

110 Farmers Attend PDDC Field Day in Jhelum

Pakistan Dairy Development Company held a field day on 9 April, 2008 on one of its Model Farms, located in Jhelum District. 110 dairy farmers attended the event, at which Dr. Muhammad Afzal, Chief Executive of Livestock & Dairy Development Board, and Mr. Geoff Walker, CEO of PDDC were also present. In addition, staff of the Special Initiatives Cell of the Ministry of Industries attended.

The farmer has been in PDDC's Model Farm Programme for 5 months. Upon joining, the farm was supplied with fencing, cooling systems, a water bore, and water troughs. But, most importantly, the farmer gained access to the farm advisory service being operated by PDDC to support its Model Farmers. The CEO of PDDC noted that it was the technology transfer associated with the Model Farm Programme which was most important – the assets provided under the programme are there only to allow new and more productive farm management practices to be implemented.

Staff of PDDC, in the course of the field day, showed how milk production on the Model Farm increased by 30% as a result of the new farm and animal management practices. PDDC also gave practical demonstrations of some its technology. These demonstrations showed small scale silage production, ear tagging and mastitis detection and treatment.

The field day was also supported by Askari Bank, one of the key partner banks working with PDDC on its programmes, and by a supplier of cattle feed.

PDDC holds field days on its Model Farms in order to introduce more farmers to its programme, and also to share ideas among its farmers in the surrounding district. This is a traditional method of advancing productivity among farmers in developed dairy farm economies, including Australia and New Zealand.

The Model Farmer was most enthusiastic about the advances he has achieved since joining the PDDC programme. He described the support he receives from PDDC as excellent. His cows are healthier than ever, and his veterinary costs have reduced. Milk production has increased, and his cost of milk production reduced. Most importantly, his profit has increased usefully. The farmer said that he was sure to invest more in his dairy farm in future, as he knew that by following the recommendations of PDDC, he would achieve a good return on his investment.

Mr. Geoff Walker, in speaking to the farmers at the field day, expressed the hope that many more of them would join the programme, and that he was confident they would get similar benefits. Mr. Walker noted that PDDC has 6 farmers enrolled in its programme in the Jhelum district, but that the company hoped to increase that number 10-fold.

The dairy sector is one with great promise, and the modern farm management practices being brought to Pakistan through PDDC are destined to be important for the future development of the sector.