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Farmers to get premium price for good milk - DDA

By Faridah Kulabako

Dairy farmers who have for decades been "cheated" by milk processors have reason to smile. This is after the Dairy Development Authority (DDA) said it is introducing the quality-based milk payment (QBMP) system, which will see dairy farmers who produce high quality milk paid a premium price that is commensurate to the product.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Fresh Dairy better nutrition campaign at City Parents School in Kampala on Thursday, the DDA principal dairy development officer, Musa Kubula, said the authority has selected a few farmer co-operatives in southwestern Uganda to start off the project before rolling out to other milk producing areas. DDA will oversee the system to ensure its effectiveness.

Dairy farmers have for years complained of being

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Dairy farmers have for years complained of being paid low prices per litre of milk by processors despite the increasing costs.

paid low prices per litre of milk by processors despite the increasing costs, yet the processors earn premium prices.

Depending on the season, milk processing firms pay between sh400 and sh800 per litre of raw milk from farmers. After processing, the final consumer pays over sh2,000 per litre.

Kubula said the QBMP system will strengthen the dairy sector by improving the quality of raw milk and improve farmers' incomes. The system is also expected to improve the product shelf life; lower

production costs, improve food safety and enhance the general product quality.

The move is expected to force farmers to put extra effort in producing quality milk that meets the pre-defined quality standards so as to earn more income.

"We want to ensure that we increase incomes of dairy farmers so that they can also enjoy a meaningful standard of living," Kubula said.

To conform to the system, it will require extra investment in quality control systems and extension services to help farmers improve the quality of milk production, in addition to technical support to farmers, among others.

Additionally, Kubula urged Ugandans to drink more milk so as to support the development of the dairy sector.

Per-capita milk consumption in Uganda is estimated at 60 litres per annum, which is way

below the 200 litres per annum recommended by the World Health Organisation.

He also urged processors to take milk consumption campaigns to all schools around the country so as to grow a new breed of dairy products consuming citizens.

"Uganda has low milk and dairy products consuming culture because people do not understand the benefits. We need to inculcate it in the young generation so that they start consuming dairy products at an early age," he said.

Uganda produces about 2.2 billion litres of milk per year.

In response to Kubula's call, Fresh Dairy marketing director Oliver Mary said the processor plans to conduct milk consumption campaigns in about 350 schools across the country, over the next three months to educate pupils and students about the benefits of consuming dairy products and having a balanced diet.