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Breeding technology

Farmers to adopt embryo transfer for quality breeds

Breeders society says new technology helps farmers get 30 calves from a cow in a year

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Dairy farmers in the country have been challenged to adopt new technologies in upgrading livestock breeds.

Ayrshire Cattle Breeders Society of Kenya (ACBSK) said new breeding technologies are now here and can assist dairy farmers multiply their cows within a short period.

Muchemi Kariuki, the chairman of ACBSK urged farmers to adopt embryo transfer technology, which guarantees a high number of quality breeds within the shortest time.

Kariuki said the new technology could help a dairy farmer get up to 30 calves from one cow in a year.

"We have animals of good quality in terms of production and fertility, and by use of hormonal treatment, we can super-ovulate them to release more ova to undergo normal fertilisation through Artificial Insemination (AI), flash out embryos resulting from fertilisation and serve to heifers," Explained Kariuki.

Kariuki spoke yesterday during a two-day training session of technical assistants and cattle handlers held at the Eldoret Polytechnic in liaison with Brookside Dairy Limited.

BREEDERS SHOW

The training was held in readiness for a biannual Brookside Dairy Limited breeders show to be held in Nairobi in June.

Kariuki also advised farmers to register their cattle with the Kenya Livestock Breeders Association.

Out of an estimated 1.2 million Ayrshire breeds of cows in the country, he said only about 1.5 per cent is registered.

"Farmers need to keep a record on



HORMONAL TREATMENT METHOD

Cattle handlers parade Ayrshire breed of dairy cows (Above)

Animals of good quality in terms of production and fertility are super-ovulated by use of hormonal treatment

The ova undergoes normal fertilisation through AI, the embryos resulting from the fertilisation are then flashed out and served to other heifers

Embryo transfer technology guarantees a high number of quality breeds within the shortest time

their livestock fertility, milk production and pedigree information for effective breeding. Little has been done due to poor records," said Kariuki.

Mr John Gethi, the Brookside Dairy General Manager in charge of milk procurement and extension services, said the processor would continue to work with breed societies to help smallholder farmers grow their milk production volumes.

"The breeders show provides a perfect platform for farmers to learn about the latest in genetic improvement of our national livestock herd," Gethi said.

He said this year's show would attract international participation with judges expected from at least ten countries.

There will be demonstrations, presentations and a livestock exhibition, which will culminate in selection of the best performing cow. Owner of the best breed will be rewarded," Gethi said.

Brookside commands nearly 45 per cent of the national raw milk market, a share that is expected to increase substantially when the firm commissions its multi-million shilling dry milk plant in Ruiru, later in the year.