

# ZiMUNDA

## FARMING

NGO EDITION  
**Issue 34**



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# ZiMUNDA

## FARMING



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## From the Editor

### Celebrating The Impact Of Agricultural Ngos In Zimbabwe

In this special edition of our farming magazine, we shine a spotlight on the commendable work being carried out by NGOs in the agricultural sector of Zimbabwe. These organizations are making significant strides in empowering farmers, improving livelihoods, and fostering sustainable agricultural practices across the nation. We highlight the remarkable achievements of three prominent NGOs: ZAGP, We Effect, and Action Aid.

Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP) has been instrumental in revolutionizing the goat value chain in Zimbabwe. Through their innovative project, they have empowered small-scale farmers to capitalize on the immense potential of goat farming. By providing training, access to quality breeding stock, and improved market linkages, ZAGP has enabled farmers to enhance their income and create a sustainable livelihood for themselves and their families. We are inspired by the stories of farmers who have successfully transformed their lives through ZAGP's intervention.

Another organization with a profound effect in Zimbabwe's agricultural landscape is We Effect. Through a strategic partnership with the Zimbabwe Association of Dairy Farmers, We Effect is playing a crucial role in promoting dairy farming and improving the productivity of smallholder dairy farmers. By offering training, technical support, and access to resources, We Effect has empowered farmers to increase milk production, enhance milk quality, and secure better market opportunities. The partnership has not only strengthened the dairy sector but has also uplifted the lives of countless farmers and their communities.

Lastly, we delve into the transformative project initiated by Action Aid in collaboration with smallholder pig producers. Recognizing the potential of pig farming in Zimbabwe, Action Aid has been working diligently to empower small-scale pig farmers, particularly women. By providing training on pig rearing, disease management, and access to veterinary services, Action Aid has enabled farmers to improve their pig production practices and increase their income. This initiative has not only brought economic benefits but has also contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment in rural areas.

The dedication and impact of these NGOs serve as a shining example of the transformative power of agriculture in Zimbabwe. Through their unwavering commitment, they are creating sustainable farming systems, fostering rural development, and building resilient communities. We salute the farmers who have embraced these opportunities and commend the NGOs for their tireless efforts in driving positive change.

As we navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing world, it is crucial to recognize and support the critical role played by NGOs in shaping the future of agriculture in Zimbabwe. We hope that their stories inspire you, our readers, to explore innovative agricultural practices and consider supporting these organizations in their noble endeavours.

Together, let us celebrate the accomplishments of ZAGP, We Effect, and Action Aid, and join hands in building a thriving and sustainable agricultural sector in Zimbabwe.

Happy reading!

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# How A Young Farmer Transformed His Life By Growing Sesame Organically.

**Article | Justice Ncube,** Communications Officer at Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre



**act:onaid**

**S**esame is one of the oldest oilseed crops in the world, dating back to ancient times. It is highly valued for its oil, which is rich in antioxidants and has a long shelf life. Sesame also has many nutritional and medicinal benefits, such as lowering cholesterol, blood pressure, and inflammation. Sesame is also a versatile crop that can grow in different climatic conditions and soils, making it suitable for smallholder farmers in the semi-arid parts of Zimbabwe, like Mbire.

One such farmer is Allen Murombo, a 30-year-old from Mbire district in Mashonaland Central province. Allen used to grow maize and cotton on his two-hectare plot, but he was struggling to make ends meet. He faced many challenges, such as erratic rainfall, pests and diseases, low yields, high input costs, and low market prices. He was barely able to feed his family and pay for his children's school fees. That changed when he heard about the ActionAid-funded project called Strategic Partnership Agreement 2 (SPA2) that was promoting sesame farming among young rural farmers in Mbire. The project is being implemented by Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre (FPC), a non-governmental organisation that works towards promoting sustainable agriculture practices that are environmentally friendly and economically viable for smallholder farmers. FPC has been at the forefront of development organisations promoting food security through sustainable land use management (permaculture) in Zimbabwe since 1988.

Allen decided to join the project and received training on how to grow sesame organically from FPC. He learned about



the benefits of sesame, the agronomic practices, the pest and disease management, the post-harvest handling, and the marketing opportunities. He also received quality seeds and technical support from FPC.

Allen planted two acres of sesame in the 2022/23 season and harvested 328 kg of sesame seeds. He sold his produce to the local buyers after FPC facilitated market linkages for the sesame farmers. He received \$1.00 to \$1.50 per kg of sesame, which was much higher than the \$0.30 per kg he used to get for cotton. He made a profit of \$400.00 from his sesame crop, which he used to buy a solar panel, a submersible water pump, and hired some men to drill a well for him.

Allen is very happy with his success story and plans to expand his sesame production in the next season. He also wants to diversify his crops and grow other organic products that FPC promotes, such as moringa, baobab, honey, and mushrooms. He says that growing sesame organically has transformed his life and given him hope for a better future.

Allen is one of the many young farmers who have benefited from the sesame farming project implemented by FPC. The project aims to empower young rural farmers in Mbire by providing them with skills, inputs, and markets for growing sesame as a cash crop. The project also contributes to improving food security, nutrition, income, health, and environmental sustainability in the district. FPC hopes to scale up the project and reach more farmers in other districts and provinces where sesame can be grown successfully. FPC believes that sesame is a crop that can change the lives of many smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe and beyond.



**Fambidzanai  
Permaculture  
Centre**



# Transforming The Goat Value Chain Landscape For Small And Medium-Scale Producers

Article | **Kevin Maenzanise** the ZAGP VALUE Project's Communication & Policy Specialist

**G**oat farming has the potential to be a profitable enterprise, however, for decades producers in rural and remote areas of Zimbabwe have been facing several value chain constraints namely limited access to the lucrative end consumer markets, poor underperforming breeds, high mortality, policy gaps, and lack of formalization. These challenges have combined to limit the growth and earning potential of the farmers.

Over the past four years, the European Union funded Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme's Value Chain Alliance for Livestock Upgrading and Empowerment (VALUE) project has implemented interventions aimed at assisting goat producers in twelve districts namely, Beitbridge, Binga, Buhera, Chikomba, Chipinge, Gwanda, Matobo, Mbire, Mudzi, Nkayi, Lupane and Rushinga.

"Armed with baseline information from our 2019 scoping study, we set out to address the blockages to commercialisation through bespoke interventions such as breed improvement, direct meat marketing, improving animal health and nutrition, farmer capacity building, and policy influencing," said Newton Chari, the VALUE Project Team Leader.

## DIRECT MEAT MARKETING

In the traditional value chain model, producers sell goats to intermediaries who in turn sell to the abattoirs, retailers, and wholesalers as well as at designated informal marketing places like the famous PaMbudzi in Harare. The net effect is that the farmers who bear the brunt of production forego most of the value generated to the market intermediaries.

To empower the rural farmers, the project introduced Direct Meat Marketing, which evades the need for middlemen by linking the farmers straight to the retailers and abattoirs thereby ensuring integration along the value chain. Despite the farmers assuming added responsibilities such as transport costs, clearance fees, slaughter fees, and other related administration costs, the route has proven to increase their earnings significantly. Farmers selling goats via the direct meat marketing route have generated more than 190,000 US dollars from the average sale of 4,393 goats (55.4 tonnes of goat meat) in slightly over a year, supplied with 1189 farmers directly through 74 butcheries in Harare and Bulawayo. While this is a positive trend towards formalization, it falls short of the market demand of 19 tonnes of meat per week by 528 butcheries profiled by the VALUE project in Harare and Bulawayo. By selling directly to the markets, the farmers not only increase their profits but now have direct feedback from the consumers. They are using this feedback, to continually improve their goat management practices namely animal health and nutrition.

"We used to sell goats at an average of USD15 to USD20 per live goat targeting middlemen, those requiring household consumption or performing some traditional rites. However, under the DMM I sent 11 goats to Harare butcheries profiled by the project and received USD480 an average of USD43 per goat. We were paid USD3.50 per kg, USD2.20 for offals, and USD1 for goat sets," says Christine Mudzingwa of Buhera.

## BREED IMPROVEMENT

Years of inbreeding and haphazard breeding especially in rural areas resulted in smaller framed goats with low Cold Dressed Masses after slaughter. Moreover, growth and developmental traits such as kid mortality, birth weights, weaning weights, and Feed Conversion Ratios, have been compromised by rampant inbreeding. The statistics in the project's goat value chain scoping study of a mammoth 40 percent kid mortality make for a sad reading. To combat this challenge, the project imported 280 top-quality genetics from Namibia comprising Boer and Kalahari Red bucks and does. The genetics were placed at different centres for propagation including integrator farms namely Zvikomborero farms in Chivhu and Michview in Matopos, in addition, the stock was localised at the goat improvement centres and anchor farmers in the districts. The results have been varied. Since the launch of the breed improvement programme, 3106 cross-bred kids have been kidded across the districts. The crosses have several advantages over the local breeds such as much higher birth weights and higher selling prices on the market. The image below shows a boer cross and an indigenous kid dropped on the same day for Mr. Basil Chikondowa, confirming how improved breeds will potentially have better returns at the market.



## IMPROVING ANIMAL HEALTH

One of the primary services on offer at the Goat Improvement Centres is animal health improvement which takes the form of plunge dipping and vaccinations against common goat diseases such as Pulpy Kidney. Many of the small and medium producers had no prior experience in dozing, vaccinations, and dipping in relation to goats and are testifying to the importance of these practices in commercial goat production. A total of 40,485 goats have been dipped at the GICs since 2021 and 24,623 have been vaccinated showing growing adoption of dipping and vaccinations as a behaviour and practice in goat production.



## POLICY INFLUENCING FOR GREATER RECOGNITION OF GOATS

When compared to other livestock like cattle and piggery, the goat value chain receives less attention in terms of policy, thus the apparent absence of strong institutions and regulations governing the value chain. To close this gap, the project trained the twelve goat associations on advocacy and policy influencing, organised consultative meetings to ascertain the local-level policy constraints faced by farmers, and facilitated the participation of the farmers in policy dialogues at district, provincial and national level. These included the Goat Indaba organised by the Goat Breeders Association of Zimbabwe, Livestock Business Forums, and several engagements with the government under the auspices of the Livestock and Meat Advisory Council. There is still a long way to go for the goat value chain to receive the same recognition as the bigger and more established livestock, but for the first time, the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Fisheries and Rural Development has recognised the need to separate goats and sheep from small ruminants in the development process of the Agriculture, Food Systems and Transformation Strategy review, this confirming how policy attention is increasing in the Goat Value Chain. In addition, in the face of climate change-induced droughts, they provide the most viable option to improve household incomes in rural communities.

## ABOUT THE ZAGP VALUE PROJECT

The Value Chain Alliance for Livestock Upgrading Empowerment (VALUE) is a European Union-funded project under the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP). The project is running from February 2019 and November 2023. It is being implemented by ActionAid Zimbabwe (Lead organisation) in partnership with COSV and Mercy Corps together with private sector livestock players namely Braford farming in the pork value chain, and Michview and Zvikomborero farms in the goat value chain.



# Embracing Collective Action To Stimulate The Competitiveness Of Smallholder Pig Producers In Zimbabwe.

**Article | Pepukai Muchazondida Svinurai**, The Value Chain and Business Development Specialist for the ZAGP VALUE project

Modern pork production is an important source of animal protein accounting for nearly 43% of all red meat consumed worldwide. China, European Union, the United States, Brazil, and Russia lead the way, supplying 86% of total production globally. For Africa, Nigeria and South Africa are the leading pork producers, with an output of about 276000MT and 246000MT in 2017 and 2018 respectively. (ZAGP VALUE project scoping study) Following this global trend, the Livestock Meat Advisory Council-LMAC (2022), recorded cumulative pig slaughters for the year 2022 at 224,881 porkers, 15% higher than the corresponding period in 2021 and 21% higher than in 2020. The aggregate slaughters were the highest for any full-year period since 2013. If maintained, the 2022 slaughtered capacity could surpass Zimbabwe's national pork demand, which should trigger more appetite for export marketing.

Considering the fact that most smallholder pig producers own an average of 9 sow unit, they are not maximising economies of scale due to limited collective action, thus threatening enterprise viability. The ZAGP scoping study recorded key challenges related to limited collective action by pig producers. These are financing challenges (high cost of money, absence of medium to long-term financing), production and productivity-related (low productivity, limited cross-learning on best production practices, high variability of production practices from farmer to farmer, limited access to cheaper inputs, high production costs, high transaction

costs, inadequate support services), and marketing related challenges (low prices, low-quality maintenance and uniformity, poor market access, limited bargaining power, limited direct meat and meat product marketing, poor competitive advantage, no economies of scale, lack of sector organization), limited lobbying power (increased imports of cheaper pork and pork products that affects the demand of locally produced pork, weaker organizations to engage policymakers on emerging policies and practices issues).

The linkage between smallholder producers and market actors is also weak, coupled with a lack of trust, thereby worsening risks in production and marketing for profit-making. The huge negative impact of these challenges is thin profit margins (if not negative) of USD0.40-0.55 cents per kilogram of pork meat sold. According to LMAC Pork Market Watch (2022), local production costs for most smallholder producers are ranging from USD2.35 to USD2.53 per kg of pork meat, while the average wholesale price is \$2.55 to USD3.15 per kg of meat. However, there are huge opportunities for smallholder farmers to reduce the cost of producing a kg of meat to less than USD1.95 and maximise profit margin. The low margins are a result of low productivity and high production costs resulting from high transaction costs, high cost of stock feed, and low-capacity utilization, which has a direct bearing cost per kilogram of pork produced. And this is worse for farmers that are working individually.

According to LMAC (2022), Zimbabwe signed and ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement in 2021, which seeks to improve borderless trading among member countries. However, this may expose our local pig producers, who are largely operating individually and uncompetitive.

Based on the efforts done by the ZAGP VALUE project (2019-2023) in supporting the establishment of Pork Producers' Business Syndicates, the benefits of collective action are numerous for smallholder farmers. First, syndicates reduce risks by guaranteeing feed purchases and sales on behalf of members and provide insurance, and feed loans to members. Second, lowering transaction costs for both members and for non-members by joint trading in high volumes e.g., association leadership negotiating discounts from and buying at lower prices from USD25 to USD21.50 per 50kg bag of straight feed for members, cost sharing in bulk transportation thus enjoying economies of scale. Farmers are also buying feed material such as sorghum, maize, soy cake, in bulk for on-farm feed formulation and thus reducing feed cost by more than 30% when comparing to direct purchase of straight feeds. Third, providing a base of market power through collective negotiations with suppliers or buyers to promote fair trade. This is necessary due high information asymmetry at small holder farmer level, which result in exposure to price manipulation and monopoly by big market actors. Fourth, production and quality standardisation to attract better markets through training members to adhere to set production and quality standards which guarantee supply of quality assured pork and pork products to identified market at premium prices. Fifth, information sharing, innovation, and action learning to allow adoption of best practices by seeing, demonstration and regular performance reviews with high performers work as learning and

innovation centres. Lastly, evidence-based research and lobbying for favourable policy environment. Because Zimbabwe's business environment is highly volatile for small holder farmers, it is paramount for farmers to join hands and increase their voices on unfair policies and practices affecting competitiveness in the business space.

From this experience, notwithstanding challenges such as lack of trust, constitutionalism and defaults synonymous with cooperative movement, collective action has become an important strategy for smallholders in developing countries to remain competitive individually and collectively in rapidly changing markets. Therefore, it needs full support from government line ministries and development partners to guarantee sustainability at local and national level. Without this critical support base and accompaniment, most collective action efforts may die a 'natural death'. Thus, the four pillars of cooperatives namely teaming, accountable empowerment, strategic leadership and democracy should always apply to sustain the vision and aspirations. Producing individually is no longer an option, let's get started, the time is NOW!!!!!!

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# Zimbabwe Milk Production On The Increase

Article | Dr Edson Chifamba, We Effect

Zimbabwe is progressively moving towards self-sufficiency in raw milk production. The Southern African nation of about 16 million people has increased raw milk production from 79.6 million litres in 2021 to 91.6 million litres in 2022, a jump of 14.3 per cent. Milk production continue to increase in 2023.

Imports of milk powder have declined – from 8.9 million kg to 7.4 million kg over the same period. If the current growth rate is maintained, Zimbabwe is confident of surpassing the national milk target requirement of 150 million litres by 2025. The country requires 130 million litres of milk annually. Until the recent increase, smallholder dairy farmers produced about three per cent of the country's milk production. Markets are strong but production systems are generally inefficient with growth coming from increases in the number of cows rather than in milk production per animal.

project works with over 4,800 dairy farmers countrywide. These include small -scale, medium and large- scale dairy farmers. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the development of a diversified and efficient dairy sector that promotes inclusive economic growth.

We Effect (a Swedish organisation, is the lead agency) is partnering the Zimbabwe Association of Dairy Farmers (ZADF), Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU) and the Zimbabwe Dairy Industry Trust (ZDIT) in project implementation.

## DISTRIBUTING DAIRY CATTLE: IMPROVING ANIMAL GENETICS

In rural communities, access to credit for investments in agriculture is an especially difficult and sometimes onerous challenge.

There are few affordable credit options for rural farmers with limited or no assets as financial institutions see them as high-risk borrowers. To increase dairy production and productivity, the project imported 500 in-calf heifers from South Africa between 2020 and 2021. The dairy cows were distributed to different areas through a heifer matching grant facility led by three private companies- Dendairy, Nestle Zimbabwe (a conglomerate) and ProDairy. Participating farmers are already benefiting from improved

family nutrition and increased agricultural incomes from milk sales. The Jersey and Friesian breed distributed by the TranZDVC currently produce more than 25 litres per cow per day.

Capacity building support on dairy cows genetic improvement was also provided to government and other partners. TranZDVC procured 4000 straws of sexed semen and 4000 straws of conventional dairy semen. Farmers can access this semen through Dairy Services and ZADF at 22usd per straw and usd5 per straw for sexed and conventional dairy semen respectively.

Under TranZDVC, key milestones have been achieved in areas such as the importation and distribution of improved dairy breeds, financing investments in dairy productive assets and infrastructure through the matching grants facility, exhaustive dairy training and capacity building programmes.

TranZDVC is promoting investments in dairy productive assets and infrastructure to ensure access to finance for dairy producers through a Matching Grants Facility. The purpose is to support investments to increase milk production and milk sales, participation by small-scale farmers in the dairy value chain, greening of manufacturing and production processes, decent job creation and local production of affordable feed.

The facility is limited to capital investments in productive assets such as machinery, equipment and buildings and does not include finance for working capital and services. At least US\$2,000,000 worth of grants have been disbursed to date, targeting large-scale farmers, processors and milk collection centres.

As part of this facility, dairy farmers across the country accessed improved dairy breeds through the heifer matching facility where TranZDVC imported and distributed 500 in calf heifers to 282 small-holder dairy farmers across Zimbabwe. Artificial insemination services are also being implemented as breed improvement strategy.

## IMPROVED FORAGES FOR ANIMAL NUTRITION

Many smallholder livestock farmers struggle with the high cost of feed, which can account for up to 70-80 per cent of raw milk production costs when feed is obtained from manufacturers or retail shops in Zimbabwe. TranZDVC introduced nutrient-dense drought-tolerant forage crops and is promoting the production of maize:legume mixed crop silages to reduce feed costs. Participating farmers were selected for livestock feed trials using diets based on velvet bean ((Mucuna pruriens),hyacinth bean (Lablab purpureus) and cowpea( Vigna unguiculata) to improve livestock feeding and nutrition. The farmers were also trained on how to produce hay and make home-based feeds. Over 1500 farmers have benefitted.

A total of 1,338 beneficiaries participated in the Presidential Silage Programme, facilitated by the Agricultural Finance



Corporation and CBZ Bank of Zimbabwe. Silage is a highly nutritious and affordable feed option which the government is promoting under the "own farm-feed formulation scheme, started in 2021.

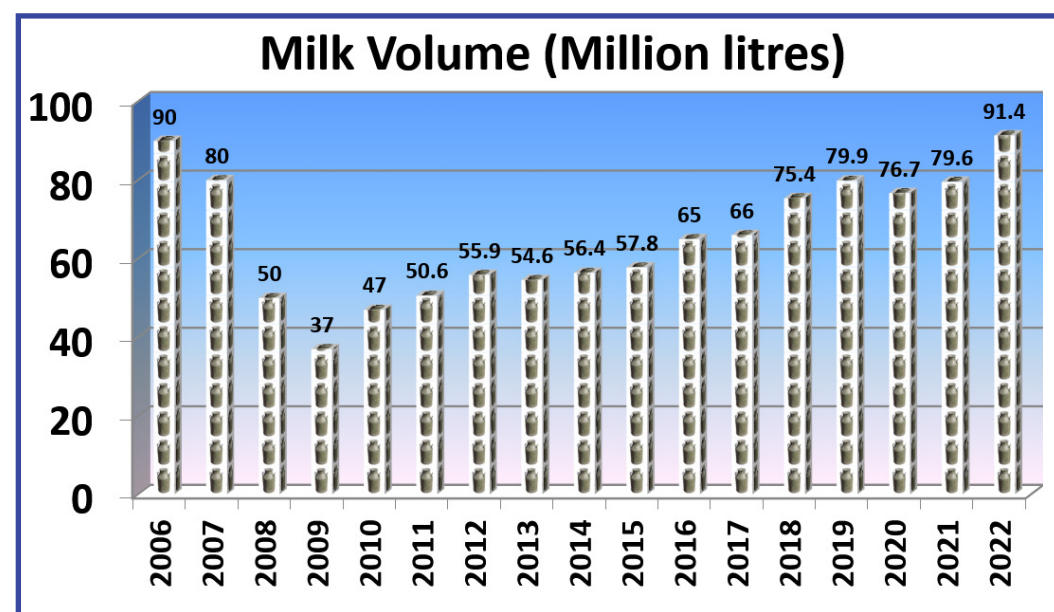
The presidential silage input package had 25 kg of maize seed for farmers in high rainfall areas and 10 kg of red sorghum for those in dry areas for silage production that covered one hectare. Each beneficiary received five bags of 50 kg for basal fertilizer, five bags of ammonium nitrate fertilizer, 5 kg legume seed (either velvet beans, lab-lab or sunhemp), tick grease and five litres of herbicides.

TranZDVC project coordinator, Dr Edson Chifamba acknowledged the close collaboration between the government, We Effect and its partners ZADF, ZFU and ZDIT and private sector players in the economic growth of the dairy value chain in Zimbabwe. "We are optimistic to be producing over 150 million litres per from 2025" said Dr Chifamba.

Dairy sector stakeholders have also developed a Dairy Sector Strategic Plan (2021-2025) for improved performance of the dairy value chain in Zimbabwe.

This multi-stakeholder dairy sector strategy was developed with the aim to fully realise the opportunities that exists and address the root causes to the underperformance of the dairy value chain. It is expected to contribute to the realisation of relevant policies and strategies of the government, including its Vision 2030 to achieve an "Empowered and prosperous upper middle-income society by 2030". The project also worked with the Government to develop and electronic dairy database for efficiently recording and sharing accurate dairy data.

In 2023, TranZDVC is graduating six milk collection centres into functional dairy HUBs. It is also developing 6 dairy breeding centres and will carry out asset handover to final beneficiaries in September 2023.



There are several challenges affecting the growth, viability and the competitiveness of the dairy sector, including low productivity, limited number of dairy animals and weak genetics in the dairy herd, high production and processing cost, limited access to affordable finance and foreign currency, high compliance cost and effects of climate change.

One of the initiatives to grow the sector is the European-Union - funded Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme. Under its portfolio, it supports the Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future (TranZDVC) project. The project has mobilised and registered more than 4000 new dairy farmers between 2019 and 2022.

This initiative aims to address the root causes of underperformance in the dairy value chain by strengthening financing, production, processing and market linkages. The

