

By Davis Buyondo

# Milk production shoots up in Lyantonde district

**D**airy farmers in Kansaagama, Lyakajura and Kinuuka sub-counties, Lyantonde district have registered great success in bulk milk production over the last five years.

Through Community Agriculture Infrastructure Improvement Programme (CAIIP) and the local government support, different dairy farmers' groups have become well established.

Frank Kakuba Bangirana, a prominent dairy farmer and board secretary of Twimukye Farmers Dairy Limited in Kansaagama, is one of the beneficiaries of the CAIIP project.

At the time the project rolled out in 2012, he says they were procuring about 1,080 litres of milk per day while dairy farmers were operating in huge losses due to lack of a collection facility.

Later, after getting two milk coolers from CAIIP, Bangirana says the quantity obtained went up 6,000 litres daily.

They now supply milk to big companies including Sameer Group of Companies, Pearl Dairy-Uganda in Mbarara and JESA Farm Dairy.

"The dairy vendors could buy milk at a give-away price of sh100 per litre. As a result, most of the farmers had given up because of the exploitative conditions," Bangirana says.

According to Bangirana, group has saved over sh100m which they used to acquire a truck embedded with a milk tank that has a 45,000 liter-capacity. He said the truck will help collect and transport milk from dairy farmers in remote communities.

Violet Namala, another dairy farmer and member of Twimukye Group, says they take their milk to the collection centre and get paid after 15 days.

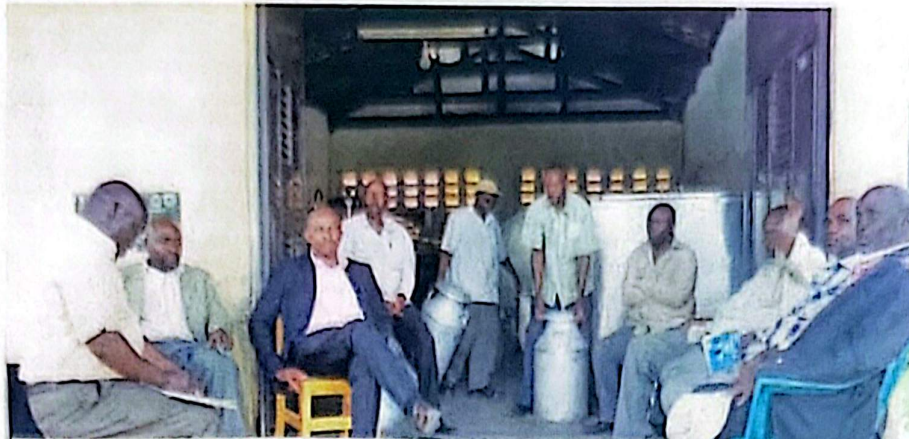
She adds that this enables farmers have set up side businesses to boost their incomes and look after their families. Namala explains that more farmers have kept joining the group every month. Other groups that benefited include Kyemamba Farmers Dairy (Lyakajura) and Kinuuka Dairy Farmers Co-operative (Kinuuka).

Sam Kempaka of Kabula Dairy Farmers' society says they began with two coolers at Kyemamba Milk Facility and later expanded to 10 coolers in different localities.

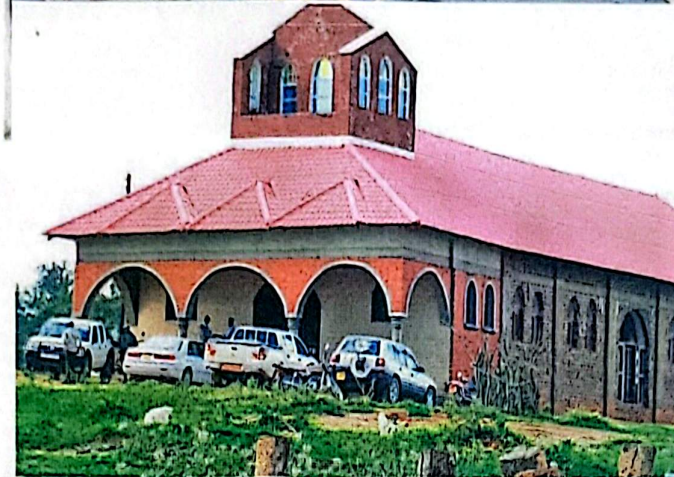
He adds that the 10 coolers are set up in Buyaga, Katajenjera, Lwamitunga, Kankubeere and Kinuuka trading centre. "We used the profits we generated from the CAIIP coolers to open up other dairies."

"We currently collect over 6,000 litres at Kyemamba from 700 litres in 2012," he adds.

Altogether, Kempaka says their branches collect a total of 20,000 litres in the dry season, which intensifies



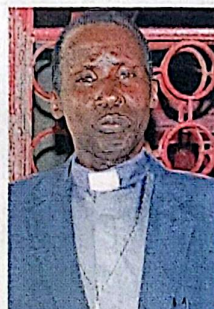
District leaders and dairy farmers in a meeting at Kansaagama Dairy Farmers. Photos by Davis Buyondo



Full view of Kansaagama Church which dairy farmers built



Violet Namala



Rev. Nathan Nkirirwa

**KEMPAKA OF KABULA DAIRY FARMERS' SOCIETY SAYS THEY CURRENTLY COLLECT OVER 6,000 LITRES AT KYEMAMBA FROM 700 LITRES IN 2012**

between June and August, but they procure over 32,000 litres in the flush periods,

between December and May.

In addition, the expansion

created more jobs for the youth mostly university graduates, who are recruited in the technical departments.

### Challenges

Just as roses have thorns, the CAIIP project has had its fair share of challenges. The district is situated in the dry cattle corridor and experiences prolonged dry spells. During such hot conditions livestock die due to lack of water and pasture and milk production reduces drastically.

Apart from the above challenges, Bangirana says over taxation of the milk collection facilities/centres has given them hard time and may soon kick them out of business.

"The district increased our taxes from sh100,000 to sh800,000, which is crippling us. This tax burden is borne by the farmer, which is unfair," he says.

He adds that they are considering not to bid for another contract to run the project due to the high taxes

set on the facility.

He also wondered whether the project will fully realise its set goals.

Godfrey Gumisiriza, a member of Kyemamba Farmers Dairy Co-operative Society, says dairy farmers are forced to graze animals at night when the grass is moist and soft for ease of digestion.

He explains that they still lack trucks to transport milk to different parts of the country. Due to the crowded local market, Gumisiriza says they need more support from the Government so as to tap the international market.

Farmers in Kempage say that affect the dairy sector, they include poor storage facilities, of narrow and poor roads and lack of trucks to collect or transport the milk and frequent load-shedding.

Kabula Dairy Farmers' society members as unhappy the persistence of ticks in livestock. Kempaka says in spite of the Government's effort to stem the ticks, more is needed to completely mitigate the problem.

In addition, he says the frequent foot and mouth disease quarantines largely hamper movement of animals and other products, such as milk, ghee, meat and hides and skins.

Usually it is the meat and milk business that suffers the biggest setback during quarantines, he adds.

## Revenue

Fred Muhangi, the Lyantonde LCS chairperson says, milk production has gone up and revenue from the dairies has also improved to aid district activities, such as road maintenance.

He says Kinuuka milk collection facility procures 5,000 litres compared to from 1,200 litres they began with in 2012.

Muhangi says CAIIP project, produce and cattle markets were built in Kansaagama, Lyakajura and Kinuuka sub-counties to promote trade.

He further adds that several roads linking the communities to main towns were upgraded to first class murrum. However, the roads have begun wearing out due to the persistent rainfall and lack of funds for regular maintenance.

"The roads have enabled many dairy farmers and vendors to reach far communities to collect milk especially in the flush season, milk production is always in surplus pushing the prices lower down says.

Michael Nsamba, the programme officer for local government in charge of the CAIIP project, says Kyemamba and Twimukye milk plants cost over sh216m and Kinuuka plant sh100m. The district engineer, Francis Kiwanuka, says the plants are operating and there is visible change in communities where they are.

He says the Government and CAIIP should extend similar projects to other sub-counties to cater for more dairy farmers and boost production.

### Developments

In Kansaagama, the Twimukye Dairy Farmers have built good houses and opened up shops, bars and lodges income. At least a loan scheme for dairy farmers was put to enable them buy motorcycles or drugs at a reasonable interest.

As a way of giving back to the community, Twimukye members contributed over sh50m to facilitate the building of Kansaagama Church, which has a capacity of more than 4,000 people. He says other collection centres have also bought more coolers to boost their production.

Rev. Nathan Nkirirwa Magezi, the priest in charge praises CAIIP over the development projects in the area from which the church has benefited.