

The Story of the Milking Cow and Goat Project

Meru, Kenya

A Story of Hope, Partnership and Lasting Change

One Conversation That Changed Lives

Sometimes the biggest changes begin with a single conversation. In 2007, Australian Rotarian Wilma Best attended a Rotary District Conference in Kampala, Uganda. During the conference she described a simple idea: helping children escape hunger by providing dairy animals to communities. Among those listening was Reverend Father Jason Micheni from the Rotary Club of Meru, Kenya. After the session he approached Wilma and shared the realities facing families in Meru—children arriving at school hungry, grandparents caring for orphaned grandchildren, and families trapped in a cycle of poverty. That conversation became the beginning of a partnership that would change lives. For three years the two Rotary partners planned carefully before Wilma travelled to Meru to see the need firsthand. In 2010 the first Holstein Friesian dairy cows arrived at a primary school, providing fresh milk for more than 300 children.





A Dream Begins to Grow

The first deliveries proved that one healthy dairy cow could do much more than produce milk. Better nutrition improved children's ability to learn. Surplus milk could be sold, creating income for school supplies, medical care and future livestock. As the project expanded, dairy goats were introduced for vulnerable households with limited land. Grandmothers raising orphaned children were among the first recipients. Goats multiplied quickly, supplied nutritious milk and created assets that families could pass on to others, extending the project's reach.



More Than Animals

Every cow and every goat represented opportunity. Families gained confidence as they became more self-reliant. Children who once went to school hungry now had regular access to fresh milk. Income from milk sales and offspring helped pay school fees and healthcare costs. Rotary clubs in Australia worked alongside the Rotary Club of Meru, providing funding, training and ongoing support to ensure the project remained sustainable rather than creating dependency.

The Ripple Effect

The success of the livestock program inspired even bigger dreams. As communities prospered they identified water as the next challenge. The relationships, trust and experience developed through the Milking Cow and Goat Project laid the foundation for the Kithima Borehole Project, which aims to provide reliable water for people, livestock and agriculture. What started with livestock has grown into a broader vision of healthy, resilient communities.

A Legacy of Hope

The Milking Cow and Goat Project demonstrates the power of partnership. It is not simply a story about cows or goats—it is a story about people who believed that practical compassion could transform lives. Every child who drinks fresh milk, every family that earns an income, and every community that becomes more self-sufficient is part of that continuing story. It reminds us that when Rotarians work together across cultures and continents, lasting change is possible.

Key Achievements

- Fresh milk provided to hundreds of school children.
- Dairy cows supplied to schools and community sites.
- Dairy goats distributed to vulnerable families.
- Income generated through milk sales and livestock breeding.
- School fees and medical expenses supported.
- A sustainable partnership between the Rotary Clubs of Bayswater, Healesville and Meru.
- Inspiration for the Kithima Borehole Project.