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Zim, Zambia in milk export dispute

Zimbabwe has challenged a protectionist move by neighbouring Zambia, its second largest trading partner in southern Africa, to restrict the country's sterilised milk imports by withholding import licences for wholesale and retail shops.

The ministry of industry and international trade notified the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) secretariat last year through the regional economic community's non-tariff barriers (NTB) monitoring and reporting mechanism, that Zambia was "not issuing permits for the importation of sterilised milk from the country." The matter is still pending.

Anthony Mandiwanza, chief executive officer of Dairibord Zimbabwe, said the company's sterilised milk exports to Zambia had not been disturbed by the conflict. However, the Zimbabwe Cross Border Traders Association (ZCBTA), said it has had to contend with numerous NTBs, including licence restrictions. The sterilised milk dispute is the second in a series of NTB conflicts in just three years. – *Fingaz*

Seven support grants for Zambia

The United States African Development Foundation (USADF) signed seven grants designed to improve income and create jobs in Zambia. The grants will benefit the Chibote Dairy Cooperative, Diocese of Mongu Development Care, Foundation for Wildlife and Habitat Conservation, Lua Lua Savings and Credit Cooperative Union, Makumbi Farmer Cooperative Society Limited, Mulondolwa Jatrophia Industries, and Zambia National Federation of the Blind.

Chibote Dairy Cooperative Operating in Kalulushi District in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia, CCSL seeks to expand its dairy

production by selling milk to the local market. The 18-month, \$79 289 grant will support the cooperative by developing its financial, operational, and administrative systems and by training staff in business practices, animal husbandry, and milk handling. – *Press release*

Donors develop appetite for milk

Apparently impressed by its phenomenal growth, development partners in Kenya are placing their bets on the country's dairy industry. Over the last six years, donors have loosened their purse strings to channel a steady stream of dollars to various dairy projects across the country.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is already implementing a \$19,5 million (about Sh1,6 billion) smallholder dairy project in Nakuru district and also has programmes in Nyanza, Central and Eastern provinces. Experts attribute the rising donor interest in the sector to its ability to fight poverty. – *Daily Nation*

Indigenous numbers remain high

Authorities in Rwanda's Rwamagana district, say the number of indigenous cattle breeds is still high. A recent domestic animals census in the district revealed that there are 3 353 head of cattle comprising of 2 456 local breeds, 392 exotic breed and 505 cross-breeds.

The new breeds are distributed through Ubudehe, and the cattle stocking programmes of Send a Cow and the Heifer Project International. Richard Niyomwungeri disclosed that the district has embarked on artificial insemination to increase the number of cross-bred cattle. At least 2 015 cows have so far been inseminated. – *NewTimes*

Uganda heifer project

The Heifer International East Africa Dairy Development (EADD) project is handing out bicycles to dairy farmers to help with sensitisation of better farming practices. Patrick Nalere, Heifer's IEADD country director, said the project was aimed at improving productivity through improved milk quality and reducing loss through spoilage. He said the bicycles would assist the farmers to access more markets. Over 190 dairy farmers from Mityana, Masindi, Luweero, Nakaseke, Masaka and Wakiso are to benefit from the project. – *New Vision*

Rwanda milk production soars

Rwanda's milk production has increased from 189 827 tons in 2007, to 257 197 tons in 2008, according to statistics from the National Bank of Rwanda (NBR). This represents a 35% increase in production. According to recently released figures, there was also a 64% increase in 2006.

Dr Théogène Rutagwenda, the director-general of the Rwanda Animal Resources and Development Agency (RARDA), attributed the increase to the increased practice of crossbreeding among local cows and heifers with exotic breeds. Last year's statistics from NBR also revealed that milk importation has greatly reduced since 2002 from 1 378 tons to 450 tons in 2007. This represents a 67% decrease. – *NewTimes*

Unprocessed milk to be criminalised

The Uganda Dairy Processors' Association (UDPA) has started campaigns to promote consumption of processed milk and other dairy products. The country's per capita milk consumption of about 50 litres, is well below the Food and Agricultural Organisation and the World Health Organisation's recommended per capita consumption rate of 200 litres.

Tom Opio Oming, the UDPA chairman, advised the public to be aware of expired dairy products and to report them to concerned processors. Agnes Audax Baguma, the DDA quality and regulatory manager, said only 10 out of 82 outlets passed the October inspection. – *New Vision*

Software can help dairy farmers

Faced with increased competition and a further decrease in subsidies, many Kenyan dairy cooperatives are now using an information management programme especially developed to help farming cooperatives run more efficiently. One way the cooperatives could increase efficiency, is through increased and better use of computers.

To help dairy farmers' cooperatives improve the efficiency of their information devices and systems, open source software developers have worked together to develop Coopworks. Development began in 2006 and the programme is now freely available for download. – *reportingtheworldover.com* 