

Small Changes at Dairy Farm Yield Big Results

Equipping dairy farmers with better agribusiness techniques.

Photo: Irene Angwenyi, USAID/Kenya



Fredrick Mwachofi is a smallholder dairy farmer in Mwatate sub-county in Taita Taveta County.

“Sudan grass is a favorite feed for my dairy cows. My two dairy cows produce 12 liters of milk per day. That’s double what I used to get before the trainings!”

– Fredrick Mwachofi

In Kenya, many rural households rely on small-scale farming for livelihoods. For instance, Fredrick Mwachofi, a 47-year-old father of four, is a dairy farmer in Mwatate Sub-county in Taita Taveta County.

“Milk demand is high and the supply low in this area. This presented a good opportunity for me to invest in dairy farming. However, I had little knowledge on dairy best practices and how to operate a farm profitably. The cows fetched two to three liters of milk per day which was not enough to cover the costs of farm inputs and labor,” said Mwachofi.

With support from USAID’s Kenya Agricultural Value Chains Enterprises (KAVES) activity, Mwachofi is one of the 15,000 farmers who have participated in farmers groups’ trainings on dairy best practices. “I learned about land preparation, animal feeds, fertilizer application, animal health and hygiene, and pest and diseases control. Access to such agricultural information improved the quality of my farming and bank balance,” said Mwachofi. KAVES has trained 455 farmer groups’ across 22 counties.

USAID piloted “Sudan grass” in Mwachofi’s farm to give farmers a hands-on experience on animal feeds. After every harvest, Mwachofi shares the grass seeds with other farmers for planting. Sudan grass is high in organic matter, suppresses weeds and has deeply penetrating roots that loosen the soil.

“Sudan grass is a favorite feed for my dairy cows. The two cows produce 12 liters of milk per day. That’s double what I used to get before the trainings! I use a liter daily at home and sell 11 liters at 40 (\$0.43) shillings per liter, which gives me 13,200 (\$142) shillings monthly. I comfortably support my four children’s education, feed my family and save some money,” said Mwachofi.

The KAVES activity works to increase the productivity and incomes of 500,000 smallholder farmers in Kenya along the value chains of dairy, maize and other staple and horticulture sectors. KAVES promotes sustainable natural resource management to help farmers adapt to the effects of climate change.