

# Zambia's milk production rises

**By Gift Chanda**

ZAMBIA'S raw milk production rose slightly in the first 10 months of the year compared to the same period last year, owing to increased number of dairy farmers and collection centres.

Figures released by the Dairy Association of Zambia show that 55 million litres of raw milk were produced between January and October this year, up from about 40 million litres realised in the first 10 months of 2012.

Jeremiah Kasalo, Dairy Association of Zambia executive director, said in an interview on Sunday that milk consumption on the other hand had remained low despite a rise in output.

The country's 2013 raw milk output is expected to reach slightly over 55 million litres from last year's 48 million.

"We estimate that our production is now standing at somewhere around 55 million litres. This has been necessitated by increasing number of farmers who are selling to the formal market resulting from increased milk collection centres," Kasalo explained.

"But our milk consumption as a country per

capita is still low. Milk consumption per person per year on average is around 19 litres. We need to grow this consumption to the 200 litres per year that is recommended by the World Health Organisation."

Despite low consumption, raw milk production among small-scale farmers has continued to increase since the adoption of the school-milk feeding programme by the government a few years ago.

Leading milk and dairy products producers such as Parmalat and Varun beverage have also embarked on a milk supply development programme, by expanding through setting-up new collection centres especially in Southern Province.

According to Kasalo, Parmalat has setup about five collection centres along the Choma-Namwala road while Varun has also set up four collection centres in Monze.

Milk production plummeted over a decade due to high production costs sparked by cattle disease outbreaks in the country then.

The government has, however, made it mandatory for all farmers to dip their cattle in a bid to cut down on disease outbreaks.