

By Prossy Nandudu

Dairy farmers have been asked to invest in the production of quality milk by embracing various trainings and the use of simple technologies.

This, according to the director of milk procurement at Fresh Dairy, John Gethi, will in turn fetch a higher price for the farmer. Gethi made the remarks during the dairy farmers' day for southwestern region last week at Kazo in Kiruhura district.

The technologies farmers should look out for include small testing kits for butter fat content, added milk and milk density. For disease management, farmers should work with qualified veterinary doctors.

Gethi said larger equipment such as bulking and storage will be provided by the processor and the money recovered from farmers in installments.

He said with quality milk assured, the processor would ensure that farmers' payments are processed promptly so as to maintain the farmers' trust for continued supply.

"What is important to the farmers is payment. That is why we are making ourselves visible here today to assure farmers that there is ready market for their product, so that they ensure that they supply quality," he said.

Fresh Dairy is currently working with 80 farmers groups.

"One thing for sure is that if the milk is of poor quality, we shall not take it," Gethi said.

He said stakeholders in the milk value chain should take advantage of the farmers' field days to train farmers in various quality measures and practices they should look out for while handling the product to maintain the standard required in the market.

According to the Dairy Development Authority, Uganda exported milk products worth \$85m and the earnings are expected to grow because of the high demand from Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo, South Sudan and the Middle East.

At the field day, farmers were trained in quality management, storage of animal feeds, best practices of controlling diseases and disease-causing organisms, as well as how to look out for quality

# Dairy farmers asked to invest in technologies



The in-calf heifer that was handed over to the winner, Tushemerire (in checked shirt)

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Officiating at the function, the state minister for agriculture in charge of animal husbandry, Joy Kabatsi, hailed the processors for recognising the importance of farmers by organising a farmers' field day.

"From the field day, farmers are

exposed to various techniques, including the preparation and storage of feeds for the future, which is important for continued milk supply. I congratulate the organisers for taking the event to where suppliers of the milk operate from," Kabatsi said.

She cautioned farmers against

compromising the quality of their milk, which she said will affect the price.

The minister also handed over an in-calf heifer to a farmer who won it in a raffle draw. Other farmers were rewarded with various gifts, which included animal salt blocks, dairy meals, milking cans and water pumps.

The farmer who won the cow, Ambrose Twinomujuni, from Ishongororo Dairy Co-operative Society in Ibanda district, called on the processor to consider increasing farm gate prices of milk from sh1,100 to sh1500 due to the increasing cost of maintenance and treatment of animals diseases.



## Milk production in Uganda

Information from the Dairy Development Authority shows that milk production has continued to grow at a rate of 8-10% and stood at 2.2 billion litres by the end of 2016 from 1.5 billion litres in 2010.

About 80% of the total national milk production is marketed and 20% consumed by the farming households. Only 33% of the marketed milk is processed, while 67% is marketed raw.

The total value of marketed milk was estimated at \$752m (2016). There are 11 unions and 219 active dairy farmers' co-operatives in the country.

The installed dairy processing capacity stands at 1.9 million litres per day. A number of products are processed from milk for both local consumption and export.

They include milk powder, ice cream, ghee and yogurt. However, the World Health Organisation says local milk consumption is still too low at 60 litres per person per year instead of the recommended 200 litres.

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