

# Feed the Future Rwanda

## Enhancing milk quality and consumption for improved income and nutrition

### Overview

Recent research by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) has highlighted a positive relationship between increases in the consumption of animal-source foods and improvements in household incomes, dietary diversity and child development. The hypothesis of this latest ILRI-led three year project, Enhancing milk quality and consumption for improved income and nutrition in Rwanda, is integrating higher quality animal-source foods—scarcely found in the diets of poor households—will promote the achievement of desired nutritional outcomes.

This United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Feed the Future Innovations Lab for Livestock Systems (LSIL) project seeks to contribute to efforts by the government of Rwanda in enhancing milk quality and consumption for improved incomes and nutrition in the country. Building on the lessons learned by government initiative, 'One Cow per Poor Family' (Girinka), and the Feed the Future Rwanda Dairy Competitiveness Program (RDCP II), the project focuses on increasing the consumption of milk from livestock, considered a promising way of promoting income generation activities and nutritional outcomes.

Milk is a wholesome food which is produced and consumed on a daily basis by many poor Rwandans. As such, increasing the quantity and quality of milk produced in the country offers significant short-term opportunities of increasing the incomes and nutrition outcomes for poor households. However, while the evidence of the benefits of increased consumption of animal-source products is strong, despite significant investment in dairy value chain program, evidence of a relationship between with dairy interventions and nutritional outcomes is weak. Therefore, more work needs to be undertaken to overcome the challenges hindering the production of high quality milk and the competitiveness of the dairy sector.



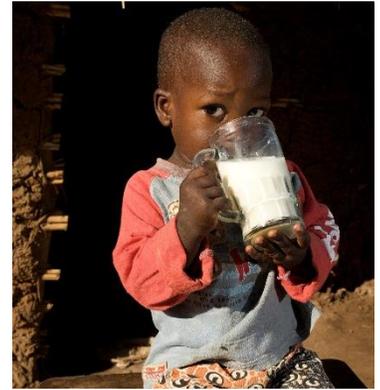
### Project objectives

- The evaluation of the impact of a nutrition-education intervention on the consumption of animal-source foods and associated nutritional outcomes for children aged 12–23 months and pregnant and lactating women.
- The assessment and enhancement of the performance and capacity of dairy cooperatives in improving market access for smallholder milk producers.
- The evaluation of the costs and benefits to value chain actors in supplying high quality milk that meets 'seal of quality' standards.

## Approach

The milk quality and nutrition project will be undertaken at the RDCP II sites, including the northern, southern, eastern and Kigali milk sheds. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach—drawing on the fields of economics, sociology, human nutrition, food science and public health—it will conduct randomized controlled trials to assess nutrition outcomes of children and mothers from a nutrition education intervention that promotes optimal nutrition practices, and inclusion of animal source foods (ASF), especially milk in diets.

The project will strengthen the capacities of dairy cooperatives to improve their market performance and supply of quality milk. It will utilise the Producer Organisation Sustainability Assessment (POSA) tool co-developed by ILRI and TechnoServe complemented by AgroPro, a cooperative performance assessment tool developed by Land O’ Lakes, Inc., to benchmark the dairy cooperatives capacities with respect to governance, gender, leadership and business management, and develop a gender-sensitive capacity development response plan for identified gaps.



An analysis of the costs and benefits of supplying high quality milk in line with ‘seal of quality’ standards will be undertaken and identify how they are distributed along the value chain. Recommendations on increasing and sustaining profitability emerging from this analysis will then be communicated to milk producers, processors and other value chain actors during implementation of the capacity development response plan.

## Expected outcomes

The project expects to achieve the following key outcomes:

- Improved nutritional status for children and pregnant and lactating women
- Increased dairy income and supply of quality milk by participating cooperatives
- Improvement in the “seal of quality” initiative to upgrade the value chain and maximise benefits to value chain actors.

## Partners

ILRI  
RTI International University of Rwanda  
TechnoServe

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