Key challenges faced by women in agricultural and dairy value chain activities

• Women's mobility is limited because of traditional patriarchal attitudes and therefore women are secluded to the home. They are limited in their role in the dairy value chain, working mainly as producers. Women cannot expand their businesses since they do not have marketing opportunities.

• Women can own productive assets such as livestock and poultry if they are bought with their own money or received as gifts from their parents. However, they may or may not have decision-making power over these assets.

• Women are responsible for the care of livestock and dairy production, however there are no formal livestock property rights in Bangladesh and women owning cattle can still be at disadvantaged when ownership of cattle is challenged.

• Women's large workload impedes on their ability to participate in other Income Generating Activities.

• Traditional attitudes of dairy producers are predominantly distrustful of female service providers because they feel women cannot skillfully conduct technical work such as LHW and AI, as men would be able to.

Shefali hopes to get a feed dealership license so that she can establish herself further as a major feed seller in her village and nearby villages. Shefali says that since making quality feed available in her area, dairy cattle are properly cared for and milk production in her village has increased; therefore it is contributing to improving not only Shefali's economical situation but also of the other villagers.

Figure 1: Trend of LHW's Income from Jan 2009 to Aug 2012
Source: SDVC's GPF and LHW Survey data

Daulotunnessa describes her life: I was a conventional village woman and had limited access to go out of the home to attend activities or social connections. My life used to be desperate and miserable. My husband was bedridden and the only income source of the family was a cow which did not produce enough milk to maintain the family. But now, this milk collection business gives me the income to properly care for my family. I can now sleep well at night and not have nightmares of how I will feed my family tomorrow.