



PASTORALIST WOMEN CHOOSE THEIR FUTURE

HTDR 005



The degree to which women are financially stable determines the extent to which **their children will be fed, educated and enjoy basic social amenities.**

The Pastoralist woman's success in milk sales directly affects the quality of life her family can enjoy.

Milk is central to the livelihood of Fulani pastoralists households. While the men are responsible for feeding the cattle, the responsibility for processing and sale of raw milk falls on women. The degree to which women are financially stable determines the extent to which their children will be fed, educated and enjoy basic social amenities. The woman's ability to guarantee her family's survival is impeded by several factors chief of which are low quantity of milk produced, the hygiene and short shelf life of the raw milk. Measures to improve the volume, shelf life and hygiene of milk would increase the income of the family. Very often women are powerless relative to the buyers and have to sell milk at "buyer's price" which most times is a very low price offered by buyers who know the seller has no choice but to sell after a few hours in the market or throw the milk out due to spoilage.

Pastoralist women are becoming self-reliant and gaining financial freedom by adopting innovations introduced by BIF in the dairy sector.

Pastoralist women in Ladduga lost 20% by volume of their milk using traditional processing methods involving direct heating. They also boiled off the best part which changed the consistency of the milk in the process. With modern pasteurization, they not only extended the shelf life by **2-3 days** allowing them more time to sell, but they also regained the 20% otherwise lost, by adopting the indirect-heating techniques of modern pasteurization, thus, increasing the volumes of milk sold. In the process they learnt about proper milk handling and milk hygiene enabling them meet acceptable market standards in the dairy sector, opening up new opportunities for them to become active participants in the formal dairy supply chains.

Using these newly acquired skills, some pastoralist women have been commissioned by milk aggregators and milk processing companies to process (by thermization) large volumes of milk for a commission of 18 - 20 naira per liter processing about 300 litres a day.

Some other women preferred to process their milk into cottage yogurt as they were taught by BIF. A liter of raw milk is sold for 100 naira but when it is converted to yogurt with a further 150-naira processing cost, it can be sold for an average of **400 naira/liter**.

A number of women who benefited from BIF's master-trainer's training in milk handling and hygiene went on to train other women in the dairy sector. They have leveraged on their knowledge to provide their technical expertise at a fee which in some cases was paid by barter. Halima who was part of the master training in 2015 has trained 600 women to date. For each training she charges approximately one liter of milk per participant. She has contributed to her family's upkeep with money and food items given to her by recipients of the training and has saved enough to support her plans to enroll in University in future. **Furthermore, this has also boosted the earnings of Pastoralist women by way of enhancing their startup capital.**

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