



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://feedthefuture.gov/article/usadf-grants-smallholder-dairy-farmers-raise-incomes-malawi>

USADF Grants to Smallholder Dairy Farmers Raise Incomes in Malawi



USADF

Mercy Chitwanga says that she can support her children as a single mother for the first time thanks to a Feed the Future grant from USADF.

Mercy Chitwanga, a dairy farmer in Malawi, has seen big improvements in her farm's milk production and her family's income since 2011. Mercy is Chairperson of the Chitsanzo Dairy Cooperative, a group of smallholder dairy farmers that was awarded a \$95,000 Feed the Future grant through the [United States African Development Foundation](#) (USADF). The dairy sector is a Feed the Future priority in Malawi because of its high potential for growth.

The capacity building grant to Chitsanzo provides training in livestock management and strengthens market linkages for the cooperative's members, many of whom are women earning a living wage for the first time. Mercy is one of more than 1,000 female dairy farmers in Malawi who are increasing their earnings and accessing more nutritious food for their children with support from Feed the Future. For many of Chitsanzo's dairy farmers, incomes have risen 35 percent in the last quarter alone.

The cooperative is also using funds from the grant to improve its financial and business management systems. The Chitsanzo members hope to use these systems to increase profits by producing higher-value commodities, such as yogurt and cheese. Mercy says that before receiving grant funding, Chitsanzo was operating without any formal financial management systems. Since 2011, when the grant was awarded, she has doubled milk production, saved significant money, and can now invest directly in her dairy business.

Under Feed the Future, USADF has invested \$1 million since 2009 in Malawi's dairy sector to improve production, develop domestic and export markets, and provide a nutritional food supply in several marginalized communities. This investment is expected to generate more than \$3.5 million in new economic activity and support 3,900 farmers and their 20,000 family members.

Mary Malunga, partner director of Malawi's National Association of Business Women, sees the Feed the Future investment as a major component of reducing extreme poverty in Malawi. "More farmers are now able to increase their household incomes because USADF has provided both the capital and the training needed to move small farmers to the next level, especially women," Malunga says.

The dairy sector projects include working with local farmers to expand animal feed production and milk bulking stations (enabling dairy farmers to travel shorter distances to have their milk processed and tested before selling it). Working

together with the Government of Malawi's development priorities, Feed the Future is mitigating food shortages and strengthening sustainable market growth at the grassroots level.

USADF's efforts under Feed the Future are part of the initiative's [whole-of-government approach](#). USADF is an independent federal U.S. Government agency devoted to increasing incomes, creating jobs, and giving hope to Africans in the most vulnerable households and communities. More than 75 percent of USADF grants assist local communities to increase food production as a means of generating greater incomes and helping improve access to nutritional food for local consumption.

[Did you know Feed the Future is also transforming the dairy sector in Kenya?](#)