



## Domestic Dairy Industry Initiative Timor-Leste



### INFORMATION SHEET

#### Buffalo Milk Industry Development

A new initiative to boost rural income prospects has just been agreed between USAID and the Xanana Vocational Education Trust. This is a three year initiative. Approximately US \$800,000 will be mobilised in support of developing a buffalo milk industry in Timor-Leste. It will initially be centred on the existing agricultural colleges at Maliana and Fuloro

The initiative will be known as **Susubeen Timor-Leste** (*East Timor Milk*). Most probably people will use just **Susubeen** for short!

Older Timorese will remember the days when their families boiled the buffalo milk and drank it regularly. The practice needs to be upgraded and developed to provide better quality milk to



Some of the 100,000 buffaloes which can be used by families to generate additional income.

Timorese people, especially children. It is hoped that once again children at school will be able to benefit from buffalo milk when this initiative is successful. Buffalo milk is twice as nutritious as cow's milk. India is the largest producer of buffalo milk in the world. They have over 1 billion people, and approximately 6 million buffalo dairy farmers located in 500,000 rural communities. So there is plenty of knowledge about use of buffaloes and milk production in a developing country.

An Australian company, Shaw River Buffalo Dairy, has one of the world's best buffalo herds from the point of view of productivity and animal genetics. This company has offered their services to the initiative partners to help Timor-Leste build a productive industry. The last census in Timor-Leste showed that there are approximately 100,000 buffaloes in the country, and their ownership is widespread. So the benefits of increasing the productivity of the existing buffalo stock can be spread widely throughout the districts.

Farmers will be encouraged to participate in the initiative as individual small farm family businesses, or in some areas they may like to develop cooperatives. The plan is to develop training which can be offered to farmers to help them use their existing buffaloes to produce milk. Systems will need to be developed by communities together with **Susubeen Timor-Leste** for the milk to be sold for cash on a daily or weekly basis by the farmers. It will be sent for local processing to ensure it is hygienic.

**Susubeen**  
**Timor-Leste**

Dairy Industry Development

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The Government of Timor-Leste is a vital partner in the initiative. The Secretary of State for Livestock, Mr Valentino Varela was consulted at the earliest stages when the idea was formed. The National Directorate of Livestock and Veterinary will play a central part in the initiative. The first stages of the initiative will be centred on the existing agricultural colleges at Maliana and Fuiloro. The Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment, Mr Bendito Freitas has also pledged his support. Expertise from the existing Land O'Lakes/USAID BACET project at Fuiloro will be used.



Secretary of State for Livestock Valentino Varela (centre) with (from left) Mr Filipe Mesquita, Livestock Advisor, Mr Michael Parr, Land O'Lakes Program Manager, Mr Helder Encarnação, Xanana Trust Country Manager, Mr Chris Trueman, Xanana Trust Executive Director and Dr Rui Daniel de Carvalho, Director of Quarantine.

**Susubeen Timor-Leste** will need the support of many sectors to ensure its success. Initially it is planned to see if buffalo milk can be added to the diet of school children to improve nutrition and learning capacities. This will help provide a viable commercial market for **Susubeen Timor-Leste's** milk output, and lead the industry to eventual sustainability.

### How you can help:

As part of the Cooperative Agreement with USAID, The Xanana Trust has made a major commitment to contribute to initiative expenditures to the value of approximately US\$330,000 and to underwrite the Trust's hands-on management of the Initiative in Timor-Leste.

You can be part of this innovative and unique initiative to help potentially thousands of families in Timor-Leste to achieve economic independence with a regular stable income from dairy industry involvement. And you will contribute to better potential health outcomes for thousands of Timorese children who will benefit from the high nutritional value of the milk and other products.

**Your financial support to help the Xanana Trust to meet this commitment is urgently sought.** Contributions can be made securely and directly at the Trust's website: [www.xananatrust.org](http://www.xananatrust.org) or by mail to: PO Box 19444 Southbank Vic 3006. Or contact Trust Executive Director Chris Trueman +613 8602 7250.

October 2009

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