

# KENYAN DAIRY COWS NEED BETTER FEED

**Most dairy farmers in Kenya have a small herd, low productivity and poor access to markets. PhD candidate Salome Migose studied how yields could be increased. Good quality feed is essential to growth.**

The majority of Kenya's farmers herd cattle and cultivate crops. This mixed crop-livestock system is not very productive. Development organizations have been trying for years to find ways to increase farmers' productivity so that they can supply more dairy products for the ur-

ban population. Salome Migose discovered that farmers near urban areas have plenty of sales channels for their milk and get a good price. But grassland is scarce, resulting in a shortage of feed and young cattle. As a result, the milk production per cow is low. While rural areas do have a sufficient supply of grassland and feed, milk prices are lower and the quality of the feed leaves much to be desired. This too results in lower milk yields per cow.

## **ALFALFA**

The research showed that farmers with a large herd have a higher yield per cow (and a higher income) and that these farmers invest in better feed. But that is not the case for many Kenyan farmers. Cattle farmers could increase their production by growing alfalfa and feeding this to their cows, as well as by buying concentrated protein-rich feed from suppliers. According to Migose, the farmers located between 20 and 50 kilometres from the city are most likely to benefit from better animal feed. At this distance, there is sufficient land for growing feed while the farmers can still get the higher milk prices. **AS**

