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TranZDVC Bulletin

The newsletter for the Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future (TranZDVC) project



MAY 2021



FROM THE PROJECT COORDINATOR

Efforts to Boost Milk Production Gather Pace

Welcome to our May 2021 issue of TranZDVC Bulletin, the newsletter for the Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain (TranZDVC) for the Future project.

We have reached the first half of the year and it gives me great pleasure to share that TranZDVC has covered significant ground towards the ultimate goal of increasing Zimbabwe's milk output. Activities such as the importation and distribution of improved dairy breeds, financing investments in dairy productive assets, infrastructure, and training and capacity building programmes, have continued unabated and major successes have been achieved.

In this bulletin, we share the key highlights and milestones achieved since project inception in 2019 to date, as we strive to transforming the country's dairy sector.

The months of April and May saw the successful implementation of the Heifer Matching Facility, with at least 300 in-calf heifers handed over to 255 smallholder farmers during two events held at Zengeya Farm in Seke district, Mashonaland East province. For us, this is a critical pathway to ensuring the availability of high-quality breeding heifers and semen towards dairy breed improvement. The excitement among the beneficiary farmers and other key dairy value chain players during the high level handover events showed the levels of enthusiasm towards improving the sector's performance.

The TranZDVC partners would also like to take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude to the Head of Delegation of the European Union to Zimbabwe, Timo Olkkonen and the Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement Deputy Minister, Vangelis Haritatos for taking part in handover ceremonies.

In this issue, we carry updates from various TranZDVC project activities being implemented nationwide. Key highlights include the in-calf heifers handover ceremonies which saw the last two batches of the imported heifers being distributed to farmers.

On the Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) front, I am glad to note that the dairy database is being rolled out nationally. The newsletter features an update on the process to ensure harmonisation of dairy sector performance through a coordinated data collection system.

We also provide an update on the strategic planning workshop as part of the development of a dairy sector strategic plan to guide the activities of all industry players, including farmer organisations, dairy sector service providers, processors and Government.

TranZDVC will keep you informed of all the activities within the project in future issues of this publication. I also urge you to visit our social media platforms to get real time updates of project activities.

Dr Edson Chifamba, TranZDVC Project Coordinator

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TranZDVC Hands Over 300 in-calf Heifers to Smallholder Dairy Farmers

The Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future (TranZDVC) project handed over the last batch of 300 in-calf heifers to 255 smallholder dairy farmers in April and May 2021 in two separate events held at Zengeya Farm in Seke district, Mashonaland East province.

The in-calf heifers constitute the last batch of the 500 in-calf heifers imported from South Africa to boost Zimbabwe's dairy herd and improve genetics. Through the importation of the heifers, it is expected TranZDVC will increase the production of milk in Zimbabwe from 75 million litres (in 2018) to 120 million litres (by 2022) per year.

Speaking at the first handover ceremony on 23rd April 2021 which saw 121 farmers receiving 147 in-calf heifers, Timo Olkkonen, the Head of Delegation to the European Union (EU) in Zimbabwe, noted that increasing milk production through the right genetics is an important step towards milk self-sufficiency in Zimbabwe.

"In Zimbabwe, with the right business environment, the right

incentives to farmers and where the farmers can invest into improved feed/improved animal husbandry practices, because they are sure that it will pay off in terms of milk price and revenues for them and their families; improved genetics will lead to increased milk production and improved national self-sufficiency," said Olkkonen.

He also encouraged the dairy value chain players to rise to the challenge and find new opportunities in solving the constraints faced by the sector.

Olkkonen again: "It is, therefore, critical that all actors, the different types of farmers, the industry, policy makers and consumers, all join together in the development of a joint vision for the transformation and modernisation of the sector. This broad partnership needs to discuss the future of the dairy sector and find a model of production, collection, processing and distribution of dairy products that is providing better trade-off between economic and competitiveness objective, the provision of decent revenues and the protection of your natural resources".



Ambassador Olkkonen delivering the keynote address. He lauded the TranZDVC project's thrust to improving genetics in the dairy sector as a critical step to boost milk production in Zimbabwe.

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In a speech to mark the second handover of 153 heifers to 134 farmers at an event on 14th May 2021, Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement Deputy Minister, Vangelis Haritatos said the development was a testament of the Government's commitment to revitalise the dairy sector.

"The dairy development project came at a time when the Government is promoting the revitalisation of the dairy sector through various growth initiatives as a strategy to improve milk quality and quantity in Zimbabwe.

"The heifers were distributed to 134 smallholder farmers in line with Government's objective of inclusive value chain development in the Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation Strategy launched in 2020".

Zimbabwe's dairy herd of 123,000 cows in 1990, at one point, produced more than 260 million litres of milk annually, but production declined over the years, with an estimated 39,000 dairy cows left. The annual demand for milk currently stands at 120 million litres and there is a deficit of 45 million litres.

The Pimbi Small-scale Dairy Association, a grouping of 10 farmers from Featherstone in Mashonaland East Province, has for the first time, ventured into dairy production after receiving five in-calf heifers from the project and matching with another five.

"We formed the group in August 2020 and now we have started this dairy business with 10 heifers after we got five in-calf heifers from TranZDVC in April 2020. We matched with five heifers we got through a Dairiboard Zimbabwe facility", said Maynard Makuvarara, the group's chairperson.

"Before receiving the heifers, we've been involved in trainings on good animal husbandry practices, fodder and feed production. This will assist us as we find our feet in dairy production. We extend our gratitude to TranZDVC as we are now geared to go full throttle in production", he added.



Some of the members of the Pimbi Small-scale Dairy Association. The 10 member group has five women and five men who are all first time dairy farmers.

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Dairy Sector Monitoring Database Rolled Out

TranZDVC has completed the development and rollout of the dairy sector monitoring database, an information system developed for the dairy sector to improve the processes of information gathering, information management, and generation of reports. Key indicators such as the national dairy herd, national milk production, dairy farms, and factories registered and certified, milk and milk products tested for quality control, among others are properly monitored and tracked through the dairy database.

The database is set to be a one-stop shop for information to cut costs, save time on parallel information collection across the dairy value chain, quick information source for research and investment.

Areas covered by the roll-out included Harare, Gweru, Bulawayo, Masvingo, Chipinge and Mutare. This process involved the training of 32 dairy officers from the Dairy Services Unit in the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) across the country, who received mobile devices for data collection. These included dairy officers, dairy technicians, and research technicians.

According to Brighton Mangena, the Database Manager for TranZDVC, the database also keeps records of all project beneficiary farmers, processors, and allows access through e-extension services to the beneficiaries in the form of email

messages. The database is being improved to allow delivery of system-generated SMSes as well.

Auto-generation and sending of laboratory test results, notifications for certification, as well as the broadcasting of dairy related information to all stakeholders at one go, are some of the features of the dairy database.

“The dairy database drastically reduces the costs and efforts involved in the conduction of dairy surveys. In the past, when we didn’t have the database, the process required a lot of resources such as stationary, logistics, and compilation of data from paper forms into electronic formats that could be analysed”, said Mangena.

“The system has reduced the time it takes to conduct a national dairy herd survey from usually two to three months to only two to four weeks. The system has also eliminated the need for manual data collection for the Dairy Services Unit, thereby allowing officers to focus their time more on service delivery”, he added.

The dairy database is now integrated into the existing Agricultural Information Management Systems (AIMS) within the agriculture ministry. This is an ecosystem of a number of databases that feed into the National Performance Monitoring Framework across all the ministry’s departments.



Dairy Services officers gathering data during the roll-out and training process in Mutare.

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Supporting The Zimbabwe Dairy Industry Trust (ZDIT) on the Development of a Dairy Strategic and Investment Plan (DSIP)

TranZDVC is addressing the gap created by the absence of a specific national strategic plan for the development of the dairy subsector. Through the formulation of a Dairy Strategic and Investment Plan (DSIP), the project is supporting the Zimbabwe Dairy Industry Trust (ZDIT) develop a dairy sector strategy and investment plan.

The development of the dairy value chain requires coordinated investments by the public and private sectors and dairy producers. The strategic plan developed through wide consultation, will guide the activities of all industry players, including farmer organisations, service providers, processors and Government.

As part of the process, stakeholder consultations were conducted between April and May 2021 through focus group discussions and individual interviews.

The first draft of the strategy was developed and reviewed by the TranZDVC project partners and the second draft was circulated and presented to all dairy value chain actors at a consultative workshop held in Harare in April 2021.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To present proposals discussed in stakeholder focus discussions groups and individual interviews (input suppliers, farmers, processors)
- To review and critique the draft dairy strategic plan compiled after individual stakeholder interviews across the dairy value chain with a focus on challenges, strategic intervention and estimate resources.
- To form a dairy stakeholder platform which will periodically meet after the lifetime of the consultation period. The platform will be under the umbrella of ZDIT and will oversee the lobby process and operationalisation of the dairy strategic and investment plan.

Feedback from the workshop and later consultations have been used to develop a final draft circulated to stakeholders. A final validation meeting is planned for June 2021 to finalise the strategy. The DSIP will be owned by ZDIT as a tool to guide on the growth and strengthening of the dairy value chain.



Participants to the consultative workshop held in Harare in April 2021.