Agritex and the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) extension staff during the lockdown also enabled Jeremiah to practice recommended measures of harvesting and post-harvest management of fodder such as drying and storing under shade.

Currently Jeremiah is constructing a shed to store fodder for his dry season supplementation needs. In addition, he plans to dig a pit to use for urea treatment of stover to enhance palatability and crude protein content.

Hay Harvesting Gives Hope to Shurugwi Beef Cattle Farmers

Mr. Jackson Magomana, a beef farmer aged 72 lives in Nkani Village, Ward 11 of Shurugwi district in Midlands province. He owns a herd of 10 cattle and his vision is to become a fully-fledged small-scale commercial beef farmer.

Shurugwi district lies in Natural Region III, characterised by annual rainfall of 500-750 mm, mid-season dry spells and high temperatures. Major challenges facing beef cattle farmers in the district include overgrazing of rangelands, poor rainfall patterns resulting in drought induced cattle deaths and lack of formal markets. The district experienced a drought during the 2019/20 agricultural season which resulted in poor crop yields and poor regeneration of grazing lands. This led to the death of over one hundred cattle during the dry season due to lack of grazing. The BEST project with its objective of commercialising the beef value chain in Zimbabwe, came as a timely relief to Shurugwi farmers like Jackson.

One of the project's key outcomes is to increase production and productivity using high nutrient feed using locally produced material such as fodder crops and grass from the veld for silage making and hay baling. This also acts as a mitigation strategy to safeguard against cattle losses due to drought. Jackson was one of the pioneer farmers who received fodder seeds, training, mentoring and support on fodder production, harvesting and post-harvest management from Agritex and private companies as well as BEST staff.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, extension support continues to reach out to Shurugwi famers via podcasts, SMS, and videos shared through mobile platforms such as WhatsApp. To date Mr Magomana has harvested more than 40 hay bales weighing an average of 15 kg from the rangeland and is still preserving more. The farmer has also gone an extra mile to preserve crop residues such as ground nut stover for fodder. Mr Magomana is confident that in the lean season he will be able to preserve his cattle from poverty deaths by feeding them the hay he has stored.

BEST on Twitter

The Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP) congratulates the European Union (EU) on the 70th Anniversary of Europe Day. More significantly, ZAGP extends its gratitude for the EU's support to revitalise Zimbabwe's livestock sector. The programme is working with the Government of Zimbabwe in the beef, dairy, goats, pork and poultry value chains, animal health, food safety and agricultural research, education and extension. The ZAGP partners are committed to make a significant contribution towards the creation of a modern, prosperous livestock and agricultural sector in Zimbabwe.