

PHOTOS BY WILSON ASIMWE



Currently, Baine's farm has about 300 head of cattle



Baine has installed a solar powered water pump to address the challenge of water scarcity

HUMBLE START

Starting with just three cows in 2007, Sam Baine has built one of the most successful dairy farms in Bunyoro. Today, his 200-acre farm in Kakumiro district boasts hundreds of dairy cows, Boer goats and multiple income-generating enterprises, turning his passion for farming into a thriving business that inspires many in the community. **Wilson Asimwe** brings you his story



Baine in his banana farm. On a good day, he harvests about 100 bunches, which sell for between sh10,000 and sh20,000 depending on size

In 2007, Sam Baine started with just three cows on a small piece of land, little knowing he would one day build one of the most profitable dairy farms in the Bunyoro sub-region. Located in Mpasasa town council, Kakumiro district, the farm has grown from a modest venture into a thriving enterprise with about 300 dairy cows grazing on 200 acres of land.

Baine says he was inspired by his parents' love for cattle. After starting a business in Kakumiro, he bought about eight acres of land for sh10m and began with three local cows. "I have always had a passion for animals. Around 2007, with the little money I had saved from my business, I bought land and animals and started rearing them. But with time, I realised dairy cattle were more profitable. In 2010, I sold the local cows and started buying Friesian cows," Baine says.

The farm also has about 200 Boer goats. Other enterprises include banana plantations and maize cultivation for both home consumption and sale on the local market.

Baine has also planted napier grass for livestock feed, established

a eucalyptus plantation on about 50 acres and started a piggyery project operated by his wife, Sharon Natukunda.

In addition, the farm has fruit trees such as avocado, jackfruit and guava, which provide shade for the animals and an additional source of income for the family.

HOW HE STARTED

"I started as a very small farmer

because I did not have enough capital. But because of my love for animals, I kept expanding both the land and the herd. I chose land with enough water supply and got quality breeds from a friend," he says.

Baine says he regularly visited fellow farmers outside Kakumiro to gain more knowledge about dairy farming.

"The beginning was not easy because I lacked experience, but

GOAT FARMING

Natukunda says they also constructed a pen for about 200 Boer goats, which are mainly reared for meat production.

"We bought five goats from Kampala in 2015 and they have multiplied over time. We chose Boer goats because they mature quickly, gain weight faster, and fetch good prices on the market," she says. She explains that the goats are reared under free-range conditions, although they are kept in pens until the dew dries off in the afternoon.

"When veterinary doctors come to treat the cows, they also treat the goats. The goats are kept in the pen until around 3:00pm before they are released into the field because dew is not good for them," she says. She warns farmers against releasing goats too early in the morning, saying dew can cause bloating, which may kill the animals. "My advice to those interested in goat farming is to invest in quality breeds that mature quickly and gain weight fast, such as Boer goats, because they have a ready market," she says.

I kept visiting colleagues who encouraged me. I had three cows producing about 60 litres of milk daily, which I sold locally in Mpasasa," he says.

He saved the proceeds from milk sales and reinvested the money to expand the farm and buy more animals.

"I started this farm in 2007 when I was still a young man, but very ambitious. I worked on the farm myself because I could not yet afford workers," he says.

MANAGING DAIRY COWS

Baine says water is essential for dairy farming and farmers must ensure reliable access to clean water.

"A cow's milk production is directly tied to how much water it drinks because milk is mostly made up of water. When cows do not drink enough, milk production drops," he says.

He adds that farmers should provide clean water to prevent bacterial contamination and diseases.

To address this, he installed several watering points across the farm to make water easily accessible to the animals.

"If cows struggle to reach water points, they will drink less. I have placed water troughs where cows can easily access them," he says. He also grows maize, which he uses to make supplementary feeds for the cows.

KEEPING WATER TROUGHS CLEAN

Baine says dirty water troughs can spread diseases such as bovine tuberculosis, so he ensures they are regularly cleaned and free from algae.

"Troughs should be cleaned, drained, and scrubbed regularly with fresh water. This helps prevent disease and improves the cows' health because healthy cows produce more milk," he says.

INNOVATIONS ON THE FARM

To improve water management, Baine harvests rainwater and has

Baine says a mature Boer goat sells for between sh300,000 and sh800,000, with most buyers purchasing them for cross-breeding with local Mubende goats



THE RISE OF BAINE'S DAIRY FARM

installed a solar-powered pumping system and plastic water tanks for storage.

"This has helped ensure a steady water supply, even during dry spells. Reliable water supply is critical for the farm," he says.

He pumps water from a dam constructed on the farm and stores it in tanks, helping address water shortages during drought periods.

Baine also ensures that his animals are treated regularly and does not allow outside animals to mix with his herd to minimise disease outbreaks.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Sam Baine says farmers in Mpasasa town council formed a cooperative society and purchased a milk cooling machine where members deliver their milk. Currently, the farm has about 300 head of cattle.

"On average, I get between 300 and 400 litres of milk daily, which we take to the cooler where a litre sells for sh1,000. I also sell cows, with a good cow going for between sh2m and sh3m, depending on the size. Buyers usually come directly to the farm," he says.

"On a good day, we harvest about 100 bunches, which sell for between sh500,000 and sh800,000, with most buyers purchasing them for cross-breeding with local Mubende goat farmers."

"For milk sales, each farmer in the cooperative has daily records, and payments are made collectively rather than daily," he explains.

Baine says many people

I get between 300 and 400 litres of milk daily, which we take to the cooler where a litre sells for sh1,000.

visit the farm not only to buy animals but also to learn modern farming practices.

"Sometimes we give goats to friends for free so they can also start farming. We have been doing this for about six years because we want to economically empower our people, and we follow up on their progress," he adds.

He says the farm harvests matooke every week and sells it locally within Mpasasa.

"On a good day, we harvest about 100 bunches, which sell for between sh10,000 and sh20,000 depending on size. We supply the local market, and sometimes people organising functions such as



The Baines with their maize harvest

weddings place orders with us," Baine says.

FAMILY SUCCESSION

Baine says the farm operates as a family business, with every family member involved in its daily activities.

"All my children have been raised through this farm. Whenever they are not at school, they help out on the farm. We have six children, and each one has a responsibility," he says.

His wife, Sharon Natukunda, says she oversees record-keeping and documentation at the farm.

BEST PRACTICES AT THE FARM

The entire farm is connected

to a reliable water system and Baine has planted fruit trees that provide shade for the animals while generating additional income for the family.

He has also established about 200 beehives for apiculture and has harvested honey for two seasons, selling each 20-litre jerrycan at sh400,000.

Baine maintains cleanliness in the banana plantation and has fenced off the entire farm to prevent theft, destruction, and conflicts with neighbours, while also enforcing strict biosecurity measures.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Baine says the farm has

positively impacted many people in the community, both directly and indirectly. The farm currently employs about 100 workers who live on-site, with salaries ranging between sh150,000 and sh250,000 per month.

"We ensure our workers are paid on time so they can support their families. We also allow people to visit and learn from the farm free of charge. Whenever veterinarians come to the farm, we invite our neighbours as well," he says.

Iveta Muiame says the family has supported local residents with livestock.

"I received two goats from Baine's farm, and they have since multiplied to six. He

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Joy Kwikiriza says visiting Baine's farm inspired her to venture into dairy farming.

"I started dairy farming three years ago after visiting Baine's farm, and today I have 10 cows. We are happy to have farmers like him who inspire others. We look at his farm as a model, and whenever we seek advice, he is always available," she says.

Gilbert Mwebembezi says Baine consistently supplies quality milk to the cooperative cooler because of the good farming practices on his farm. "We are very proud of him. Every time you visit his farm, there is something new to learn. He has dedicated a lot of time and effort to farming," he says.

gave them to me for free after my grandchild was sent home from school because of school fees," she says.

John Tumwine says he has worked on the farm for 12 years and has since managed to buy three acres of land, with plans to venture into farming himself.

"We have coffee at the farm, and I want to get seedlings and start my own plantation to supplement my income," Tumwine says.

CHALLENGES

Baine says prolonged drought remains the biggest challenge affecting the farm. However, he has constructed a dam and installed water storage facilities to address the problem. Another challenge, he says, is retaining trained workers. "You invest money in training a worker, but after returning, they work for only a few months before leaving for another farm. That becomes very costly," he says.

PLANS

Baine plans to establish a yoghurt-processing factory to add value to the farm's milk production.

"My plan is to start producing yoghurt by the end of this year. I have already acquired land in Mpasasa and will soon begin construction. The electricity connection is already in place," he says.

He has also started planting coffee on the remaining land to generate additional income to support farm activities.