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Communiqué

THE HUMPTY DUMPTY
INSTITUTE

Monthly Communiqué from Sri Lanka

April 2008

April saw a lot of military activity in Jaffna along the Forward Defense lines. In spite of the tense situation in the peninsula HDI's partners, The HALO Trust and Land O'Lakes, continued to work without interruption. HALO Trust cleared a total of 16,291 m² in April bringing the total land cleared in Jaffna District to 168,646 m². Eighteen anti-personnel mines were recovered in April bringing the accumulated total to 452. HDI funded 17 manual sections that have been deployed on minefields off to Point Pedro road, north of Jaffna in the Thenmarachchi Division east of Jaffna. Two minefields were completed this month in Chiruppidi South and Nunavil East. Local people have moved immediately into the cleared polygon at Chiruppidi South to quarry stones for construction, after which we hope to see the ground cultivated as in the surrounding plots. One new mine field was opened this month in the Atchuvely Industrial Complex which is 600 meters south of the High Security Zone and adjacent to Palaly Military Air Base. Local people have been cultivating up to the edge of this minefield which has seen two prior accidents. The minefield is producing P4 and Jony 95 mines due to the fact that both the LTTE and Sri Lanka Army mined this area in the past.

Land O'Lakes also continued to progress well in April. The second rotation of farmer training in dairy farm management and cattle nutrition took off well with 475 new farmer beneficiaries. The program also expanded into three new island divisions targeting 40 dairy farmer families. A five-day business planning workshop for extension agents, selected farmers and Department of Animal Production and Health divisional staff was also conducted. LOL delivered and granted to Yarlco and select LIBCOs milk cans, measuring jars, quality testing equipment, cold boxes, plastic crates and two refrigerator units. Raw milk collection was above 90,000 liters which is 33% more than collected one year ago. The feed mill also continued to record increased production of dairy mash reaching 65 metric tons which is up by 66% compared to the same time last year. Sales at the Yarlco branches have also increased.

HDI Sri Lanka welcomed Steve Ginther and Daniel Mencher, Mine Action Program Managers from its New York Headquarters, who visited Jaffna to evaluate the work carried out by our partners. They visited past, present and future tasks in HALO minefields and LOL's newly constructed model farms, renovated milk sales branches and functional Yarlco feed mill and pasteurized plant. They also had the opportunity to meet staff members and farmers including the new rotation batch of farmer beneficiaries when they visited the Jaffna Islands.

Conversation with LOL's Extension Officer- Kandasamy Thavasarooban

Thavasarooban is one of LOL's 10 Extension Officers handling Chavakachcheri Division of the Jaffna District. He was born in Jaffna in a rural village called Ketpali at Mirusuvil, Thenmarachchi. He was educated at Usan Ramanathan Maha Vidyalam and completed his Advanced Level Education at Palely Central College.

Have you lived in Jaffna all your life? Tell us about yourself?

Jaffna is my home town and I have lived here most of my life. I am from a farming family. My parents are old now. I have 3 younger sisters and 3 brothers. I am married and have a daughter and a son. My wife works as a Branch Manager at the Marketing Department.

What is your work experience?

After completion of my Advance Level education I decided to work so that I could look after my family. I have followed a training course on electronic instruments handling and repairing at the

famous New Victor Electronic Complex. After completion of training I was employed there and later on promoted as the Manager. Due to the civil conflict we had several displacements so the company closed down its activities. We were also displaced to Kaithady area and I learned composing and operation of a printing center and eventually became the Manager. Subsequently we returned to Jaffna and I was employed by the Jaffna District Development Cooperative Society as a branch manager for 12 years. During this period I was promoted as Branch Supervisor. After the ceasefire agreement was signed in 2002, I had an opportunity to go to Colombo and was engaged in private business for 2 years.

What made you apply to Land O'Lakes?

When I saw the newspaper advertisement I thought this was a suitable task for me and decided to apply because I was able to fulfil the requirement that Land O' Lakes required as I am from a farming background and had experience with dairy farming.

What do you do in Land O'Lakes?

I am an Extension Agent for Thenmarachchi division. I provide training and technical support to dairy farmers with the support of the Veterinary Officer of the Department of Animal Production and Health. I am trying to change the present attitude of the farmers in dairy farming to promote and increase milk production. As the aim of our program we promote livelihood opportunities to farmers and let the people of Jaffna get Nutritious milk and value added products.

What do you enjoy most in your job?

I enjoy every thing in my task. Actually when I provide training to farmers I see that they are beginning to be interested in expanding their existing farm business which most of them are doing.

What were your achievements in the last 9 months with LOL?

I changed the attitude of 40 farmers out of 48 in my first rotation beneficiaries in dairy management. They have planted grass and pasture and modernised their cow sheds. I provided 13,506 grass cuttings and 7,787 Glyceria to my farmer beneficiaries after the completion of training on dairy nutrition. This has motivated other farmers who are not in the program to plant Glyceria and improve their pasture land.

A farmer constructed a model farm with technical support I provided. He spent 1.2 million Sri Lankan Rupees to construct the farm. The farm includes a mini pharmacy, feed and water tanks, shower, drainage, milking parlour, a calf pen and a biogas plant.



Thavasarrooban with Matt Krause & Dr. Gnana at Model Farm Opening



Making a speech at the opening ceremony



Glyceria plantation

Grass plantation

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