

Double the Milk. Double the Income.

SRI LANKAN DAIRY FARMER SHARES BEST PRACTICES WITH OVER 800 FELLOW FARMERS

Mr. Udeni Arunashantha, hailing from Sri Lanka's ancient capital Anuradhapura, was in the military for 16 years until his retirement in 2012. Still a young man with a young family, he was unable to find an alternate income and was doing odd jobs as an unskilled laborer. Three years later, determined to improve their circumstances, he and his wife Ms. Kalyani decided to set up a dairy farm after leasing seven animals from his brother-in-law. The agreement was to give 50 percent of their dairy income to the brother-in-law. With this seven-animal herd, he was producing about 15 – 20 liters per day. He sold the milk to Nestlé Lanka and continues to do so to-date. During this time, through Nestlé Lanka, he attended a USG funded training program and learned to make silage. Encouraged by the increases in milk yield when feeding silage, Mr. Arunashantha and his wife focused their efforts to become full-time dairy farmers.

During the next three years, they had grown their herd to 74 animals and were yielding about 50 - 60 liters of milk per day. Having enough land, they were allowing the animals to graze freely throughout the day and paddocking them only at night. In 2018, Mr. Arunashantha was invited to attend the Market-Oriented Dairy (MOD) Dairy Entrepreneur Development Program. There he gained new knowledge such as Total Mixed Ration feeding, making silage using local materials such as road-side grass, and new feeding methods such as separation of concentrates from water.



BEFORE MOD TRAINING
Free grazing during the day



AFTER MOD TRAINING
Remodeled loose barn stalling milking cows

Implementation of these practices increased the yield by an additional 45 liters per day totaling 95 - 105 liters per day from six milking cows. In addition, implementation of MOD best practices also helped him improve the quality of the milk, with the milk fat increasing from 3.9 to 5.7 percent and solid-non-fat components increasing from 8.1 to 8.8 percent. Improving the milk quality allowed them to further improve their income through the milk quality-based payment system, contributing towards doubling their overall income.

With advice from MOD's Productivity Director Dr. Sivayoganathan, technical support by MOD's Technical Specialist Dr. Akilan, and close supervision by MOD's Regional Field Officer Mr. Suresh Srimal, the husband and wife duo remodeled the cattle shed into a loose barn where the milking animals are stalled full-time. They also cultivated one acre of sugar graze sorghum, maize and CO3 to ensure adequate feed and night feeding for the milking animals. Their next steps include improving the productivity of the farm by reducing the herd from 75 to 25 animals and achieve a yield of 200 to 250 liters of milk per day.



HOSTING THE MOD DAIRY ENTERPRISE DAY

Their farm served as an excellent demonstration farm to share best practices, new knowledge and techniques to over 800 dairy farmers, fodder cultivators, silage makers, input retailers and service providers.

Due to their dedication and success in implementing the lessons learned through MOD's training program, their farm was selected to host the MOD Dairy Enterprise Day so that these best practices and new techniques could be demonstrated to other farmers and industry

stakeholders. Following the MOD Enterprise Day at their farm, a tired but elated Mr. Arunashantha said, "I am ever so grateful for the level of support extended by the entire MOD team in the region led by the Regional Project Coordinator Mr. Thiyagarajah Benziger to develop our farm and very happy to have had the opportunity to share these learnings and experience with the wider farming community in the region."

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.