

EVALUATION BRIEF

COLOMBIA DAIRY VALUE CHAIN PROJECT: EVALUATION REPORT

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

The project started well, establishing a strong programme of work with the four dairy associations and their 40 target farmers.

Impressive production and profitability gains were generated in the first year.

The roadmap for institutionalising the integrated on farm/research/extension model is less clear and requires attention.

It is time for the project to take stock of its achievements, to review its logic and to improve its planning and reporting procedures.

The results and experience being generated for a business case for the integrated model will support the Colombian Government's decision making on whether and how to scale up the programme.



ABOUT THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATION

The Colombia Dairy Value Chain Project was set up to develop a profitable and competitive Colombian dairy farming model. It is a four year project with small holders in the high altitude tropical zone regions of Nariño, Boyacá and Cundinamarca.

Improved farm management systems and techniques were developed and adapted from New Zealand and Colombian dairy experiences. These were shared through training and business support with established farmer associations. Research, extension, and vocational training systems were also developed to enhance delivery capability.

This is a mid-term evaluation, 18 months into the project. It intends to draw out key lessons that will:

- inform the future shape, direction of and support to the project
- identify what is working, and what is not, and why, and
- account to stakeholders for resources used and differences they are likely to make.

WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE?

- Increase participation by industry in the Advisory Groups.
- Develop a plan of action to roll out and scale-up the integrated dairy extension model.
- Develop a communications plan with clear targets and indicators, including the use of informal channels, to share project learnings with a wider audience.
- Provide more detail about the next stage of the project, ensuring that New Zealand specialists' work links with Colombian priorities and undertakings.
- Review and improve the results framework with project participants. At the same time, review the budget to see if some costs might be saved in the short term that could support an extension of the project beyond its current time frame.

DETAILS ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Completed by: **Warwick Thomson and Santiago Jaramillo Mosquera for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

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[Read the full report by clicking on this link \(to come\)](#)

FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

WHAT HAS WORKED WELL?

The project has started well, reflecting its relevance to Colombian priorities. Management and administration systems were established satisfactorily and the Governance and Advisory Groups were formed and have met. The study tours to New Zealand for partners and stakeholders have had an impact in building participants' understanding and ownership of the project.

The evaluation noted that transparent choices have been made in the selection of the four dairy farmers' associations and their target farmers. Four extensionists were employed and trained; they are now each running full programmes of work with farmers and dairy farmers' associations.

Having visited project farms, New Zealand specialists have made preliminary assessments and established programmes of work. The baseline for the target farms has been documented and they have been led through a business and activity planning process that identifies what needs to be done to improve production, productivity and profitability by increasing milk volumes and quality, cost effectively.

Analysis and development work facilitated by New Zealand specialists has led to a series of pragmatic interventions generating tangible quick-wins in a short time. These include correcting soil pH, pasture development and management, improving record-keeping, farm business planning and activity planning, and milk quality assurance. There are already early indications of spontaneous adoption by neighbouring farmers.

The second output, improving the business management of the farmers' associations, around centred small milk collection centres, is progressing and beginning to generate positive business results.

The evaluation's opinion is that the project is prudent and mindful in its processes of validation and dissemination and this is important.

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD BE MADE?

Good Practice Guidelines (GPGs) and other means of communication are needed to package recommendations from the project in formats that can readily be disseminated, understood and adopted. This requires that the project is more inclusive and prioritises communication and dissemination.

Progress is less apparent on systematising and institutionalising an integrated, farmer-facing research-training-extension approach to be scaled up and rolled out by the Colombian government and industry. The pathways for this part of the project are less well defined, but it is important to view this process of institutionalisation in the context of public investment planning and budget cycles.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Supplier has worked quickly to respond to key recommendations and delivered a Plan of Action, revised budget and results measurement table in July 2017. Pathways for scaling out the results of the project by partnering with industry and government agencies working in dairy development have been outlined in order to work towards establishing a more integrated dairy extension system, that draws upon best practices demonstrated through the project.

EVALUATION INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM THE MFAT WEBSITE: WWW.MFAT.GOV.T.NZ

We welcome feedback. You can contact us at evaluation@mfat.govt.nz or via social media on @MFATgovtNZ