

## Dairy farmers in Ethiopia successfully adopt herbal recipes and other natural measures

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'I was in Ethiopia for work and made use this opportunity to ask our Natural Livestock Farming (NLF) partner organization in Ethiopia ESAP (Ethiopian Society of Animal Production) to visit some of the farmers who have been trained in the use of herbal medicines and other natural methods. We visited two farms, one urban and the other, a peri-urban farm, both with around 8 to 10 cows. On the first farm, the farmer showed us the ingredients she uses in a recipe to treat diarrhea in calves, all from her garden or from the market. When she had an adult cow suffering from diarrhea, she decided to adapt the dose and successfully treated her. She is proud and happy to share her knowledge with other farmers.

I will shortly tell you how different measures helped yet another farmer family to become an example for others in their rural community'.

This farmer from rural Debre Zeit, near Addis Ababa, manages her farm together with her teenage son. She tells how different measures she learnt through training provided by NLF partners from Ethiopia, India and the Netherlands have helped them to improve the health of their cows:

- The cow on the left was suffering from 'abomossal displacement', and when the farmer was shown how to turn the displaced stomach by manipulation, the cow survived.
- She has two new calves, and after she was told about the importance of colostrum (the first milk produced by the cow after delivering a calf) and how to feed it to the young born calves; from now on she will no longer miss this valuable natural antibiotic. Before most of her calves died.
- The black cow resting in the back is under treatment for mastitis. The farmer learnt from the Indian NLF partners to prevent and treat mastitis, without waiting for the veterinarian to come with antibiotics.
- And finally, the white cow on the right gave birth yesterday. The farmer now uses a thermometer to monitor their temperature as an indicator for their health status.



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The farmer takes the temperature to monitor the cow's health. Temperature also indicates when a bull should be brought to a cow to make her pregnant, which makes that the right moment for this is no longer missed.

### CONCLUSION: LOW COST, HIGH IMPACT

All these measures are life saving interventions which altogether are easy to apply, low cost and high impact. Within this farmer community, mortality especially in calves was very high and mastitis had a negative impact on milk productivity and quality, while the region is producing almost all dairy products for the capital town of Addis Ababa. Many farmers decided to sell their cows because of the high mortality and high costs. Now they regret this decision and one neighbor of the farmer on the photo already decided to go back to dairy farming. One commercial farmer from the Northern region of Ethiopia heard about a training given by ESAP together with NLF partner veterinarians and farmers from India and the Netherlands. She decided to participate in the training on her own expense and one month later she called Dr Daniel from ESAP to tell him that she applied the recipes and that the results are amazing.

In Ethiopia, the potential impact of natural livestock farming is enormous, in a country of over 103,000,000 inhabitants of whom a large percentage, are dairy farmers.

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