

Powering up the voice of an industry!

SRI LANKA'S DAIRY ASSOCIATION HIGHLIGHTS ACHIEVEMENTS AT ITS INAUGURAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Two and half years ago, when the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded Market-Oriented Dairy (MOD) Project carried out a needs assessment study of the dairy sector in Sri Lanka, the sector did not have an organized representative body. A year later, a group of leading industrialists came together to form the All Island Dairy Association (AIDA) under the aegis of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. AIDA was formed to function as a united industry body capable of tackling the industry's most challenging problems and to work with dairy industry stakeholders to drive positive change in the industry and to deliver meaningful outcomes for the nation.

With the formal incorporation of AIDA and the launch of the MOD project taking place in May 2018, MOD Chief of Party, Mr. Matthew Krause, presented the ways that the Project can help strengthen the nascent association. AIDA's Executive Committee welcomed MOD's offer to play a significant role in laying the structural foundations of the association and to develop a self-sustaining business model that would allow it to achieve its goal of becoming a full-fledged association delivering value to its membership, the dairy industry, and the nation.



Mr. Nishantha Jayasooriya, elected President of AIDA for a second term, addressing the gathering at the inaugural Annual General Meeting

The Executive Committee appointed for a new term joins him at the head table

MOD's collaboration with AIDA was largely facilitated through the Global Dairy Platform, one of IESC's sub-partners on MOD. In consultation with AIDA, GDP developed a three-year strategic action plan to build AIDA's representation of the entire dairy industry supply chain with the goal of demonstrating a unified industry voice to the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and clearly defining industry priorities that reflect what is best for the national agenda to develop the dairy sector. To drive the strategic plan forward, AIDA hired a general manager and established steering committees led by industry leaders to implement the plan's initiatives.

Since the adoption of the strategic plan, AIDA's Executive Committee has made significant progress towards achieving its goals. With the support of the MOD Project, AIDA has successfully delivered two knowledge forums for its members, which featured leading academics from the University of Florida's Department of Animal Science. AIDA has also drafted a white paper advocating for the recognition of fodder as a crop which will be submitted to the GoSL, conducted a membership drive at the MOD Enterprise Day which was attended by nearly 1,000 farmers and enterprises in the dairy value chain, co-hosted a two-day workshop on 'Sustainable Dairy Development – A Value Chain Approach' with MOD and the Smallholder Agribusiness Partnerships Program, and launched its official website.



AIDA website launched by the Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, Livestock Development and Rural Economic Affairs

AIDA has gained recognition as the industry's representative body, which enabled it to offer dairy sector related recommendations to the country's leading presidential candidates, many of which were adopted in their political manifestos in the recent elections.

At the inaugural Annual General Meeting, Mr. Jayasooriya acknowledged the hard work and gains made by the Association during its first year. He also expressed his gratitude for the support extended by MOD to develop the capacity of the Association to provide effective representation, provide services to its members including fee-for-service activities which would develop AIDA into a self-sustaining entity, improve industry practices, and ultimately increase milk production to meet national demand for dairy products.

Looking to the future, AIDA plans to expand their current membership of 22 corporate members representing producers, processors, importers, and input retailers by extending memberships to farmer societies and cooperatives in order to holistically represent the entire dairy value chain. As AIDA grows, it will continue to collaborate with MOD to achieve their shared goals of improving milk production in terms of both quality and productivity, driving consumer demand, and working with the government to create a favorable business operating environment for the dairy sector.

Market-Oriented Dairy (MOD) Project, based in Sri Lanka, is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) 'Food for Progress' initiative and implemented by IESC. The project aims to double the milk production of participating dairy farmers and enable them to obtain a higher price premium for fresh milk through interventions primarily designed to enhance their technical knowledge and create an entrepreneurial, business-oriented mindset. The project also supports enterprises along the dairy value chain to meet the demands of the country's dairy sector to catalyze a sustainable growth. The project's sub-partners are Sarvodaya, University of Florida, Global Dairy Platform and SEAF.