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MMPA News letter

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This is the 4th issue of the newsletter and the feedback we are getting from many directions is very positive. However when we ask some MBG members if they have seen it, or heard about it, we still get a negative response sometimes. So once again we would like to urge all MBG executives to please share this information with as many members as possible, this is the only way we can get our message out.

In response to our "Extra edition" about early haymaking, we have to share with you that we actually have seen farmers do this. Even along some of the main roads of Malawi. That is a good development. Although the quality will not be as high at this time of the year we still urge all farmers to try to make as much hay as possible for the dry season.

Semen and liquid nitrogen

The liquid nitrogen machines are now in place at MDFA and CREMPA. The semen is also available from your Regional Association. The first MBG's are now breeding their cows again after a dry spell of more than a year. For MMPA it is our goal to make this service available at the lowest price to **all our members** .For that reason we have designed a set or **guidelines** that will make sure that all farmers in the Central- and Northern are paying the same price to get their cow bred. It will also give you information on the breeding from the breeding slip that is left with you by the AI technician. These guidelines have been approved by the Executive committee of MMPA

Guidelines for semen distribution

With the availability of liquid nitrogen and semen at the Regional Associations we should have the following rules in place to properly keep track of the distribution of semen and liquid nitrogen, the use of it and the payments.

- Semen can only be issued to credible AI technicians in the MBG's that are properly trained.
- The semen supply is kept at MMPA.
- MMPA sells the semen to CREMPA and MDFA for the price of MK 1000.00 per unit/straw. This price includes the liquid nitrogen for the AI technicians tank
- The Regional Associations can then sell the semen to the Farmer for MK 1500.00 **in the cow**

The extra MK 500.00 is divided up as follows;

- MK 150.00 for the Association handling fees
- MK 250.00 Insemination fee for the AI technician
- MK 100.00 Bonus for the AI technician, when a pregnancy is achieved.

All breeding's shall be recorded on a **BREEDING SLIP** in triplicate.[Books available from MMPA]
One copy to be left and signed by the farmer, one copy to Regional Association and one copy left in the book for the AI technician.

At the end of the month, the Regional Association will pay the AI technicians on the basis of the number of breeding's performed and breeding slips submitted.

If no breeding slips are submitted there will be no payment and no more semen will be issued to that AI technician.

The MBG's are responsible for the collection of the amount of MK 1500.00 from the farmers and submit it to CREMPA or MDFA offices or have it deducted from the milk proceeds through the Processors.

If we do it this way, the farmers get their cows bred and the system will be cost recovering so that we can keep it going forever. Let's all work together to make this happen.

In addition to this we have send breeding information from the selected bulls to all the MBG's so that you can select the bull you want to use for your cow. This should be posted on the door of milk collection centers.

Semen tanks

We have discovered that many of the small 3 and 4 liter AI technician semen tanks are in bad shape and do not hold the liquid nitrogen very long. A good tank should hold LN2 for 20 – 30 days but many of the ones in the field are only good for 3 -7 days. This causes a problem as our machine cannot keep up the production of liquid nitrogen at that rate. So we have discussed this problem with several stakeholders and donors and we have found Land O Lakes willing to supply us 15 new 3 liter tanks so we solve this problem. They hope to have the tanks ordered within the next few weeks and available within 2 months.

Thank you Land O Lakes for this great gesture. This will help our farmers tremendously.

80 new cows

In recent weeks Land O Lakes through the US AID sponsored MDDA program, has distributed 80 new highbred pregnant Jersey cows imported from South Africa to several Bulking groups in the Central Region. This is a great development and will set up more farmers in the dairy business. **We would like to call on all the experienced farmers in these bulking groups to help and support these new farmers with their knowledge and experience.** . Good care is especially needed when these cows calf down to ensure the cows remain in good health and the calves do not die. The birthing process is a very critical time for these new farmers. We also would like the executive committee's from the MBG's to monitor these farmers. If they are struggling to cope with this new responsibility, they should contact the CREMPA staff and Land O Lakes immediately so arrangements might be made to address the problem quickly.

Veterinarian Dr. Bill Hazen

Bill Hazen has left Malawi back to Canada after his 3 month working with the MBG and the AVO's in the Central region. Bill did a great job and we are sure that people have learned a lot from him. He left a simple training manual that he used for the training of the AVO's and that is available from the MMPA office.

Thanks Bill for all you have done. It was a pleasure working with you. Also thanks to World Universities of Canada [WUSC] who made Bill available to us as a volunteer.

Katete Practical Training Center

The training center has so far trained 58 new farmers on a 2 week hands on course at the farm.

We are still targeting the new farmers that are getting a pass on animal in the near future. This so far evenly divided between CREMPA and MDFA and also evenly divided in men and women. The feedback from the student is good and soon we will go see some of the students in their home environment to see how they are doing.

Solar lights

The sale of solar lights has really taken off well. Many units have been sold at CREMPA and MDFA. We have been able to lower the price on the big lantern that also charges your cellphone, to MK 6,700.00 the smaller ones are still priced at MK 3,500.00 everybody is very pleased with enormous amount of light these lanterns produce, and how easy they are re-charged in the sun, at no cost. One rule we had to put in place is that we can only sell them cash in hand to keep things simple and accountable. Contact your regional office for orders.

Drug revolving Fund

The drug revolving fund is also operational. MMPA is buying drugs in bulk and is able to provide them to the MBG's at a reduced price. Also in this case the MBG's will have to collect the money from the farmers and submit it to the regional associations to make this activity sustainable.

MDFA is now a Processor

Milk processing has now started in the MDFA area. Farmers are finally having a market for their milk. The price is MK 7.00 higher than what Northern Dairy is paying the farmers. They still have to build out the consumer selling points, but it is available now at Chipiku Plus, Tuttlas and Total filling station and off course straight from the Processing Plant next to the MDFA offices. World Universities of Canada [WUSC] is helping to place a Market Development volunteer in Mzuzu, to assist MDFA building their consumer market share. We are congratulating MDFA on this great development and hope they will be able to bring the Plant up to capacity quickly, so that all milk can be collected.

Second phase FIDIP Program

The second phase of the Farm Diversification Program [FDIP] has been official launched. This program will have several opportunities for the Dairy Industry in Malawi. The details are still sketchy but it looks that many activities will be undertaken through the District Assemblies. This means that as groups you should get in contact with the DA to see what is possible. MMPA has had a few meetings with officials to promote Dairy activities and we will keep you updated as things become clearer. In the meantime if help is needed with proposals etc. keep in contact with your Regional Association for support.

All these activities we have been able to put in place, were made possible through the funding of FICA. We thank them greatly for their continued support.