

## **Prize Bulls' Semen**

### **Prize Bull**

Sid, the prize bull donated by a generous Good Giver, is manfully raising the calibre of cattle in Rwanda. Can you help him out?

Privations during the civil war have led to the weakening of the cattle breeds – less hardy, less productive animals, breeding less successfully. With the support of Good Gifts, SURF has set up three model farms, providing livestock and training for subsistence farmers.

The gift of bulls has considerably helped improve the calibre of livestock, and the calves fetch much higher prices because of their improved productivity. Instead of one litre of milk a day, our bull's youngsters give a nourishing 15 litres, and they are stronger and more disease resistant than the weakened local stock. Sid the Bull has been instrumental, keeping the cows very busy.

The original 30 cows have been providing milk, which is distributed to widows living with HIV and AIDS in the community. The morning milk is sold to a restaurant and the revenue pays for veterinary support, and the wages for the team that manages the farm. Within a year, 17 cows have given birth to 15 calves.

Through this project an association of 30 women came together to receive 15 local cows. Since then seven calves were born, and the whole herd was sold for a profit – with the revenue being used to buy 19 improved dairy cattle. Milk production rose from 1 litre per cow per day to the current 15 litres of milk per cow per day!

One of the beneficiaries explains the difference it has made to her life:

*“Until 1 January 2007, when I was given this cow you see (pointing a finger at her black and white spotted crossbreed), life had not had any meaning for me since the genocide. I always remembered the cows we used to have in my home before genocide and the amount of milk at my disposal... and for all the time I did not have a cow or access to milk, my heart was very bitter. I had developed acute ulcers. I did not love anyone.*

*But when you drink milk, especially from a cow that you have attended to, it makes you feel valuable again, and you start to love and to laugh. Besides, when it is breathing outside at night, you do not have fear, you feel as if some one is outside protecting you...though it may only be a cow.*

*I do not have words to express my thanks to the people who gave me this cow. In appreciation I will pass on a calf to my neighbour Eugenie so she can also feel like I feel now. That is the agreement I signed, I now look forward to honouring it.”*