

Briefly | Africa

Court in favour of farmers

The Minister of Agriculture must pay an Eastern Cape dairy farming entity more than R10,8 million after it lost about 700 cattle during an outbreak of bovine tuberculosis (TB), the Supreme Court of Appeals said.

Blueilliesbush Dairy Farming (Pty) Ltd and Grasslands Agriculture (Pty) Ltd, part of a group of companies that run the largest dairy farming operation in the Eastern Cape, in May 2004 had to slaughter the cattle due to an outbreak of bovine tuberculosis on eight farms.

They applied for compensation under the Animal Diseases Act (No 35 of 1984) for the dairy cattle that were slaughtered. The director of animal health in the Department of Agriculture, who must decide on a fair compensation price, decided that the Department would only pay the slaughter value of the animals and not the full productive value of the dairy cattle.

The farming group objected to the method of calculation and turned to the Eastern Cape High Court in Port Elizabeth. The high court held in favour of the farming group and ordered the Department to pay out more than R14 million. The Department appealed to the Supreme Court of Appeal.

Delivering judgement, Appeal Judge Edwin Cameron, confirmed the high court's finding and ordered that the Minister of Agriculture should pay the farming group R10,8 million in compensation, plus costs. – *IOL*

One cow, one household

The Rwandese government's "One-Cow-One-Household Programme" has seen a significant improvement in people's living standards.

Dr Evariste Namahungu, the coordinator of the programme, says cases of malnutrition are now rare as most families are benefiting from the programme. Namahungu said the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources took up this role to ensure that the rural poor do not have to leave their homes up-country and come to the city without any survival plan.

The programme is meant to empower rural families by giving them a cow that can produce milk for home consumption and for sale, so as to generate an income to sustain other family needs. Apart from milk, manure from the cow dung can be used as fertilisers to enhance crop production.

The cows given to households, are high quality Friesian, Jersey and other modern breeds. The programme started last year when 14 000 cows were given to rural farmers. So far 16 000 cows are on record. Today, 330 000 families in the country have benefited from the programme. It is expected that by the year 2020, poverty in Rwanda will be at its lowest. – *The Nation*

Brookside lands foreign deal

Kenya's Brookside Dairy has secured new markets for its products in the eastern and central African countries. Brookside Dairy says it had managed to get customers in Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and Congo.

The company's milk procurement and extension services manager, Emmanuel Kabaki, said talks were at advanced stage to start exporting Brookside products to Botswana.

"We have secured enough markets and are still negotiating with some other countries. However, we may be unable to meet the demand due to

low production of milk and, therefore, appeal to dairy farmers to raise production," he said.

To improve production, Brookside has started training farmers in the modern ways of animal breeding. "We have trained 12 000 dairy farmers this year in various parts of the country and we will visit all areas," said Kabaki. – *The East African*

Smuggling probed

South African-based forensic investigation firm, Agri Inspec, is probing illegal dairy smuggling in southern Africa. The investigation firm has been contracted by a US company which is struggling to gain returns on its investments in the Zambian dairy market.

Agri Inspec, a private company that investigates irregularities in the agricultural sector, has been commissioned by the Zambian dairy market.

The probe, which includes the monitoring of ports and border posts in southern Africa and a full market analysis of the dairy sector in Zambia, started beginning of June and should be concluded within four weeks, said Kleynhans.

He said the investigation would also benefit South Africa and its neighbouring countries. "Inadequate border control in neighbouring countries has a negative impact on local industries. As Agri Inspec expands its investigations, our knowledge of illegal activities improves and local industries can be better protected," he said.

Since the start of the dairy probe, the poultry industry has also asked Agri Inspec to conduct a similar investigation into the poultry market in Zambia. – *Press release*

Zimbabweans to stay in Nigeria

Farmers who moved to Nigeria after being kicked off their farms by President Robert Mugabe, say they won't return to the land they love, even if Mugabe fails to emerge victorious.

The farmers recently received the first batch of some 690 cows imported at a cost of about US\$3 000 per head.

Zimbabwe's infrastructure and services have decayed with hyper-inflation above one million per cent and an 80% unemployment rate. The seized farms have largely failed, and nearly half of Zimbabweans are malnourished.

When the group of 13 white commercial farmers arrived in Nigeria, the land they now farm was bush. There were a few scattered subsistence farms, no electricity, and no mobile phone coverage. But the nearby Niger River promised unlimited water once boreholes and irrigation systems were in place.

"The government realised that agriculture could grow our economy, but that to do this there must be a shift from just peasant farming," says Mohammed Gana-Yisa, Kwara State commissioner for agriculture and natural resources. – *AllAfrica.com*

Cameroon's seven-year plan

Cameroon's dairy sector stakeholders met in Yaoundé recently under the guidance of the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries to work out a strategy to step up dairy production, with particular focus on milk.

The experts were invited to examine with diligence the feasibility study financed by the European Union. According to the study, milk consumption in Cameroon is extremely low with only 14 kg of the product being consumed per inhabitant annually. The study blames the situation on low production in the country and the expensive nature of imported dairy products.

The programme consists of building up a conservation and genetic improvement project for cattle species in the country. The seven year programme will cost over CFA 22 billion. – *AllAfrica.com DMA*