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# News letter

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## About this news letter

MMPA's new program with funding from Flanders International Cooperative Agency, [FICA for short] has now official started.

This news letter is part of the program and we are going to try to send this to All the MBG's every 3 months. It will then be the task of your MBG executive committee to inform you about the content of the Newsletter. This way we will keep you informed about developments in the Dairy Industry, such as production information, farm gate prices, new programs, progress on projects that can benefit you as farmers and new possibilities in the Dairy Industry in general. We will ask outside experts to share their knowledge with us through this news letter, in helping you to succeed as Dairy farmers.

This news letter can also be used by you to ask questions about anything regarding your associations or problems you have to deal with as a dairy farmer in your daily business. We will then try to answer these questions in this newsletter or send you a personal answer.

## The MMPA/ FICA Program

Under this program there are several activities that will be of direct benefit to you and will aim on making your associations **stronger** so they are better able to serve you in your daily activities as a farmer and will give you the tools to increase production and so more income for your family.

### 1. Semen and liquid nitrogen.

The artificial breeding of our dairy cows has long been a problem in this country through the lack of good semen available to farmers and the lack of liquid nitrogen to keep the semen alive. This program will give us the opportunity to buy semen in bulk at much, much lower prices and much, much better quality. **We already have ordered 3 new liquid nitrogen machines and have placed an order for 3000 straws of semen.**

The three machines are going to be placed with MDFA, CREMPA and SHIMPA and will produce enough liquid nitrogen to supply all the small tanks in the MBG's on a regular basis. MMPA will **deliver** this semen and nitrogen on a regular basis to all the MBG's in the central and northern regions and SHIMPA will take care of the distribution in the south. CREMPA and MDFA will survey the MBG's in the near future about their needs in the line of feed or feed ingredients and drugs that also can be delivered to them at the same time.

### 2. Training of new farmers

The training of new farmers has also been a problem for a long time. Training farmers in a class room has proven not to be very effective, as most of the farmers have never dealt with a cow, what makes it very difficult to take care of a dairy animal. For this reason MMPA has made an agreement with Katete Dairy Farm in Lilongwe to set up a **Practical Training School** for new farmers, where they learn "**hands on**" how to take care of a dairy cow. Katete has 300 dairy animals with over 100 milking cows. Students will see and **do** all daily activities of a dairy farmer. They will learn how to milk, detect heat, feed the cow, assist the cow that is giving birth, feed the new borne calf, indentify health problems and how to treat it, [ or when to ask for assistance] What a good khola should look like and how to build it.

Two groups of students have already gone through and received their certificates.

The selection of students will be initiated by the MBG's and approved by CREMPA or MDFA and then send to MMPA/Training school. The selection should concentrate on **new farmers** who are receiving a cow in the near future.

### 3. Separation of powers.

In the past the executive committees and the full Boards of the Regional Associations had to run the offices of the Associations. That took a lot of time from the board members who did this for very little or no money! Whenever new elections were held, often the whole board changed and a new board had to learn all over again how to run and lead the Association. Under the FICA program we have been able to hire **full time managers** for MDFA, CREMPA and MMPA. They will now run the day to day activities of the Association and are responsible to the Board. The board can now concentrate on developing the right direction of the Association and supervising the activities of the office. In addition to the Managers, CREMPA and MDFA will also be able to put a full time Field Officer in place to help you to solve problems at the MBG level and develop cooperation with government Officers in the field.

Nothing is for free.

All the above mentioned activities are not for free. The cost of semen, liquid nitrogen, feed or drugs will be charged to the MBG's and need to be paid into a revolving fund. The start up money is made available by the MMPA/FICA program but need to revolve so we can keep providing you with the services in years to come. However we are confident that we can supply you much cheaper and more regular with the inputs than ever before.

#### **4. 3% withholding tax on milk.**

There is some information that Malawi Revenue Authority [MRA] is working on a 3% tax on the sale of milk for the farmers. MMPA is very concerned about this development as it is our argument that most farmers are earning below the taxable income level of MK 10.000 and should not be charged with this, as a further erosion of the farm gate price of milk. MMPA will take action on this with the appropriate authorities. In the mean time it would be a good idea to bring this matter to the attention of your MP's in the area.

#### **5. Milk processor for MDFA**

The marketing of milk in the MDFA area has become a big problem for the farmers. Only 500 – 600 liters a day is picked up for processing out of a total of 2500 liters produced. So most of the milk is vended what means a big loss for the farmers and for MDFA as no levies are collected. MDFA has now with the help of the Kampen -Tanzania Group and MMPA/FICA ordered a **Milk Processing machine** from South Africa, so that most of the milk produced and brought to the MBG's and can be collected and processed. The processer will be placed at the Lusangazi MBG where power and back-up power is available and the processed milk will be shipped to a distribution center in Mzuzu. The Mzuzu ADD has graciously made space available for this venture. This space will also be combined with the Liquid nitrogen machine for the North.

A marketing plan has been developed and we are starting the renovations of the buildings very soon. We hope to have the plant in operation in 6 – 8 weeks.

The staff of MMPA hopes this news letter is of value to you. We are looking forward hearing from you about other things you like to have addressed in future issues

**Happy Milking**