

Briefly | Africa

If meat is your game ...

Achieve superior distinction in traceability, quality, safety, classification, inspection, beneficiation, processing and export of meat carcasses. IIR SA's Excellence in Meat Management Masterclass, in association with Exhibitions Africa's Big Seven Exhibition at Gallagher Estate in Midrand, is in its second year.

The Meat Masterclass will take place on 21 and 22 July 2008. The programme will be available shortly. For more information on this not-to-miss opportunity, e-mail cshangase@iir.co.za for more information or visit www.iir-conferences.co.za/meat.

Private sector promises assistance

The Private Sector Federation (PSF) is to give more support to the dairy sector in Rwanda. The funding will be for putting in place more milk collection centres as a way of addressing the marketing problem faced by farmers.

Alexie Rubayinza, the director of the livestock sector in the PSF, said that the federation is also trying to help farmers organise themselves as a company. The company, if formed, will provide the collection, distribution and processing of milk.

Dr Theogéne Rutagwenda, director of Rwanda Animal Resource Development Authority (Rarda), urged the private sector to invest more in dairy farming. Rarda wanted more milk collection centres to be constructed in order to address the marketing and distribution constraints in the country.

Rubayinza further revealed that they are drafting an integrated business plan for a milk production chain that will include measures for the collection, distribution and processing of all dairy products.

He refuted Rarda's claims that there is no market for increased milk production. According

to a report released by the Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Ministry last year, Rwanda only produces 130 000 tons of milk. This allows for 13 litres per person per year. The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) recommends an intake of 52 litres per person per year. – *The New Times*

Dairy firm invests in upgrade

Spin Knit Dairy in Kenya is planning to invest over KSh10 million in the upgrading of its technology infrastructure and installing an automated milk reception system. The implementation of an automated milk collection system will also involve the calibration of metered milk tankers.

The move to upgrade its technology infrastructure is mainly to increase efficiency of data processing from the remote sites as well as boost security on the wide area network against system vulnerabilities such as packet sniffing, phishing, and internet protocol spoofing among others.

Hulder Mwasela, the company's IT manager, said risks from outside the local area network are increasingly becoming viable and the information technology department must prepare itself for the eventuality.

"We have set up virtual private networks for our regional branches, installed firewalls, an ISA server and an enterprise antivirus software with group policy enabled. We have also installed several mail filters to guard against virus attacks and spam mail."

Since its establishment 11 years ago, the dairy has invested an estimated KSh24 million on information technology systems. Currently, the system comprises seven servers, Cisco PIX 501 firewalls, Cisco switches, routers, outdoor radio units and other outsourced programmes.

The company became the country's first milk processor to install a biometric system. With over 500 employees working 20 shifts, the system

ensures employee accountability moving from the manual time recordings. – *The Nation*

HI supports farmers

Heifer International, a programme providing cows to people in poor countries, will use a US\$42,8 million grant announced recently that is meant to build a strong dairy industry in three East African countries.

The grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which is 12 times more than the size of the agency's largest gift to date, will let the group expand a programme designed to reduce poverty among the one million people living on rural dairy farms in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Some 179 000 families are to receive assistance under the latest grant aimed at helping farmers produce and sell their milk in a manner that is more profitable.

Heifer intends to provide 169 000 head of cattle better livestock than cows now on the small family farms in the region and train another 10 000 families to supply feed for the animals, said Sahr Lebbie, Heifer's vice-president for its Africa programme.

An important focus of the four-year effort will be bringing more women into positions of responsibility, both on family farms and in regional chilling plants for the milk. "The cow

goes to the family unit. The man and the woman sign the contract," Lebbie said. "We have found that female-led cooperatives fare better than their male-led counterparts."

Heifer will develop 30 collection points where farmers will be able to bring their milk to be chilled before it is sold. Farmer associations will own the chilling plants, as organised by Heifer. The project will be carried out with US-based TechnoServe and the Kenya-based International Livestock Research Institute. – *The Nation*

Milk price increases inevitable

The South African Milk Producers' Organisation (MPO) says increases in the price of milk are inevitable. This follows ongoing power outages across the country. The MPO says Eskom's load-shedding is hitting milk producers hard, with an estimated monthly cost to the dairy industry of R100 million.

The organisation says that in addition to direct financial losses – the erratic electricity supply has forced dairy farmers to spend more than R240 million on generators and other supplementary power support systems.

MPO economist, Dawie Maree, says the man in the street can expect price increases, not only from the decline in milk production, but also the increase in costs to keep the milk cool and to keep the scheduled production. – *SABC.com*

Dairy giants accused of colluding

Eight major South African dairy firms could be slapped with fines of up to R500 million if found guilty of milk price-fixing. The South African Competition Commission recently said it had gathered enough evidence against the eight major dairy processors from investigations into anti-competitive behaviour in the milk industry.

Investigations started in February 2005 and hearings into the alleged cartel began in February 2008, with Clover Industries (Clover), Clover SA (CSA), Parmalat, Ladismith Cheese, Woodlands Dairy, Lancewood, Nestlé SA and Milkwood Dairy taking centre stage before the Competition Tribunal. By buying up surplus milk from farmers, companies were found selling

it to each other rather than at lower prices to end-users, enabling colluding companies to maintain the price of milk at artificially high levels.

Clover and Parmalat allegedly also abused their dominant positions in exclusive agreements that compelled producers to supply them with their total milk production. Producers were prevented from selling surplus raw milk at competitive prices to third parties or consumers directly.

The initial complaint was made by the Commission and followed by a rebuttal from the Milk Producers' Organisation, which claimed that supermarkets were also involved in price-fixing. – *Bizcommunity.com DMA*