

From losses and spoilage to Profits - The story of Qali Ali Seife
By Mark Abaha and Tobias Ounga, VSF–Suisse, Somalia, January 2010

When Qali Ali Seife, a small scale milk trader in Luuq, a modest town located in Gedo, Somalia started her business, she faced substantial losses and low sales as a result of milk spoilage. *“I noticed that the jerricans always had some cloudy dark marks in the inner wall even when viewed from outside and I could not clean these containers because of their small openings. Not only did this make my milk go bad quickly but it also discouraged the buyers”* says Qali.

Qali is a beneficiary of training in milk hygiene and handling and basic business skills conducted by Veterinaires Sans Frontieres (VSF) under the Enhanced Livelihood in the Manderia Triangle (ELMT) project in March 2009. The trainees were also provided with aluminum milk cans to help reduce on the spoilages.



Qali Ali Seife during the interview

“I was trained and given a milk can by VSF –Suisse, something that most people thought was of no real consequence, but from the changes my business has gone through, I wish I had been given more cans” recounts Qali *“milk spoilage is no longer a big worry for me and my sales have even increased. For instance previously I would buy 57 litres of cow milk and sell about 47 litres but now I sell almost all my milk with no spoilage...The aluminum milk cans have wide opening so I can clean them easily without leaving any residues on the container’s walls”* explains Qali.

According to Qali, the training was the first ever to enlighten her on practices that lead to milk spoilage and simple ways of how this can be avoided. She was more convinced of the benefits of the practices after personally witnessing the reduction in spoilage. *“I have a personal experience on the importance of the training and now I can concentrate on expanding my business. I am also sharing my ideas and lessons learnt with other traders some of whom have adopted these practices”* says a happy Qali.

“I also learnt skills for running a small business, though I have no formal records, I have been very able to split the inputs from outputs and hence pay myself a salary. I pray to Allah, to bless me so I may see my business expand further.”