

# Briefly | Africa

## **Obama's initiative for Africa**

At the G8 Summit in July, President Barack Obama announced a multibillion dollar initiative to assist with agriculture development and food security in Africa. Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) senior fellow, Laurie Garrett, says that it's not clear if or when congress will appropriate funding for the initiative, given all its other legislative priorities, including health care reform.

She does believe, however, that the initiative's promise to end tied food aid, the practice of exporting US food to developing countries for aid instead of buying food on local markets, is possible in the current political climate. Many details of the new policy have yet to emerge, but Garrett recommends that it focus on how to assist women, because they are responsible for doing most of the agriculture work in Africa.

– *Council on Foreign Relations*

## **Super farm swings into production**

The state-of-the-art N\$80 million super dairy farm outside Mariental in Namibia, hopes to increase its milk production from the current 18 000 litres per day to 60 000 litres per day over the next three years. Farm manager, Jacques du Toit, said the farm started with production on 26 February.

He said the raw milk is sent to Namibia Dairies, which owns a stake in the farm, for final production. Du Toit said of the 2 000 cows at the farm, only 850 cows are currently being milked three times a day, at eight-hour intervals. The farm employs 55 workers, but Du Toit said more jobs would be created when the farm reached full production capacity.

– *The Namibian*

## **FMD reported in Nyagatare**

Foot and mouth disease (FMD) has been reported in Nyagatare district of the Eastern Province of Rwanda. Officials from the Rwanda Animal Resources Development Authority (Rarda) said that the fatal viral disease of cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, was confirmed.

Dr Théogène Rutagwenda, the director-general of Rarda, said that about 244 cows have been diagnosed with signs of the disease.

"These are all within Katabagemu sector (umurenge), whose cattle are now under quarantine," he revealed. "As we continue to investigate where the disease might have come from, the situation is not alarming. In fact, we have managed to contain it with no severe developments seen."

– *The New Times*

## **Human nutrition threatened**

In parts of Niger's far-east Diffa region, animals dying from malnutrition have a direct impact on human food security and nutrition, according to local livestock ministry officials. Regional livestock director, Kosso Matta Kellou, told IRIN that 90% of Diffa's residents count on animals for survival, and that poor animal health has been overlooked as a cause of human malnutrition.

Matta Kellou said livestock ministry officials plan to look into local reports of animal deaths, with some breeders reported to have lost as many as 25% of their animals. A recent inter-ministerial bulletin on agriculture and pastoralism noted that rainfall in July had improved grazing land and that animal health is good overall. But herders in Diffa region told IRIN they are being forced to sell under-fed sick animals before the animals die. – *IRIN*

### Drought causes drop in production

Milk production in south-western Uganda has dropped by half, due to the prolonged drought. The farm gate price of milk has gone up by sh200 a litre from sh380 to sh600. Clayton Arinanye from the Uganda Crane Creameries Cooperative Union (UCCCU) said that the cost of producing a litre of milk is sh340 from sh280, due to climate variations.

In Kampala supermarkets, the prices of pasteurised milk went up from sh700 to sh900 for half a litre and from sh1 400 for a litre to sh1 700. The demand for milk and dairy products has exceeded production. Urban consumption has gone up by 40% due to continued encouragement by health workers for people to consume dairy products. – *The New Times*

### Lifeline for livestock farmers

The Kenyan government will start buying livestock from farmers in the wake of increased drought and lack of pasture, to save the animals from dying. According to Kenneth Lusaka from Livestock Development, negotiations are going on between his ministry and the treasury to have funds released to the Kenya Meat Commission for the exercise.

He was speaking at the port of Mombasa when he flagged off a consignment of 800 cattle and 1 000 goats for the export market in Mauritius. The consignment, the fifth since the beginning of the year, brings the total number of animals exported since 2004 to 25 600 cattle and 13 700 goats.

Lusaka said that this year alone, more than 100 000 cattle have died due to drought that has hit most parts of the country, especially in the Rift Valley, Eastern and North Eastern provinces. – *The Nation*

### Boost for Zambezi grain processing

The Planning and Development Office for the Zambezi Valley (GPZ) intends to invest US\$ 50 million in the erection of three grain processing

plants in the central Mozambican provinces of Zambezia, Manica and Tete.

GPZ general director Sergio Vieira told reporters that work on one of the factories will begin this year in the Tete district of Angonia, and will have the capacity to process about 25 000 tons of maize a year. Meanwhile, six silos, which can hold 50 000 tons of grain, have been built in Tete city as part of the government's efforts to minimise the effects of the world food crisis. – *Mozambique NewsAgency*

### Angolan dairy under restoration

The Angolan government is rebuilding the country's dairy potential that existed before the armed conflict. The deputy minister of agriculture, José Amaro Tati, said at the end of a visit to the Angola dairy company (Lactiangol), that there are milk basins, some of which are in steady development, such as that of Wako Kungo and those of the country's central highlands.

According to Lactiangol director, José César Macedo, the country's milk production is still insufficient to cover its needs. Lactiangol produces 50 000 litres of milk daily. – *Allafrica.com*

### Bumper harvest expected in Tanzania

Food production in Tanzania is set to increase to 11,5 million metric tons, an additional 600 000 tons from last year's 10,9 million. This is in line with other countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which predicted recently that food security in the region had improved in 2009 compared with 2008 due to favourable weather.

The high food production figures have helped lower inflation, as the annual headline inflation rate for the year ended June 2009 decreased to 10,7%, compared with 11,3% in the year ended May 2009. This was attributed mainly to the decrease of food inflation from 17,8% in the year ended May 2009 to 17% in the year ended June 2009. – *Allafrica.com* 