

## MRA BOARD MEMBERS AND GOAT HOPE MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY TEAM VISIT FARM IN EMBU, KENYA



This summer, MRA board members and Goat Hope Marquette University students visited our Social Venture Goat farm in Kirinyaga County in Kenya. The farm is about 70 miles from Nairobi, Kenya's capital city. The main goals of the trip were to assess the impact we have made since launching the farm in 2012 and to develop and implement systems that will allow for a successful launch of a community operated dairy in 2017. The goals of the dairy will be to create a central milk collection point at the farm, where Goat Hope beneficiaries in Kirinyaga County will bring their milk and sell it to the farm. The farm will in turn sell the milk locally and to supermarkets in Nairobi. The cooperative model will create a reliable marketing structure for Goat Hope families –a ready market for dairy goat milk that will transform household's economic and nutritional wellbeing, in line with Goat Hope's mission.

Our Goat Hope families make up almost 80% of the goat milk supply chain in Kirinyaga County, with each family producing an average of 2 liters per day.

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*Above is the Goat Hope Farm sign posted on the main road from Nairobi that passes through Embu heading to Meru, another town in the Eastern part of Kenya.*



*Above: Toggenberg dairy goats at the Goat Hope farm*

*Below: Newest additions to the farm 'RJ' and 'Kid G'*







Our visit started with a meeting at the farm where we met the women's group leaders and listened as they gave their testimonies about the benefits of the dairy goats they received through Goat Hope, and continued support from MRA. We witnessed the impact of the project to a cross section of the community. We heard from families that the consumption of the goat milk had really boosted their health, particularly those with a member

of the household either suffering from HIV/AIDS, or other chronic diseases. We learnt that sales of goat milk, allowed for families to afford medication, school supplies, and in some cases, savings towards increasing their goat herds!

The team visited with a community owned goat milk dairy in a neighboring county in Meru to learn from them how their dairy operates. They explained and showed us the entire process from the time the milk is collected from the families to the point it's picked up by the processor. At this dairy, they told us they sell their milk to another goat farm outside of Nairobi, who use it to make goat yogurt. We also learned how yogurt is made.



*Women participate during our first community meeting at the Goat Hope farm*



*Goat Hope offices also received a fresh coat of paint*



Together, the team refurbished the current goat housing and Goat Hope offices at the farm. A database to track milk production in the community was also developed. The database will be used to track numbers of Goat Hope goats. This information is crucial in ensuring a healthier, better performing goat herd.

The team prepared the foundation to construct new housing for pregnant goats and their young ones. After the pregnant does give birth, they will be placed with their kids in the newly constructed pens. This will enable the kids to bond with their mothers and keep them away from other goats. This is especially important if one of the kids happens to be a buck. Goats mature quickly and at just 7 weeks old; the little buck is ready and able to breed with any doe in heat. It's also important to separate the doe that has just given birth because she can be milked the first three months of a pregnancy and if it's breeding season, the buck should be kept away because they have a strong odor that can affect the taste of the milk.



It was important for us to meet with families who have received goats through Goat Hope, so we organized an event that was attended by government officials and over 130 community members. The team presented the cooperative dairy

model by explaining how the dairy will work and the benefits of the dairy to the community. Everyone present was very excited with the next phase of the project and vowed to work hard.

It was a fun day filled with song and dance and even an impromptu children's choir.



*Visiting a local clinic in Difathas' where MRA board chair made a donation to the pediatric unit at the clinic. The clinic is in need of medical equipment for its maternity wing.*



*Kirinyaga County Women's Representative, Hon. Winnie Njuguna (above) and Member of Kirinyaga County Assembly, Hon. Mwai (below) talk to the Women, Children and Men who had gathered for the community event at the farm.*





We also met with a leading goat veterinarian in Kenya, to discuss ways to improve



the health and productivity of our goats. He is the head of a goat farm and dairy we visited in a neighboring town to see first-hand how they run their dairy and discuss a possible partnership, since they are already stocking yogurt in some supermarkets in Nairobi and run a very successful operation.



*MRA Board, Marquette Students take photo with Government officials*

One of the highlights of our trip was the meeting with executives from a major supermarket chain in Nairobi, to solidify our partnership for the sale of our goat milk. We scheduled a follow-up meeting in the next few months to share with them our marketing strategy and our products.

We received support from the local government, which we will use to purchase a milk cooling tank, a pasteurizer and other accessories that we will use in the dairy.

Our trip ended on a high note. We came back to the US energized to continue our fundraising efforts to successfully launch the community dairy in 2017 and we are happy to engage all partners to realize this goal!

**We need your support to successfully launch the dairy.**

So far we have raised \$25,000 to purchase a milk cooler and a pasteurizer.

Your support towards the goal of \$35,000 will enable us to:

- Construct the dairy facility- \$20,000
- Purchase a Refrigerated Truck- \$10,000
- Install a Generator- \$5,000
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Donations can be made safely and securely at [www.mra-africa.org](http://www.mra-africa.org) or by mailing checks addressed to

**Medical Relief Alliance, Inc. to 244 5th Avenue Suite B293,  
New York, NY 10001.**

All donations are tax deductible.

Need More Information? Email: [mra@mra-africa.org](mailto:mra@mra-africa.org)

Contact us

*MRA is a fully volunteer ran 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization based in New York City. 90 cents of every dollar goes directly to our program work!*