HEIFER® INTERNATIONAL RWANDA

PROJECT FACTSHEET

RWANDA DAIRY MARKET SYSTEMS (RDMS) PROJECT

Transforming Rwanda's dairy sector through mechanization, quality animal feeds and fodder, and water access



Heifer and Hello Tractor leadership briefed senior government officials and other partners during the mechanization hub launch in Nyagatare

Project overview

The Rwanda Dairy Market Systems (RDMS) project is a comprehensive three-year initiative led by Heifer International Rwanda in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda and private sector partners. The project employs a holistic approach to transform Rwanda's dairy sector by systematically addressing critical bottlenecks, including low adoption of mechanization, limited availability of high-quality and affordable animal feeds and fodder, and inadequate access to quality water resources. It integrates essential support services, such as access to credit, within its mechanization framework to ensure sustainable and comprehensive development of the dairy value chain. The four core project districts are Nyagatare, Gatsibo, Kayonza and Bugesera, with services delivered and reported across 16 districts in total.

PROJECT PERIOD	**Three years; 2024–2027**	**TARGET PARTICIPANTS**	**10,500 smallholder farmers**
CORE PROJECT DISTRICTS	**Nyagatare, Gatsibo, Kayonza and Bugesera**	**SERVICE DELIVERY REACH**	**16 districts – wider reach of mechanization and market**

			services beyond the core area
LEAD IMPLEMENTER	**Heifer International Rwanda**	**KEY PARTNERS**	**MINAGRI; Hello Tractor (mechanization lead); private sector partners**
OVERALL GOAL	**To increase income and wellbeing of dairy farmers in the Eastern Province of Rwanda**		

Development objective

Support the introduction of mechanization – with a focus on promoting the use of tractors and other farm equipment – increase the use and adoption of enhanced, market-driven animal feed production and feeding practices, and facilitate access to water and affordable finance for farmers.

Three project components

COMPONENT	FOCUS
1. Mechanization	Aligned with PSTA-5 (which targets 100,000 hectares of mechanized farmland by 2029), RDMS promotes adapted mechanized technologies to boost yields and production, minimize harvest and post-harvest losses, and save labour and capital in farm operations.
2. Animal feeds and fodder	Improve animal feed production and feeding practices through market-driven approaches, developing sustainable and inclusive business models in the fodder and feed sector.
3. Water access	Improve farmers' access to water and affordable finance, conducting market analysis to identify suitable water-harvesting technologies for dairy farming and implementing a commercially viable model to expand water harvesting and storage.

Expected outcomes

RESULT AREA	TARGET
Milk production	Increase national milk production from 999,976 MT to 1.2 million MT.
Jobs	At least 500 jobs created.
Household income	Improved incomes for more than 5,000 smallholder farmers.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Combined results from November 2024 to June 2026

AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION (IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HELLO TRACTOR)

INDICATOR	REPORTED ACHIEVEMENT
Farmers reached with mechanization services	9,783 smallholder farmers
Land serviced	24,704 hectares cultivated using mechanization technology; 58,301 hectares booked through the Hello Tractor digital platform
Jobs created	346 (tractor operators, owners, booking agents, champion agents, mechanics and hub personnel)
Booking agents and operators trained	307 (252 booking agents and 55 operators) in mechanization and business development
Tractors and implements deployed	26 tractors, including 1 Passing on the Gift (PoG) tractor; around 58 implements including harrows, disc ploughs, square balers, maize choppers, rippers, hay rakes, planters, rotovators and trailers
Mechanization hubs operationalized	2 – Kayonza Hub (Nov 2024; 12 tractors) and Nyagatare Hub (Aug 2025; 14 tractors)

INDICATOR	REPORTED ACHIEVEMENT
Hub outreach	7,751 farmers engaged through hub foot traffic; 275 implement rentals generating RWF 11.2 million
Farmer-level results	Production costs reduced from RWF 198 to RWF 155 per kg; yields increased from 4,250 to 6,400 kg per hectare; average income per hectare rose from RWF 750,000 to RWF 1.3 million
Districts served	16 (Bugesera, Gasabo, Gatsibo, Gicumbi, Gisagara, Kamonyi, Kayonza, Kicukiro, Kirehe, Musanze, Ngoma, Nyagatare, Nyarugenge, Ruhango, Rulindo and Rwamagana), anchored by the Kayonza and Nyagatare mechanization hubs

FODDER AND WATER MARKET FACILITATION

EVENTS	REPORTED HIGHLIGHTS
Mechanization hubs launch event in Kayonza and Nyagatare (August 2025)	RDMS, in partnership with Hello Tractor, launched two mechanization hubs in Kayonza and Nyagatare Districts with a combined fleet of 26 tractors, including one Passing on the Gift (PoG) tractor, and around 58 implements such as harrows, disc ploughs, square balers, maize choppers, rippers, hay rakes, planters, rotovators and trailers. The Kayonza Hub was launched in November 2024, followed by the Nyagatare Hub in August 2025, expanding smallholder farmers' access to affordable Pay-As-You-Go mechanization services across the core project districts. The two hubs anchor service delivery across the wider project area, engaging 7,751 farmers through hub foot traffic and generating RWF 11.2 million from 275 implement rentals.
Water Co-Creation Workshop (Kayonza, May 2026)	Convened in response to water scarcity as a persistent constraint to livestock health and milk yields. Brought together government institutions (MINAGRI, RAB, RWB, districts), cooperatives, private water technology providers, financial institutions and development partners to co-design market-based solutions – a District Water Coordination Platform, simplified water permits, mapping of business and financing opportunities, affordable technologies (rainwater harvesting, solar pumps, drip irrigation) and stronger Water User Associations, with roles for women- and youth-led enterprises.
Fodder Co-Creation Workshop (Nyagatare, June 2026)	Translated the RDMS-commissioned Fodder Market Systems Assessment into collective action, as fodder shortages remain the leading constraint to dairy productivity. Convened 45+ stakeholders in three thematic groups to validate the assessment, map actors and barriers, and prioritize solutions – business cases for fodder investment in Nyagatare, tailored financial products for fodder producers, and a shift toward commercialized fodder production.

Sources: RDMS project design documents; implementation achievements reported for November 2024 to June 2026.

With sincere appreciation to our partners, the Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) and Hello Tractor, for their continued collaboration in advancing mechanization and market systems for Rwanda's dairy sector.

Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Agriculture & Animal Resources

hello tractor

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