

A word from the Editor



Is Kenya going the Zimbabwe way? The agricultural productivity in Kenya has nose-dived by almost 50% due to the political instability being experienced there.

Milk production is slowly crumbling, with some processing companies set to lose their niche in foreign markets. Kenya is a living example of how smallholder dairy farming can change the economic face of a country in tatters.

The country has been given a brutal portrait of the effects of the conflicts and of what is termed the "systematic destruction" of its agricultural sector, including the killing and theft of livestock, and the destruction of irrigation systems and farms in general.

In less than a month, the country's dairy sector lost over 20 million litres of milk estimated to be worth more than 200 million shillings as a result of the post poll skirmishes.

In this issue we attempt to give an analysis of the situation in Kenya. There are assurances from Kenya Dairy Board managing director, Machira Gichohi, that the situation will not lead to a milk shortage or retail price increment in the country.

But a loss is a loss, no matter how small it might be. This loss also goes beyond the fact that the dairy industry in that country has taken so long to build itself up to where it currently is. Kenya's Dairy Board projected this year's milk production to grow by 20% more than the 410 million litres realised last year.

But now this remains a pipe dream as the area around the central region, the North Rift and some parts of the western region regarded as the milk pot of the country, bear the brunt of the chaos, with dairy production hitting an all-time low of 50%.

On a more positive note, we look at plans to expand a dairy – once you've got your structures in place, how do you plan for future expansion? We also see what a comfortable cow bed should look like and we enter the world of new technology in an article about a new robotic milking system introduced during the International Green Week in Berlin.

We give some feedback on the All Africa Dairy Expo held in South Africa recently, and invite you to join the fourth African Dairy Conference and Exhibition that will be held later this year in Nairobi. Please take note of the fact that the date and venue has changed. We also glance at the worldwide milk production situation and include our usual dose of dairy news from the African continent.

Enjoy the read and do feel free to write to us with any suggestions or commentary that might add value to this publication.

Editor