

**PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFIT OF SMALL SCALE DAIRY  
FARMING IN KIAMBU DISTRICT**

**BY**



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## ABSTRACT

Small scale dairy farming (commonly known as zero grazing units) has become an important enterprise in central Kenya. This is because of lack of adequate land to practice other farming activities, but still it faces a number of challenges. As a result of lack of adequate land and consequent enough feed.

A study was carried out in Kikuyu division of Kiambu district using a structured questionnaire. The results showed that the small scale dairy farming was not attracting new investors as those who were interviewed indicated that they have been in the practice for more than five years.

One of the reasons sought to explain the reason to the failure to attract new investors was found to be lack of adequate feeds. A majority (82%) depended on napier grass as the major fodder for their livestock, which had to be grown within the farm. The napier grass they grew from their farms was not adequate for their dairy cows due to small land sizes; a majority had less than one acre of land where napier and other household crops were to be grown together and hence were forced to buy feed to make up for the balance or search from road sides.

It was apparent that a good number (50%) of the farmers did not keep dairy health records and less than 40% had training in dairy farming. This made the farmers to depend mainly on private veterinaries for their livestock health. Calving interval was sacrificed and lactation period extended to be able to have at least some milk for a longer period of time but the milk yields were on average low; between ten to fifteen litres per cow per day.

Economic evaluation of the enterprise showed that a majority of the farmers were working at a loss due to low milk market prices and exploitation by middlemen who were paying them poorly for one litre of milk. Although some cooperatives were available, the price fetched from them was far low to offset the small scale dairy farming daily expenses and hence the farmers were forced to borrow finances from other sources to fund their dairy farming.

Therefore, a policy needs to be put in place that will take care of milk market prices and protect small scale dairy farmers from exploitation by cooperatives and middlemen compounded with regular training in dairy farming will make the enterprise a success.