



Workers of Legemaat Boerdery who successfully completed an IDT training course. In the front, from the left: Timothy Chikanya, Mbongeni Sibanda, Joshua Dube, Isaac Chimangiwe. In the middle from the left are Dinah Phowone, Martha Mnisi, Sannah Mnisi, Sekima Nape, Cynthia Sabakhe. At the back from the left are Maria Chauke, Sinothando Muchuzuki, Fadzai Chimanyiwa, Feistas Chimanyiwa, Amanda Matambo, Marjorie Muchenyne

# Training for dairy **success**

by Fidelis Zvomuya (Photograph by Justin Kennerley)

**It is Timothy Chikanya's job to watch dozens of dairy cows move through a milking parlour on a carousel at Legemaat Boerdery farm in Cullinan, just outside Pretoria. Chikanya supervises workers at the farm, as they clean udders and attach milking machines. And he checks to make sure that there are no problems with the milk being pumped.**

He is one of the 15 farm workers who participated in a five-day dairy training course offered by the Milk Producers' Organisation's Institute for Dairy Technology (IDT). The IDT's training deals with methods of handling milk, from production to consumption.

"I have learnt a lot about the prevention of spoilage, improving quality, increasing shelf-life, and making milk palatable and safe for human consumption," Chakanga says.

## Learning the ropes

Another trainee, Amanda Matambo, says that she now knows how to test the teat of the cow and figure out which teat has bad milk, in which case she can now treat the animal and maintain milk production.

Matambo started working at the farm about six months ago. According to Matambo, this was the first time that she had ever received such training. Originally from Zimbabwe, Matambo is adamant that she is not only going to use these skills at the farm, but will share it with her father when she goes back to Zimbabwe.

IDT instructor, Justice Mathebula, says that dairy farmers can be very knowledgeable and proficient in all aspects of dairy farming, but with a mediocre labour force which is not trained or motivated, such a farmer is unlikely to make a success of dairy farming.

The management of the labour force is often a neglected section of management. Farmers often think that parlour workers must simply do as they are told. However, it is very important that each and every dairy farm worker knows what he or she is doing, and why. This knowledge becomes an asset for the whole enterprise and in the longer term, serves to give the farmer peace of mind.

## Training principles

“It is now generally accepted that people are the most valuable assets of an enterprise, and when one starts thinking about the benefits to any enterprise in terms of people, the potential is enormous,” Mathebula says.

A well-trained and a sound worker force, according to him, is the success of all dairy enterprises. Therefore the training that the IDT gives, must have a solid foundation.

“The basic elements of our training with regard to management principles, are planning, training, motivation and discipline,” he says.

## The Legemaat farm

With its rolling green fields, healthy dairy cows and state-of-the-art milking enclosure, Legemaat Boerdery farm is a shining example of a successful dairy business. With more than 280 cows milked, Cees Legemaat saw the need to train his workers. Each cow produces an average 34 litres per day and he expects the number of cows to be milked per day, to increase to about 400 in 2010.

The purpose of this training is to ensure that the persons involved in dairy production, can accurately operate the relevant equipment, solve related problems and evaluate the quality of the final product. And these skills and knowledge are seen as vital to ensure good quality and safe end products. 