



# WEEKLY LABOUR BULLETIN

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## NEW GRADING STRUCTURE

### INTRODUCTION

The grades applicable in the agriculture industry were found in the first schedule of S.I 41 of 2022. However, a job evaluation exercise was carried out and concluded in 2024, and the results were adopted at a Full Council in July 2024, but implementation of the new grades began on 1 September 2025. These new grades replaced the grades that are found in the first schedule of S.I 41 of 2022, and each sub-sector now has its own grades. In this bulletin, we will explain what this entails, but first, we will look at how these new grades came about.

### JOB EVALUATION EXERCISE

The job evaluation was done by a firm called Kubasa Consultants, who were engaged by the NEC to assist with the job evaluation. The grades that were in the agriculture industry had been in operation for a long time, and they had not been updated to keep up with the evolution of the agriculture industry, hence the job evaluation exercise.

The job evaluation exercise was carried out in 8 regions and covered all the sub-sectors in the agriculture industry. The exercise was carried out over a period of one year, and a total of 2115 jobs were evaluated according to the sub-sectors in the industry:

1. Agro – 13 farms were visited, and 633 jobs were evaluated.
2. General Agriculture – 45 farms were visited, and 726 jobs were evaluated.
3. Horticulture – 17 farms were visited, and 380 jobs were evaluated.
4. Kapenta – 2 farms were visited, and 21 jobs were evaluated.
5. Sugarcane – 12 farms were visited, and 125 jobs were evaluated.
6. Tea and Coffee – 4 farms were visited, and 130 jobs were evaluated.
7. Timber – 3 farms were visited, and 100 jobs were evaluated.

The framework that was used to evaluate these jobs was the Patterson Job Description framework, which has 6 bands where jobs are classified and below are the bands:

- i. F – Policy decision making, Top management
- ii. E – Programming decisions, Senior management
- iii. D – Interpretive decisions, Middle management
- iv. C – Routine decisions, Skilled workers
- v. B – Automatic decisions, Semi-skilled worker
- vi. A – Defined decisions, Unskilled workers.



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It is important to note that for the NEC, jobs are graded from A to C only as managerial employees (D, E and F) are not part of the NEC. Previously, the highest grade was C2; however, the new grades established by the job evaluation exercise saw the grades going up to C5 and below are the highest grades per sub-sector:

- a. Agro – C5
- b. General Agriculture – C4
- c. Tea and Coffee – C3
- d. Horticulture – C2
- e. Sugarcane – C3
- f. Timber – C3 (However, there is no job in A1, the grading starts in A2)
- g. Kapenta – C5 (However, there are no jobs in A1 and C4)

## THE NEW GRADES

The new grading structure, as outlined above, came into effect on 1 September 2025 and requires that employees be assigned according to these updated grades. Questions may arise regarding employees whose grades have changed—either from a higher to a lower grade, or from a lower to a higher one. The response to these situations is as follows:

*Where an employee was previously on a higher grade but is placed on a lower grade under the new grading structure, the employee will be regraded accordingly, and their remuneration will remain unchanged. In other words, the employee will continue to receive the wage associated with their former higher grade despite the downgrade (see section 6(2) of S.I. 41 of 2022).*

Conversely, where an employee was on a lower grade and is now placed on a higher grade under the new structure, both the employee's grade and remuneration will be adjusted to align with the new, higher grade (see section 6(9)(c)(i) of S.I. 41 of 2022). Employees engaged after the adoption of the new grading structure will be graded accordingly and paid the appropriate wage for their assigned grade.

Significant effort was undertaken to determine these grades, with 2,115 jobs evaluated. However, it is possible that some jobs may have been overlooked during the process. Under Section 6(9) of S.I. 41 of 2022, an employer may provisionally assign a grade to a job, but they are required to notify the NEC, who will then evaluate the position and assign the correct grade. Therefore, farmers with such jobs should contact the NEC for guidance. Additionally, if a farmer is uncertain about how to grade their employees under the new system, they should also seek assistance from the NEC.

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A key distinction between the old and new grading systems is that the new grades are supported by defined job descriptions. This makes it easier for farmers to accurately grade their employees, as these descriptions are set out in the job evaluation report. The report is available for download from the NEC website.

It is important to note that a new constitution was adopted in August 2024, which provided clear definitions for each sub-sector. As a result, some crops were reclassified into different sub-sectors, meaning that certain farmers also changed their sub-sector classification. Farmers who are uncertain about which sub-sector they currently belong to should contact the NEC for clarification. This redefinition of sub-sectors also affects the grading system, as the new grades are organised according to sub-sectors. Therefore, it is essential for farmers to know the sub-sector under which they are classified.

## CONCLUSION

The grading structure in the agriculture industry has been revised, with the new grades taking effect on 1 September 2025. It is therefore essential for farmers to implement these updated grades. The grades are now organized by sub-sector, meaning each sub-sector has its own specific grading structure. Farmers who are unsure how to proceed can seek guidance from the NEC or consult a CFU labour consultant for assistance.

***Disclaimer: This article is issued to serve as a general guide to farmers and does not substitute legal advice that may be required to address a particular situation with peculiar circumstances.***

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