



Newsletter nr.8

November, 2012

New supply of semen arriving in Malawi

A new supply of progeny proven semen will be arriving in the country shortly. Over 3000 doses from 6 proven Holstein and Jersey Sires have been selected for improving milk production and longevity of the cows to help you, the farmers, to improve the quality of the next generation of cows. We have paid special attention in the selection on the ease of calving [smaller calves at birth] this time, to help prevent problems when cross breeding with local M Zebu cows. There are 2 bulls in this line up that are very high in calving ease. Your AI technicians have been supplied with the information on all the bulls. Ask them about which bull might be right for your cow.

This time we have also included semen for Beef production by selecting a Pure Beef Bull. If you are breeding cows for the Beef market, cross breeding with this semen will greatly improve the weight gain of the offspring and the quality of the meat, resulting in higher prices for your beef animals.



We warn you though not to use this semen on Dairy cows, as it will lower milk production of the offspring. Use for beef production only!

All semen is available through MMPA or the regional Associations across the country. We encourage farmers to use this semen as much as possible as this will guarantee genetic improvement of the next generation of Dairy cows.

Update on The INVC program.

For more than a year now the MMPA Team has been working on a US AID initiated program improving the Dairy Industry for 5 districts in the Central Region. MMPA was consulted by US AID from the beginning and was asked to give input on the formulation of the program. The program was then put out for Tender to 3 US based Consulting Companies who would do the implementation in Malawi. MMPA was also widely consulted by these companies on how and what MMPA thought was most important for our members. US AID awarded the Contract to DAI, now present in Malawi, to implement the program. MMPA was asked to submit a proposal to DAI for implementation in the 5 districts.

The MMPA team with support from the volunteers at the Canadian Office, submitted an ambitious proposal based on the three major challenges in the development of the dairy production;

- The shortage of available cows for Dairy Production
- Lack of available nutritious feed during the dry season.
- Improving the quality of milk at MBG level.

It was proposed to set up 25 new cross breeding groups to increase the number of cows for dairy production available to farmers. This activity could produce 400 -500 dairy crosses in the first 3 years of the program, with larger numbers after that initial period.

To improve the feed situation during the dry Season MMPA asked for providing 5 MBG's with the equipment and storage capacity for Bulk Silage at the MBG facilities for sale to farmers with milk producing cows [Fodder banks] This plan would improve milk production per cow up to 50% in our calculations. It would also improve the fertility of the cows, what would lead to a faster growth of the dairy herd.

To improve the quality of milk and to get an unbiased test on the milk delivered to the MBG's, it was proposed to equip 10 MBG's with Electronic Testers. This would lead to higher a quality of milk sold to the Processors and would give the MBG an opportunity to demand a higher price for their milk from the processors.

After many months of meetings and counter proposals the program now states the set up of 10 Cross breeding groups. The Fodder Banks are completely taken out of the proposal and the number of MBG's that will be targeted with testing equipment is down to 3. MMPA is obviously disappointed with the lower numbers but it seemed the best what we can do at this time. We hope to start the Program as soon as the paperwork is finished at DAI.

FICA program winding down.

The Funding Program with the Flanders International Cooperation Agency [FICA] for MMPA and the Regional Associations in the Northern and Central Region is going into its last year. This

program has given the Associations an enormous boost and we are very grateful for that. Many of the services you are now enjoying, such as Semen and liquid nitrogen supply for AI services, improved administration at the Associations Offices, supply of Solar lights/chargers, Milk Processing in the North, Technical support from field officers, the Practical Training Center at Katete Farm and many others were made possible through the Funding from FICA. Income at the Regional Associations has improved, but not to the point that they can be financial Independent yet. We all have to work hard in this last year of the program to make sure that the Associations will be at a solid footing when the funding stops. These are your organizations and they work for the betterment of your livelihood.

FICA has indicated they might be open for a new program when this one ends. It might however focus on different area's in Dairy development. MMPA has submitted a preliminary list of ideas for consideration to FICA



Milk cooling tanks ready to be shipped to Malawi, funded by FICA.

Direct Sales and Vending

The Associations have recently conducted surveys of several MBG's and the outcome of these surveys indicate that the direct sales of milk from the farm and the MBG's is on the increase. This is likely caused, for a big part, by the fact that the cost of production of a liter of milk has not been reflected in the price paid to the farmer. Although MMPA is not against these sales as it gives the farmer an opportunity to recover a little more of the cost and the consumer pays a little less for milk, it causes a problem for the income of the associations as no levy is collected to help run your Association. If you value the services your associations provide to you, than we have to take a good hard look at this. **Ways have to be developed to put the Associations on a stable funding in order to be able to continue these services.** The Government also has an important role to play in these discussions. Consumer prices are so high that most people cannot afford to buy milk in the stores anymore. Regulations have to be developed to make direct sales possible including a levy for the operation of the Associations. We encourage all the MBG committees to have a frank discussion about these problems if we want this industry to grow, and give all dairy farmers an opportunity to make a living. MMPA in its capacity of the

umbrella organization will keep the pressure on the Government to change the Milk Product Act to make direct sales possible and legal.

Fodder Trees



Moringa Plantation

MMPA has purchased 1000 seedlings of Moringa Trees (Chammwamba) from a women faith group from the Assemblies God Church of Malawi. 100 seedlings will be distributed to selected MBGs on trial basis. If the results will be successful, MMPA will include other MBGs in the coming year. The leaves of Moringa Tree are a good source of protein if used as feed for dairy cows. It has been proven by feeding dairy cows with leaves of Moringa Tree, the milk production per cow can double. Moringa Tree leaves have a high protein value and as a result they are good source of protein for HIV and AIDS patient.

We would like to ask the MBGs which will receive the seedlings to jealously guard them against animals and take good care of their growth. As Moringa Trees are fast growing trees, we sincerely hope farmers will start to make use of these trees by the end of 2014.

Devaluation of Kwacha

The devaluation of Kwacha in April this year has equally hit the dairy farmers very hard. Their take home pay from milk sales has shrunk by more than 60%. The cost to produce 1 litre of milk has also increased from K69 to almost K80.00, yet the price offered by processors has only been increased to K75.00 from K68.75 over the past month, which is only a meagre increase of K6.75, which is significantly too small to cover the increased cost of production. The woes of a dairy farmer are compounded with the fact that the increase of diesel, to run the generators which cool the milk is on the increase. The prices keep changing on monthly basis. The price of diesel which was K536.00 per liter in June is currently at K597.30 per liter, which is an increase of 12.4%. This is one missile hitting the farmer besides other missiles i.e. the cost of Dairy mash is now more than K4,000 from K2,500 for a 50kg bag in June, the high cost of vet drugs, the high cost of transport. The dairy business is now becoming too expensive to manage day by day.

Training of farmers at Katete

The practical training courses at Katete are still on. As of November, 2012, 80 farmers from CREMPA and MDFA have been trained. Plans are under way to visit the farmers and see if the practical training has had a positive impact in their dairy farming. We hope to start the visits by mid January, 2013.

Revolving Fund

We would like to thank all the farmers and other individuals who have been able to buy the MMPA cloth available at the Regional Associations. It is encouraging to see you in shirts and chitenjes made from a cloth which is depicting the life of a dairy. The cloth, solar torches, liquid nitrogen, semen, vet drugs, are still available at MMPA through the Regional Associations.

MMPA has noted slow progress in the functioning of the revolving funds run by the Regional Associations. We are not pleased that many MBGs are not repaying their loans to their Associations on time. This practice has slowed down the business to unsustainable levels. We want to see improvement in order to increase the business turnover of the Regional Associations in the coming year. We sincerely hope all loans will be repaid by end of December.

We can only continue these services if loans are paid back.

New Dairy Groups

MMPA would like to welcome on board all the new groups who have shown interest to start dairy farming as a business. We would like to encourage you contact the Regional Association for information on how you can obtain artificial insemination information even for Malawi Zebu Cows. It is our hope to form as many cross breeding groups as possible.

Planting Season

Planting season is around the corner and it will be a busy time for all farmers. MMPA likes to encourage everyone to look ahead and plant also crops that will supply feed during the dry season. **Crop residue feeding of a milk producing cow is not enough for a good production.** For instance grass from Dambo areas and Roadsides can easily be dried and stored for feeding during the dry season. **If you look after your cow... she will look after you!!!!**

Let's pray for a good Rainy Season.

**MMPA wishes all their members and supporters a
Blessed Christmas and a Great New Year!**