



# HDI

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## Communiqué

THE HUMPTY DUMPTY  
INSTITUTE

Monthly Communiqué  
from Sri Lanka

December 2007

In spite of the escalating violence in Sri Lanka, HDIs demining and dairy revitalization program in the Jaffna peninsula continues to make positive strides. In December 2007, the HALO Trust continued their de-mining work in Jaffna and cleared 10,576 square meters of HDIs 17 sections. A total of 142,913 square meters were cleared by HDI-funded teams in 2007.

HDIs development partner, Land OLakes (LOL), made some impressive progress as well. Training sessions on breeding and disease control for over 400 farmers were held. Agricultural extension officers conducted onsite, one-to-one field visits to an additional 448 farmers and attended a two-day training session on Clean Milk Production. Ten key model farms were selected to serve as examples of proper dairy farming and the capacity of Farmer Cooperatives continues to expand through training programs on cooperative principles, law, activities, finance and accounting systems.

We are happy to report that the most important metric of success of our entire program in Sri Lanka – increased milk production – continues to move in the right direction. Since the start of our program, the Yarlico dairy cooperative, our local partner, has experienced a 3.24 percent increase in milk collection along with a 215 percent increase in value-added milk product sales. Yarlico is also now producing 27,513 kg monthly of feed mash which represents a 122 percent increase since the beginning of HDIs program. Two outlets of the Libcos cooperative have experienced 97 percent



Mahalingham in his cattle shed



and 158 percent increases respectively in milk collection.

Moreover, sales in the newly introduced paneer (cheese) products have grown to 10kg per month while over 5,000 pasteurized milk packs were sold. By the end of December, 30 percent of the renovation work on Yarlcos 10 sales centers was completed.

### **An interview with a model farmer Sinnathamby Mahalingam of Jaffna**

Mr. Sinnathamby Mahalingam, a 50-year-old energetic farmer residing at Neerveli in the Kopay section of Jaffna peninsula, is one of our programs "Model Farmers". Mahalingam worked as a technician for a watch parts production company in Switzerland for more than 20 years. He returned to his hometown in Jaffna after a ceasefire agreement was signed between the government and the LTTE in 2002. He and his wife work together on their farm.

Mahalingam has utilized every inch of land on his property. He has organized his vegetable plots meticulously and his cattle sheds are clean and tidy. He observes all the rules of a good dairy farmer. He has a special section for growing grass for his cattle, a compost heap and stacked-up hay.

*Why did you select this field of agriculture and cattle farming as your livelihood?*

Cattle rearing and agriculture are traditional forms of work here and very familiar to me. My grandparents followed by my parents were cattle farmers and I am now following the tradition. Agriculture and farming are well accepted and profitable. I would like to live honestly, independently and through my own efforts. I don't expect my neighbors or relatives to run my daily life. I am able to help others too.

The field of agriculture and cattle farming is exceptional work. Several countries such as America, India, Germany and Australia developed because of the revolution in agriculture and animal husbandry. As a Sri Lankan citizen, I can say I will never be hungry if the war starts again because I have cultivated my land. I have paddy and vegetables so I can have my food at any moment. I also have a



Mahalingham in his cattle shed



Mahalingham in his CO3 pasture



cattle farm so I can get milk for my family and others.

*What is your future plan for the development of your farm?*

Now that this USDA program is providing technical support for farmers like me, I am confident that my farm will develop according to international standards. Earlier I didn't know about pasture or fodder but now with the technical support of veterinary officers I have planted them on a large scale so that my earnings can increase. I have also started to construct a bio gas plant because it is a popular and money-saving technology. With this technical support, I will improve my earning capacity and use more developed technology.

*What message do you have for the Jaffna farmers?*

The daily work routine is the most important factor. My wife and I wake up at 4 a.m. every day. We wash and clean up. I then milk and feed the cows. I pick the available vegetables and bananas, water the field, distribute the milk to the neighbors and go to the market where I sell the vegetables and bananas. On my return I go back to the field and cattle farm. This is quite hard but interesting.

I would like to say to farmers that the work is hard. I think broadly rather than waiting or fighting for free rations. My advice is, Don't hesitate to invest. Don't worry about the war. This is not new for us. We can work and earn while we are young and have the opportunity. Make hay while the sun shines.

*What do you think of the HDI's dairy revitalization program?*

This is a golden opportunity for cattle farmers and our Jaffna people because we now have access to experts in the dairy development field. We receive new technology and advice on cattle rearing. I have received good information on farm management, disease control, breeding, nutrition, etc. I can see that the production of milk has increased and my cows look cool and happy. This program has led to changes in the dairy industry as well in the lives of farmers like me.

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Banana cultivation



Vegetable cultivation