

trending now> DAIRY FARMERS TO IMPROVE PRODUCTION

By Michael J Ssali

Over 30 milk collection centres in Uganda have been transformed into vibrant business hubs where small-scale dairy farmers can access inputs and services for improved milk production, quick market access, and better prices.

This was disclosed by Dr Joshua Zimbe, Country Project Manager of the East Africa Dairy Development Project (EADDP) during a meeting with farmer groups' leaders at Kyakabunga Dairy Farmers Cooperative Society in Kiruhura District last Saturday.

He said the services range from veterinary extension, business advice, trainings, better milk prices, and connecting farmers to inputs supply shops and accessing loans among others.

He said the project uses the hub model to support the organization of Dairy Farmer Business Associations (DFFBAs) to develop dairy hubs.

"Although their main business is to collect farmers' milk and market it as a group, there is more than just that when it comes to producer organisations



supported by the East Africa Dairy Development project," he said.

The dairy farmers today boast of unity and favourable bargaining power.

"At first, each farmer set his or her own price," said Ezekiel Mwesigye, Chairman of Lugusuulu Dairy Cooperative Society. "Those with low production

had low prices while those with high production lacked buyers and sold at throw away prices. We now have a single voice as dairy farmers. We collect milk as a group and negotiate with the processors for better prices."

He disclosed that the favourable prices had attracted more farmers to join the cooperative society.

Besides improving market access for the Dairy farmers' milk, the cooperatives also provide members with short-term loans.

"We have an internal lending system to bail out our members in instances of urgent need for money," said Ronald Mwesigwa, Manager of Nabitanga Dairy Cooperative Society in Ssembabule District. The money is paid through deductions from monthly milk earnings.