

# Esada news

by Fidelis Zvomuya



Dr Mohammed Abdi Kuti on the left, with outgoing Esada chairperson, Sandress Nyirenda. With them is Anne Kavuu, one of the exhibitors at the 4th African Dairy Conference and Exhibition

Kenya's livestock development minister, Dr Mohammed Abdi Kuti, has called upon heads of state and governments, as well as ministers responsible for agriculture and livestock development within the African continent, to take an active role through their participation in the 5th African Dairy Conference and Exhibition, to be hosted by South Africa next year.

Speaking during an interview with *Dairy Mail Africa* soon after he officially opened the 4th Esada conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, Kuti said the conference was an important gathering that is meant to shape the future of Africa's dairy sector – from the producer, up to the consumer – and must be supported politically.

Esada's executive director, Dr Kipkirui Arap Lang'at, also announced during the regional dairy grouping's annual general meeting, that the conference will be held in South Africa towards the end of May or in October, at a venue still to be decided.

The conference and exhibition brings together all the dairy players in Africa as well as other global players in the dairy sector. Dr Kuti acknowledged the value of the dairy subsector, emphasising it as one of Kenya's major contributors in its efforts to fight poverty.

He also applauded Esada for its vision to promote the modernisation of the dairy industry through various initiatives within the region and the progress made within its short period in existence.

"I therefore challenge this conference to come up with workable recommendations that Africa, and Kenya in particular, will use to create the requisite quantum leap necessary to lift the dairy industry into the 21st century. Esada should therefore strive to promote ethical practices and transparency among its stakeholders and members," he said.

## New board members

Esada elected Tom Opio from Uganda as its next chairman. Opio takes over from Sandress Nyirenda. The new vice-chairman is Koos Pienaar of the Milk Producers' Association in South Africa. Other members of the board include Indra Thanacody from Mauritius Dairy Processors, Innocent Rutamu of Rwanda Dairy Processors, Taib Faiz of the Kenya Dairy Processors Association, Alnor Hussein of the Tanzania Milk Processors Association and Theodora Nyamandi of the Malawi Dairy Processors Association. 



## From the Executive Director's desk

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in this year's 4th African Dairy Conference and Exhibition held in Nairobi, Kenya. This is our fourth year since inception and we are proud of our joint efforts to be at the forefront in setting the stage and acting as a catalyst and forum for the region to increase trade in African dairy.*

This year's conference was an avenue to place Africa on the world dairy map and gave the continent new impetus to exploit its potential. As Esada, we have worked towards an improved regional policy environment which is conducive to regional and international dairy trade.

We are proud to have been part and parcel of the harmonisation of dairy standards for Comesa and the East African community, which has now been completed. The preparation of the S.P.S. protocol is now in its final stages.

Our conference took place against a background of worldwide food shortages and spiralling food prices. The rise in food prices did not spare dairy. In fact in 2007 the Food and Agricultural Organisation estimated that dairy product prices had recorded the steepest rise among food produce.

The increases came as a result of low stocks in major producing countries, discontinuation of EU subsidies, as well as bad weather in Australia and neighbouring countries. In 2008 the prices seem to be easing mainly due to supply responses and resistance by consumers to pay higher prices.

The easing of prices may, however, be temporarily due to the continuing grain shortages

and its high cost. The average *per capita* consumption for African countries currently at 25 kg, is still well below the World Health Organisation's estimates of 200 kg. Hence the high cost will drive this *per capita* consumption down.

Secondly, availability may be worsened since some countries are highly dependent on imports. According to existing trade records, dairy trade is an important component of intra-Comesa trade with trade in dairy products amounting to US\$25,6 million in 2006, while total extra trade amounted to US\$383,2 million.

African dairy is gaining recognition as a potential for development into an integrated robust industry that can deliver marketable products through innovative models of linking poor farmers with markets.

May I also take this opportunity to say that the 5th African Dairy Conference and Exhibition will be held in South Africa organised by the Milk Producers' Organisation. This will give our delegates the necessary exposure to commercial dairy production.

**Dr Kipkirui Arap Lang'at**  
Executive Director 