

## Improving access to dairy markets in Kenya: applying knowledge to policy reform

Intervention:	Research and Development Support to the Smallholder Dairy Project
Country:	Kenya
Date:	March 1996 to June 2005
Challenge:	To improve policies and institutions for smallholders supplying the Nairobi milk market.
Objectives:	Improve access by poor dairy farmers to goods, agriculture knowledge services and output markets.
Approach of the Intervention:	The project was housed in two reputable research institutions and sought to bring influence to bear on key actors, introducing evidence into a policy process which does not systematically seek such evidence. This was achieved without linkage to a formal vehicle such as a SWAp or PRSP. A series of phased interventions were launched. First, a number of policy and institutional reform documents were prepared drawing on the project's research findings. Second, there was a push for pro-poor agricultural policies and institutions to be introduced. Third, efforts were made to disseminate agricultural technologies for the poor.
Benefits and Impacts:	About 80% of Kenya's marketed milk comes from smallholder dairy herds. Also, many thousands of Kenya's poorest people are either employed by smallholder dairy producers, or make a living by selling milk through the informal channels that dominate the supply chain. Drafts of the Kenya Dairy Development Policy and the Dairy Industry Bill incorporated some project proposals (e.g. on licensing informal milk traders), but not others. This legislation was still under discussion when project implementation ended, contrary to the (ambitious) timetable set out when the project was approved. Some of the technological innovations (e.g. Smut-resistant Napier) have been adopted in certain areas and have been found to be highly effective. Although key figures in government acknowledged the project's influence on the policy debate the monitoring apparatus was not sufficiently sophisticated to capture the amount of influence achieved, or the scale of adoption of innovation. Also, contrary to the stated objective, the project did not explicitly target poor dairy farmers.
Lessons learned:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Solid research findings provide a sound foundation for an influencing strategy, helping to counter objections from opponents to the policies proposed.</li> <li>□ The involvement of high-profile figures from the government was vital for advancing the reform agenda.</li> </ul>
Wider application:	The project's influence continued after implementation was completed because key figures targeted by the project remained in positions of influence; and the research institutes were able to tap funding from alternative sources.
Implementing agency & partners	ILRI and KARI research institutes; Government of Kenya
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