

Implementation of dairy herd management services in Ukraine

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Abstract

Ukraine's agriculture is the country's third largest economic sector. In spite of excellent growing conditions, Ukrainian agriculture suffers from low yields and productivity. Milk production is concentrated mainly in small and medium size farms and households (81 percent of total production in 2013) many of them characterized by low cow productivity, backyard milk production and seasonality which compromises milk supply, quality and the price at the farm gate. Milk collection, cooling and transportation are additional challenges to a regular supply for milk processors. As such, Ukraine is looking for ways to develop its dairy sector and improve its competitiveness on the European and Asian markets. Canada assists Ukraine's efforts to increase its food security through supporting dairy production in small farms. The "Improvement of the Competitiveness of the Dairy Sector in Ukraine" is a project financed by the Government of Canada and executed by the Société de Coopération pour le Développement International (SOCODEVI), having as partners two provincial extension services in Ukraine, the L'viv Agricultural Extension Services (LAES), and the Dnipropetrovsk Agricultural Advisory Services (DAAS). Valacta, the Canadian Center of Expertise in Dairy Production is the executing partner for the component of this project aiming to establish a milk recording (MR) service, or dairy management services (DMS) in both provinces and develop field and technical advisory services for dairy farmers. The overall project aims to develop the capacity of 5000 small and medium sized dairy farmers grouped in 24 dairy cooperatives in the regions of Dnipropetrovsk and L'viv to produce and market high quality milk through a value chain approach which covers stakeholders from raw material suppliers to final consumers at the market. The improvement of the economic well-being of rural communities in the two oblasts of L'viv and Dnipropetrovsk is the ultimate goal of the project. The development plan for the MR constituent of the project is composed of three main components:(1) Installation of a modern dairy laboratory in Dnipropetrovsk and in L'viv for milk recording activities, monitoring milk quality and for the analysis of feeds and forages. A monthly flow of up to 10,000 milk samples is expected to be processed by each laboratory by the end of 2021. So far, both laboratories have been built and are fully operational currently performing approximately 6000 analyses per month. Key laboratory personnel has been trained both in Canada and on site by Valacta experts. (2) Data management systems: Valacta is providing data collection software, online data processing and editing and web access to processed reports. As of June 2016, data of 47 family herds are fully processed at Valacta data processing center. (3) Training and skills

development: MR technicians and support staff of DAAS and LAES (19 people) are being trained on milk recording procedures, sample and data collection, interpretation of MR reports, and advisory services on feeding, health and farm management.

key words: dairy, ukraine, milk recording, field services