

# Timor Dairy NEWS



Winter 2006

## Timor in Turmoil – Again

The people of Timor Leste are again struggling for survival amid chaos caused by a breakdown of civil authority and law enforcement. Ongoing conflict between the armed forces and the police, fuelled by recent sackings and divided loyalties has sparked the unrest. The local people understandably reacted with fear and panic to this breakdown in civil order, mainly in and around the capital, Dili with unruly gangs taking advantage of the lawless climate to settle some old scores. This resulted in violence and looting which is now being brought under control by Australian soldiers and federal police supported by several other peacekeeping teams now in Dili.

Fuiloro is 200km and about 5 hours east of Dili and is not in danger. For those involved in support programs like the Dairy project at Don Bosco (Salesian) Agricultural College, Fuiloro, it is even more urgent that we can maintain our support to ensure that critical nutrition sources are maintained and protected from the ratbag behaviour of a few while law and order is being restored to the new nation.

### News from Fuiloro

The Kiwanis Dairy team have resolved to make regular visits to Fuiloro about every three months to avoid a repetition of a downturn to the dairy program which occurred during 2004 and early 05. With this in mind, project chairman, Peter Kimberley and project secretary, Peter Cecil visited Fuiloro early in May for about eight days. They were accompanied by Peter Kimberley's son, Dr Simon Kimberley and Dairy volunteer, Brendan Read. The team also met with a veterinary officer in Dili, Mr Brendan Mimmagh from Bothar International (visiting from Ireland) to explore developmental initiatives for the dairy operation in the communities around Fuiloro. Their report is printed elsewhere in this newsletter.



### Peace and Tranquillity at Fuiloro

Despite the turbulence and political unrest in Timor, it was a boost to us to receive the best ever report on the dairy and farm operations at Fuiloro. Significantly we are now seeing the benefit of a good team effort from the College administration under the watchful eye of Fr Manuel Ximines as Rector and Fr Jesuino as administrator. Both have a real commitment to the communities around Fuiloro and to the success of the dairy project with milk as a vital source of nutrition for the students.

Acacio has taken over the lead role in the dairy operation and is progressing well. He is keeping records up to date, performing the necessary maintenance and training the other members of the farm team. He is also teaching them to drive safely and carefully along with other farm duties. Daniel, Jose and Domingoes currently make up the dairy team while Celestino remains absent on sick leave and may not return to the farm. It is appropriate that we acknowledge the leadership role so ably undertaken by Celestino during the dairy establishment from 2002. Well done Celestino.



Milk never tasted this good

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# Kiwanis Team visits Timor Dairy - Peter Cecil.

After several 'almosts', a couple of changed dates, and with a little trepidation following some unrest which had occurred in Dili the previous week, Peter Kimberley and Peter Cecil, accompanied by Peter Kimberley's son Simon, set off from Melbourne en route to Darwin, and then Dili, on Monday May 1, 2006.

We arrived in Darwin at some unearthly hour in the early morning, and met up with Brendan Read, our retired dairy farmer, who with his wife Robyn, had spent 15 months in 2002/03, and a further 2 months last year, setting up and supervising our Dairy Project. We spent the rest of the night 'camped' at Darwin airport, before boarding a flight to Dili at 7.00am.

I was amazed at the terrain as we flew into Dili. There did not seem to be any flat surfaces! We did, of course, find there is an airport. We disembarked, were hit by the humidity, paid for and collected our visas, and were on our way. We spent the rest of Tuesday sightseeing in Dili, and costing and sourcing some supplies we needed for the project.

Wednesday morning we were back at the airport, to meet Dr Brendan Mimmagh, who flew in from Dublin, via Paris, Singapore, and Darwin, to be part of our group. Brendan is a co-founder and director of an Irish based group 'Bothar International', about which you can read elsewhere in this newsletter. Brendan is more used to visiting third world countries in Africa, so a trip to Timor Leste was more like an epic.

We put the jet lagged Brendan in the front seat of our Toyota Hilux twin cab, and headed for Fuiloro. Fuiloro is east of Dili, 200 kilometres by road, but 200 kilometres which take more than five hours driving, not including stops. A freeway the road is not! We arrived at Fuiloro College to a very warm welcome from Fr Manuel and the Fuiloro team. For Brendan it was a 'homecoming'. Smiles and hugs from the staff, everyone asking after Robyn, obviously a very popular visitor.

'The Peters' had chosen to visit Fuiloro when Brendan was to be there for his 'maintenance visit', as we are not dairy farmers, but realised we could judge the status of the farm by watching Brendan's face as we entered the dairy.

We were not disappointed! The 'Cheshire cat' smile on Brendan's face told it all. He was delighted with the cleanliness of the dairy and its surrounds, the condition of the cows, the health of the calves, the records of feeding, milking, calving, and whatever else a well managed dairy needs to be successful. It needs a lot more than us city slickers ever imagined, and it was happening. This is a tribute to both Brendan and Robyn, who developed the systems, and the local workers, who, having had limited training in dairy farming, are now doing a great job. We felt proud of all of them.

One of our cows has been transferred to Fr Jose at Venilale, to provide milk for the locals, and two more are going to Fatumaca Technical College, as soon as the College completes construction of their dairy, which we visited, and it is a grand construction indeed. One of our bulls will be rotated around these locations at appropriate times. Lucky Bull! So our plan of expanding the project beyond Fuiloro is coming to fruition.

As a very experienced vet, used to dealing with rural issues, Dr Brendan Mimmagh was also praising of our project. By now Brendan had recovered from his jetlag, had been renamed 'Paddy' to avoid confusion with our Brendan, and was enjoying the experience. We tried to keep up with him!



**The Kiwanis Team at Fuiloro L to R - Br Raimundo, Peter Kimberley, Brendan Read, Fr Manuel Ximines, (Rector) Peter Cecil, Fr Jesuino, (Admin) Dr Brendan Mimmagh ( Bothar), Dr Simon Kimberley.**

The following day, Brendan, 'Paddy', and the local staff did those technical things which dairy farmers do, drenching, estimating 'body condition', checking and recording ear tags, etc. Hard work in the humidity of Timor Leste. The city slickers were onlookers!

During our time at the College, we were treated as honoured guests, almost at times to an embarrassing degree, but it brought home to us just how important



**Essential Farm Management tasks**

the help we are able to give is appreciated. All too soon it was time to bid farewell to our newest friends. Fr Manuel presented each of us with some of the local 'Tais' (traditional Timorese weaving), and thanked us most sincerely for what we have done, and will continue to do, to assist both the local and wider community in Timor Leste.

We arrived safely back in Australia, to endless hot water, electricity which is available for more than 4 hours a day, good roads, plentiful variety of food, and for me at least, a nagging desire that I must do more for these beautiful people. We will return!



**Pasquela Milking the cows. (See Footnote on page 5).**

# “For any tree to bear fruit, the seed has to first die.”

- a letter from Timor

## Editor's note

This letter (edited email) was received from Fr Jose Vattaparambil, the Indian Salesian priest who was responsible for the re-establishment of Fuiloro Agricultural College in 1986 after the Indonesian invasion of 1975. Fr Jose has returned to Venilale after almost two years absence for illness, rest and rehabilitation in USA. He played a leading role at Fuiloro during the 1999 Timor Leste independence vote and devastation that followed. Together with the Rector, Fr Manuel Ximines, Fr Jose was influential in our decision to establish the dairy at the Fuiloro location. In a quiet moment, Fr Jose admitted that in coming to Fuiloro in 1986, he had no experience in agriculture or food production. After almost a year of continuous work burying the casualties of gross malnutrition, Fr Jose decided that he needed to learn how to grow food quickly. Fuiloro is his legacy to Timor Leste.

Fr Manuel was head of the Agricultural School ( years 9-12 ) at Fuiloro in 2001 when we planned the Dairy. In 2006, the upturn at Fuiloro is due to a real team effort led by Fr Manuel, ably assisted by Fr Jesuino, newly appointed administrator and to Fr Jose's continued interest in the farm success. With Bothar International now interested in the further expansion of the dairy concept, its future looks much more optimistic.



Fr Manuel Ximines

Dear Kevin

How are you, Ann and your dear ones? Sorry for my long silence and to hear from Howard that you were very ill recently. I was also relieved to know that you are now feeling better. I can now happily give you the good news that Fuiloro is back on track. I know that you went through a great crisis about Fuiloro. Any tree to bear fruit, the seed has to first die. The good you are doing is so great, that the weight of it is almost crushing you. I must assure you that all your efforts are not in vain. The Fuiloro phenomenon or better, the Kiwanis phenomenon is catching up. Now Fatumaca and Venilale are thinking of starting milking cows, obtained from Fuiloro.

It will not be long before the people also will take to the habit of drinking milk and rearing milking cows. When all our students drink milk, they would want the same for their families and children. The snowball which the Kiwanis rolled into Timor will keep rolling. Congratulations and a **BIG THANKS TO YOU AND TO THE KIWANIS.**

When is your next visit to Timor? I think it is long overdue. Don't forget, Venilale is on the way to Fuiloro. Brendan and Robyn are doing an excellent job in Fuiloro.

In Venilale we had many electrical problems, besides others. I am happy to say that we recently solved our problem of electricity, by installing 9 solar panels with three 2000W inverters and six 200Amp batteries, for the whole school. Actually, I am using the solar power to type this letter. So the students have light for their studies. They now get up at 5.00 in the morning. Surprisingly, they are happy that they have more time for study.

We can also run our fridges and freezers on it. During the day we can also operate the computers. So when you come, you can wake up with electricity. Everybody is very happy with it. It cost us about \$5000. It was funded by the New Zealand Government. We are waiting for the milking cows to give the boys a little more nourishing food. I hope to be able to get the two cows from Fuiloro soon. When you come, you can now rise up

to electricity and also have a bowl of fresh warm milk straight from the cow (that is if you arrive after the cow!).

At the moment we are planting grass. We are also experimenting

with fish. We have three small ponds with a few hundred fish in it. The pond is too small for so many. But as they grow, we intend to cull them. The boys are really taken by this project. Recently we inaugurated the beautiful library for the children- the Portuguese old building. They also gave us a lot of Portuguese books. I invited the American Ambassador and he came and inaugurated it. He thought that it might be a small room with a few books. He was surprised to see a very well set up library, full of books on very many topics in four languages. It may be the best library in East Timor. There are some very small kids of lower primary coming to read everyday in the Library. At the moment they are not allowed to take books home, as they do not yet know how to handle books and have no facility at home to keep the books. I don't think I'll live to see what these kids will grow up to be. But I know it is going to make a difference in their lives. Your Kiwanis team and your family were among those specially remembered at the altar on Christmas and New Years' day. The New Year is another year of love and grace from the Lord. Let us really enjoy it and thank the Lord. That's all for the moment!

With love and prayers,  
Fr. Jose.



L to R Howard Williams, Manuel (criado), Fr Jose

## Brendan Returns to Fuiloro

The May visit to Fuiloro by the Kiwanis team was a big lesson in the rewards that come with patience and perseverance. There have been times when Robyn and I have despaired of ever seeing progress at the dairy farm, but we both knew that this was a worthwhile endeavour - a real potential to change and improve life for the East Timorese. At last, when I returned to the college with the two Peters, Simon and Brendan (Paddy) the news was good.



**Brendan Read**

The welcome, as always, was very warm and genuine. It was great to see everyone and to hear how life had been going for them since we were in East Timor last year. On visiting the dairy, I was thrilled and impressed to find 15 healthy and well cared for calves. These calves are the future of the East Timor Dairy Project. It is vital that every care is taken to grow them out to their full potential. To see them looking so fit and happy was very gratifying for me.

Acacio is currently leading the dairy team. Acacio has been with the project from the beginning in 2002 and has developed an extensive knowledge of dairy farming. He is a quiet man and leads by example. Daniel joined the team late last year, so I was really pleased to see how his skills and confidence have grown. Jose started work recently at the farm and Domingos has come to Fuiloro to learn dairying. He will be in charge of the dairy at Fatumaca, which will soon take two dairy cows from Fuiloro. The whole team is

working together well and Acacio is ensuring that each worker gets a chance to extend and practice what they learn.

The condition of the dairy plant was also a pleasure to inspect. There has been regular maintenance of the dairy plant and cleaning is now an integral part of the routine at Fuiloro. The rains have been abundant this year and Fuiloro was lush. Pasture was in abundance and the cattle were well fed. The few days we had at Fuiloro were busy with walks over the farm, drenching the animals and checking their health, minor repairs to plant and long talks

with Acacio, the farm staff, Fr Jesuino and Fr Manuel.

On our trip back to Dili we detoured to Fatumaca. I wanted to show the rest of our team the wonderful work that is being done by Fr Locatelli and his fellow Salesians. Fuiloro's potential can be better understood in the light of the great achievements in education, agriculture and development at Fatumaca. We inspected the new dairy being built there which is soon to receive Fuiloro cows. WOW! It's the Taj Mahal of dairying!

It was a wonderful chance to catch up with old friends and see the fantastic progress at Fuiloro. It would not be there without a firm and committed belief in the East Timor Dairy Project, and the continued efforts of people a long way off in Australia. Thanks to the ongoing partnership with East Timor, the dairy farm is going from strength to strength.

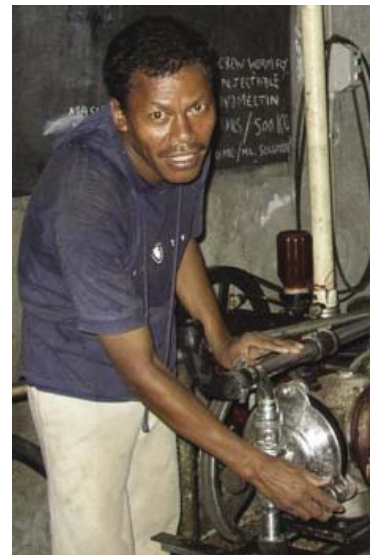
## Irrigation – The Next Step

The current season at Fuiloro is the best since the dairy project began with both pasture and the cattle in good condition. To maintain this effort it is now imperative that we urgently commission the underground irrigation system which is already in place fitted with a new electric pump. This will dramatically extend the grazing cycle beyond July through the dry period which usually lasts until end November.

The plan is to overhead wire the pump from the dairy where a new larger generator has been recently installed using US Aid funds secured by the project. The original generator was too small and has been transferred to the farm workshop where it can also provide back-up lighting for the school.

The overhead wire involves about 900m of 25mm copper cable to cost around \$ 4,000. A volunteer electrician is available to help. When completed, the irrigation will

significantly extend the dairy output and maintain the herd nutrition. By extending the electricity to the pump, it can also operate without the dairy generator when Los Palos electricity supply is again restored to the College soon. This has been down for about 18 months and has caused a sharp increase in diesel operating costs for the farm/ and College.



**Daniel services the milk pump**



**The new diesel generator funded by USAid**

## Extra Funds Still Required

As indicated with the irrigation system, donated funds are still required and will be much appreciated by the Fuiloro community to selectively maintain this exciting project and expand its horizons. Further funding is being very carefully targeted to ensure maximum self reliance but ensuring the critical development path for the dairy. Tax deductible receipts can be provided. Assistance from any of our supporters will be much appreciated.

See Acknowledgements page 6.

# FARM NEWS - Briefs

The good news is not all at the dairy. The poultry sheds are also prolific- almost 3,000 eggs daily from very healthy Australian hens. The initial day old chicks were hatched from fertile eggs provided by Rotary from Melbourne and delivered with the first herd of cows by Kiwanis in 2002. Kiwanis also provided the modern incubator and many pallets of egg cartons. The result is a thriving poultry operation.



**New piglets receive TLC from Mum**

Nearby, as well as providing pork for the college, the breeding piggery continues to produce and distribute healthy piglets to the local communities. These are given to the villagers free of cost when weaned and then fattened as a reliable and valuable source of meat and protein.



**Brendan's pride and joy – some of the new calves**

As Brendan has reported elsewhere, the 15 very healthy dairy calves and the plans to expand milking cows to Fatumaca and Venilale are a pleasing reward for all concerned.

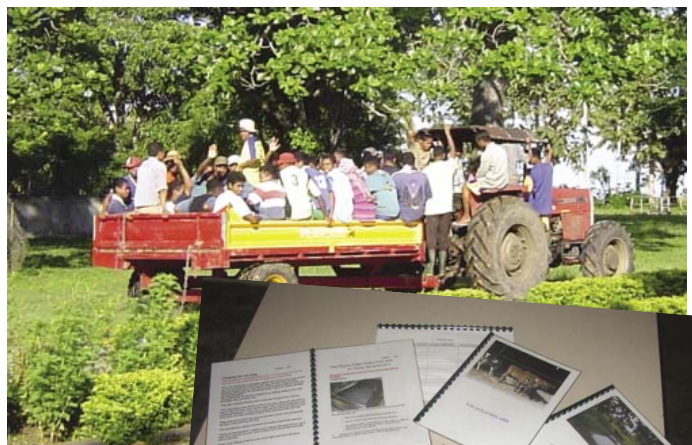
**Footnote:** Pasquela is a friend of Mary-Claire Bailey. Her sister, Esmenia, was a star pupil in 2002 and a hard worker at the dairy. She featured in the Dairy opening at Fuiloro - Oct 2002 Esmenia is now studying Agriculture at Dili University. Pasquela and Esmenia come from Assalaino and their father is a primary school teacher. Pasquela has a great sense of humour and she enjoyed working at the dairy with Robyn.



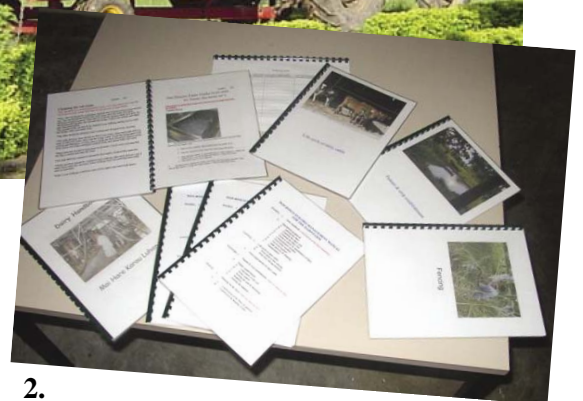
**3000 plus eggs - all neatly stacked in Kiwanis cartons**



**A few of the hard working hens**



**1.**



**2.**

**Above:** 1. The new feed trailer has multiple uses  
2. A full set of Dairy manuals – in Tetum & English - Thanks to Robyn

**These pictures tell a great story.**

# Fuiloro Dairy Farm attracts Irish interest

**Bothar** (pronounced Bow Har) is an Irish based charitable organisation which specializes in locating many types of livestock – but especially cattle - in developing countries around the world. Their focus in recent years has been most African countries, but has included Albania and Serbia.

In our Summer 2005 Newsletter we reported on a meeting with Peter Ireton the Founding CEO of Bothar when he visited Melbourne. This meeting provided the opportunity to share knowledge of the work of Bothar and Kiwanis in their respective fields.

**VIVA** – Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance – is a volunteer organisation whose stated Mission is providing animal health care and education to the Developing World. Viva vigorously pursues their own objectives but they also work closely with Bothar on many projects in a number of countries. In our part of the world, they have a presence in Nepal and Vietnam.

The work of Don Bosco Agricultural College, Fuiloro and the establishment of the Kiwanis Dairy are of keen interest to both Bothar and VIVA, who were jointly represented by Veterinarian Dr Brendan Mimmagh on a recent visit to Timor Leste (see Kiwanis Team visits Timor Dairy). As Brendan Mimmagh observed, the model being deployed at Fuiloro – a traditional herd-based dairying operation with pasture grazing and mechanised milking – is markedly different to the Bothar model.

The Bothar model usually involves one or two cows in a household or village and all milking is done by hand. Nevertheless, there are many issues of animal health, milking hygiene, local pastures, education and the challenges of working far from home which we found



**Dr Mimmagh**

in common. As well as being a keen observer of the operations and progress at Fuiloro, Dr Mimmagh was able to make a hands-on contribution in a number of ways.

We will maintain close ties with both Bothar and VIVA, so that we can draw on their experience as the dairy expands beyond Fuiloro. Already preparations are well underway to place pairs of dairy cows in two other locations – at Fatumaca and Venilale.

In both these locations hand feeding and hand milking methods will be deployed.

We hope that we can report in future Newsletters that these initiatives – and others being planned – are successful in continuing the development of dairying in Timor Leste.

## Acknowledgments

This column would not be complete without a mention of the efforts of Howard Williams from Christian College farm Ballarat, who has made at least twelve trips to Fuiloro for the dairy team and his other love, the Viqueque school project, supported by Geelong. On his last visit he finalised arrangements for the three criados to attend the Anzac Day march in Melbourne and meet the veterans they helped and supported in Timor during WW11. A huge effort, Howard!

Recent donations of \$1,000 from Noel Grasso of Parkdale will ensure another 6-8 children without

family support can commence school at Fuiloro. This is intended as an annual gift by Noel. Long time supporter, Alan Odgers from Korumburra, has forwarded another \$ 2,000 towards the irrigation pump costs. Sincerely appreciated Alan and Noel!

Dairy News wishes to sincerely thank team member and Kiwanian, John Fife for a great effort in managing our PR, newsletter, webpage and media for the Dairy team since the project began in 2001. A great job well done, John!



Serving the  
Children  
of the World

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