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Budget time.

It is Budget time again and MMPA has watched with great anticipation as H.E. the President and the Honourable Finance Minister gave their speeches to Parliament. The President touched on the Dairy Industry, as he announced that 300 high bred cows were going to be imported from South Africa under this new budget. However the Finance Minister said nothing at all about these cows in his speech a few days later and MMPA has not been able to find anything about this in the actual budget proposal. All the Finance Minister announced was that, from the first of July, all milk and milk products sold in the country will be subject to a 16.5 % VAT charge the consumer will pay.

The importation of 300 cows would be a positive development, but it is not nearly enough to solve the problem of the chronic shortage of Dairy cows in the country. Still about 50% of dairy products consumed in Malawi is imported from other countries and keeps draining the already scares Forex Supply. If Malawian farmers were given the opportunity to produce and process this shortfall, it would create thousands of jobs and save millions upon millions of foreign currency.

MMPA in the lead up to this budget, submitted a proposal to the Finance Minister to create a **Dairy Fund** to develop the Dairy Industry by using the money that is collected on Import Duty on milk and milk products that has been in place for the last two years. Instead we get an additional tax on Dairy products that will make the price of a liter of milk **the highest in all of Southern Africa**. The majority of Malawians cannot cope with an increase in the price of a liter of milk by MK 26.40 although everybody knows how important it is for every man, woman and child to have milk **daily** for a healthy diet. Milk becomes now a luxury item that only the rich of this country can afford.

MMPA is urging all their members to talk to their MP's and make them aware of this situation.

This Tax is going to hurt everybody from Farmers to Processors and right down to the Consumers. **For now we have to call this a Zero- Dairy Budget.**

Artificial breeding services.

Since MMPA has installed the liquid Nitrogen Machines and supplied semen to the MBG's, more than **1500** cows have been bred with high quality semen from World Wide Sires across the country. This is a great step forward after AI services were not available to our famers for more than a year, due to the lack of liquid nitrogen. Unfortunately one of the machines developed a problem and had to be sent back to the manufacturer for repair. However Land O Lakes Malawi has stepped in to help us, and is importing liquid nitrogen, so our program is not interrupted till our machine is functional again. Land O'Lakes recognizes the success of MMPA's new AI program, which offers affordable AI services to farmers through their regional associations and local AI technicians. In addition to this, Land O Lakes has made available 15 new liquid nitrogen canisters. They have now arrived in country, and they will be donated to MMPA during the next month. MMPA is helping identify AI technicians who need these 3 liter canisters. The arrival is very timely, as these new canisters are able to hold the Liquid nitrogen much longer, so more AI technicians can be supplied with semen. A note of caution should be sounded, to spread out the breedings were possible, to make sure that there is a constant supply of milk throughout the year and not all cows in the country calve down in the same months.

Land O' Lakes has extended the heat synchronization and artificial insemination program being conducted by GSJ in the following milk bulking groups: Chitsanzo, Dzaonewekha, Lumbadzi, Magomero, Machite, and Namwiri. GSJ noted that many MBGs presented a small number of animals for screening and participation under the program. Please ensure that all farmers with animals of body condition 2.5-3.5 (see posters at the MBG cooling facilities) are aware of the program. Contact your AI technicians for more information. Also, some eligible farmers did not receive AI services because of a lack of liquid nitrogen. Land O'Lakes is sourcing extra liquid nitrogen for use by GSJ and the AI technicians. Land O' Lakes has also decided to expand the program to Majiga MBG during the months of June & July. Land O'Lakes and GSJ will soon be in contact with Majiga to provide more information. These free services will no longer be available to all of the previously listed MBGs after July, so please move quickly.

We also like to remind the AI technicians to fill out the breeding reports and submit them to the Regional Associations, so we can keep track of the results of the AI services.

Milk quality

Again some reports have been coming in to our offices from some MBG's, where adulterated milk was delivered. Once again we are calling on all farmers and MBG's to take strong action against the people who do this. Processors and consumers are expecting clean, wholesome milk and it will hurt the whole Industry if we are not serious about the quality of our products.

Teat dipping

To prevent mastitis of your cow it is very important that you dip the teats of the cow with a disinfectant immediately after **every milking**. This is the time that bacteria can enter the udder through the teat canal and cause infections. Mastitis greatly reduces milk production of your cow and milk from an infected cow cannot be accepted by the MBG. So it causes a total loss of income for you, the farmer. MMPA has Teat dip available at very reasonable prices through the Regional Associations. In this regard it is also very important to keep the bedding in the khola **clean and dry**, because manure is the biggest source of mastitis infection.

Other Animal Health products such as mastitis treatment, dry cow treatment, minerals and dip are also available at the Regional offices.

Practical Training Center

Katete Practical Training Center has now trained over 80 farmers on a two week course, in how to take care of a cow. The feedback we are getting is very good and farmers are great full to be able to practice and see all the daily activities that need to be done to make a successful dairy farmer. **US AID funded Land O' Lakes** is the first organization, apart from the FICA funded training, that is now sending 22 farmers for practical training, after they did an evaluation of recent recipients in the MBGs. MMPA and Katete PTC welcome this initiative and hope that other organization will follow this example by also sending new farmers to the Training Center to give them the tools to succeed.

MDFA Dairy Plant.

The farmer owned and operated MDFA Dairy Processing Plant has made great progress in its 4 months of operations. From their humble beginnings of 900 liters per month, they are now processing and selling 3000 liter a month and growing every day. It is not an easy task to start a new venture like this and the staff learned a lot in this time period. It is also not easy to penetrate a market with a new product and convince consumers that this is the product they should buy. Credit has to go to a hard working staff with the help from Dr. Resham P Archaya, a volunteer from World University of Canada who has been working with the staff. His expertise in Dairy Marketing and Production has greatly helped the MDFA Plant over the last few months. MMPA has partly funded a full time accountant for MDFA and that too has made a difference in the operation and financial management of the Plant. Credit also has to go to Land O' Lakes for supporting MDFA with a grant for the cost of collecting the milk from the MBG's and distributing the finished product to the retail outlets. This grant has now been extended till the end of July to increase collection and sales past the "break-even" point [i.e. where the plant starts making profit]. We urge all the farmers who are selling milk to the Plant, to support them with the best quality milk possible and not to take any shortcuts for personal gain. It is like your baby; if you feed it water instead of milk.... It will get sick..... and die.

Market place

This is a new section of our news letter, which from now on will be a regular feature available to all MBG's and dairy farmers. In this section you can advertise animals, equipment, feed or anything else other farmers or organizations can use in the dairy business. We hope that this will be of benefit to everyone. This month we have the following information.

Malawi Zebu herd owners

CREMPA is looking for **M Zebu herd owners** that are interested in cross breeding, to supply small holder farmer with dairy cows. If selected, these herd owners will be supplied with a pure Holstein or Jersey bull to breed all the cows. The herd should have at least 20 female cows and need to separate Malawi Zebu (MZ) bulls from the herd so that **all animals will be bred by the pure bull** supplied. The resulting female calves can be sold at the age of 12 to 15 months and made available to new small holder farmers. The bull calves can be raised for beef purposes as the bull calves will in general grow bigger than MZ cows and will give you higher prices for beef. If you have such a herd, or know of somebody who does, contact CREMPA office for selection by 15 July 2011. Cell; 0999 629 866 [Grenna] or 0881 334 500 [Phillimon] or 01 975 875 [Herbert].

Looking to Buy

LAND O'LAKES is looking to buy **8 dairy animals** to support the Pass-on program in the Central Region. The cows should be a minimal of 15 month of age and pregnant and pure Holstein or Jersey or at least 75% pure. Cows should not be more than 3 years old. They should have 4 functioning quarters and teats and have no known defects. The animals should be of body condition of 2.5-3.5 (see the body condition posters at your MBG cooling facilities for more information). Any farmer that has too many animals in their khola [and there are quite a few farmers who do] should take advantage of this opportunity to make some extra income.

Contact Bevin at Land O'Lakes (Phone; 01 753 341 / 0999 296082) or Herbert at MMPA (Phone: 01 975 875).

FOR SALE

Katete Farm in Lilongwe has for sale two Breeding age bulls. Both bulls are from Pure Bred Mothers and by AI sires. This is a great opportunity for cross breeding with Malawi Zebu herds or as a backup bull for breeding in the MBG's

Contact the dairy supervisor at Katete, Mr. Banda (Cell # 0995 130 137).

For Sale

MMPA and the Regional Associations have for sale Solar lights, veterinarian Drugs and semen at very competitive prices. Contact your regional offices for orders and supply.

