

THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS' UNION OF ZIMBABWE



COMMERCIAL
FARMERS'
UNION

83RD ANNUAL CONGRESS 2026

GROWTH THROUGH UNITY: Building an Inclusive,
Sustainable Agricultural Future

The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe



VENUE: ART Farm, Calgary Close, Off Alpes Road, Pomona.

THEME: "GROWTH THROUGH UNITY: Building an Inclusive, Sustainable Agricultural Future"

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The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe

VENUE: ART FARM



23RD JULY 2026

08:00 - 14:30



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AGENDA

23RD JULY 2026

GROWTH THROUGH UNITY: Building an Inclusive,
Sustainable Agricultural Future

08:00 - 09:00

Council Meeting (Councilors Only)

09:00 - 09:50

CLOSED SESSION

- Registration of delegates
- Regional Chairman Annual Tabled Reports
- ARAC ANNUAL TABLED REPORT
- LABOUR ANNUAL TABLED REPORT
- CFU Accounts year ending 31 March 2026
- Appointment of Legal Advisor for the Union
- Confirmation of Trustees
- Appointment of Auditors
- Resolutions for 2026
 - Restructuring of CFU to separate compensation and farming.
 - Membership & Licence Fee 2026
- Discussion

09:50 - 10:30

Tea

10:30 - 13:00

OPEN SESSION

10:30 - 10:40

Welcome & Opening with scripture reading & prayer

10:40 - 11:10

OFFICIAL OPENING

by Guest of Honour, the Minister of Lands and Rural Development,
Honourable Vangelis P. Haritatos, MP

11:10 - 11:35

Presentation - Daniel Burger - UF

83rd Annual Congress 2026

The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe



VENUE: ART FARM

23RD JULY 2026

08:00 - 14:30



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11:35 - 12:00

Address to Congress by the President of the Commercial Farmers' Union
Liam Philp and Adoption of Report

12:00 - 13:00

Panel Discussion with individuals covering:

Lands
Agriculture
Finance
Markets
CFU/ UF

13:00 - 13:15

Presentation of CFU Farming Oscar award by CFU Vice President

13:15- 13:20

CLOSURE & VOTE OF THANKS

13:20 - 14:00

FINGER LUNCH

14:00 - 14:30

POST CONGRESS COUNCIL MEETING
END OF FORMAL PROCEEDINGS

AGENDA

23RD JULY 2026

GROWTH THROUGH UNITY: Building an Inclusive,
Sustainable Agricultural Future



83rd Annual Congress 2026

2. Rules of Debate

Order of Debate

- The **Proposer** will identify him/herself clearly.
- The **Proposer** will speak.
- The **Seconder** will speak.
- **General Debate** will take place.
- The **Proposer** will wind up the Debate.

***Note:** If required, the Minister, Government representative or guest will be asked to reply at a time requested by the CFU President.*

Length of Speeches

- **Proposer of Resolutions** – 5 minutes
- **Seconder of Resolutions** – 3 minutes
- **Mover of Amendments** – 2 minutes
- **Other speakers** – 2 minutes

The proposer of a resolution may reply at the conclusion of debate, limited to three minutes. Government representatives and guests are requested to keep their speeches as short as possible. The President may, at his discretion, allow an extension of these limits.



3. Past Presidents of the Commercial Farmers' Union

1910 – 1914 HON R A Fletcher, **MLA**

1914 – 1916 E Wilson, **Esq**

1920 – 1923 C S Jobling, **Esq**

1923 – 1929 S M Lanigan O'Keefe, **CMG**

1929 – 1931 H B Christian, **Esq**

1932 – 1935 G N Fleming, **Esq**

RNFU

1942 – 1944 John Dennis, **OBE**

1944 – 1946 Hon H V Gibbs

1946 – 1948 J M Caldicott, **Esq**

1948 – 1951 E D Palmer, **Esq**

1951 – 1954 J MacIntyre, **Esq**

1954 – 1956 M Chenells, **Esq**

1956 – 1963 E B Evans, **OBE**

1963 – 1968 T Mitchell, **DFC**

1968 – 1970 J W Field, **Esq**

1970 – 1972 R G Pascoe, **Esq**

1972 – 1974 M E Butler, **Esq**

1974 – 1976 C Millar, **Esq**

1976 – 1978 C J Strong, **Esq**

1978 – 1979 D R Norman, **Esq**

Honorary Life Vice Presidents

A J Laurie, **Esq**

R G Pascoe, **Esq**

C J Strong, **Esq**

C G Tracey, **ICD, Esq**

C J Taffs, **Esq**

CFU

1979 – 1980 D R Norman, **Esq**

1980 – 1981 D B Spain, **Esq**

1981 – 1983 J M Sinclair, **Esq**

1983 – 1986 A J Laurie, **Esq**

1986 – 1988 J R Rutherford, **Esq**

1988 – 1990 J H Brown, **Esq**

1990 – 1992 A D P Burl, **Esq**

1992 – 1994 A J Swire-Thompson, **Esq**

1994 – 1996 P MacSporran, **Esq**

1996 – 1998 N Swanepoel, **Esq**

1998 R D Swift, **Esq**

1998 – 1999 N Swanepoel, **Esq**

1999 – 2001 T Henwood, **Esq**

2001 – 2003 C Cloete, **Esq**

2003 – 2007 D S Taylor-Freeme, **Esq**

2007 – 2009 T R Gifford, **Esq**

2009 – 2011 G S Theron, **Esq**

2011 – 2014 C J Taffs, **Esq**

2014 – 2018 P S Steyl, **Esq**

2018 – 2024 A J Pascoe, **Esq**

2024 - TO DATE R S Philp, **Esq**

Trustees

Dave Bouma, **Esq**

Susan Heyns, **Esq**



History of the Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe Farming Oscar Award

The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe Farming Oscar Award has a long and proud history having been introduced in 1961 by the late Mr C. G. Tracey during his term as an award in recognition of “those people who have generally done well for agriculture”.

This annual Oscar has become known as the “Farming Oscar” to be given to some person or persons who have given outstanding service to agriculture, and has been awarded to people who have contributed to the industry in its widest sense.

Over the years winners have been chosen from the practical and scientific disciplines of agriculture, as well as from the administration and leadership roles with the winners selected in recognition of having contributed significantly to the agricultural progress in Zimbabwe.

The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe



4. OSCAR Winners Award



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1961 E B Evans, OBE	1983 J M Sinclair Marchel	2005 Dr J Grant
1962 A Rattray, OBE	1984 J W Hayward	2006 D S Taylor- Freeme
1963 E R Campbell, CBE	1985 H J Quinton	2007 A Masterson
1964 R Stockil, KBE, OBE	1986 John & Jill Laurie	2008 D Drury
1965 A C Black	1987 Dr R W Mupawose	2009 R H Vaughan-Evans
1966 Dr I McDonald	1988 J Brown	2010 Mike Campbell & Ambassador Xavier
1967 Dr H Pereira	1989 R K Harvey	2011 B Oldrieve
1968 J R Southall	1990 P Millar	2012 Dr C Foggen
1969 W Margolis	1991 Dr S Hargreaves	2013 L R Bruce
1970 H R Mundy	1992 R Ternouth	2014 C J Taffs
1971 The Hon J C Graylin, ICDCMG	1993 Dr P Grant	2015 Dr D Bruce
1972 C G Tracey	1994 R Winkfield	2016 Dr J MacRobert
1973 Dr R C Elliott	1995 D Smith	2017 Mike Clark
1974 M E Butler	1996 M Edwards	2018 Pete Steyl
1975 N Spoel	1997 H Smith	2019 Nick Brooke
1976 R A Griffith, ICD, MBE	1998 V Hurley	2020 Ben Purcell Gilpin
1977 J R Humphreys	1999 N Swanepoel	2021 T de Jager
1978 D K Worthington	2000 P Lombard	2022
1979 C J Strong	2001 Dr L T V Cousins	2023 Dr Mario Beffa
1980 Max Rosenfels	2002 R Tattersfield	2024 Andrew Pascoe
1981 D R Norman	2003 Dr J Jackson	2025 Dirk Odendaal
1982 J W Field	2004 D Hasluck	



5. Resolution: Farmers' License Fees and Rules

The Council of the Commercial Farmers' Union resolves and recommends to Congress the adoption of an Annual License Fee for the 2026/2027 year. License fees will become due on the anniversary date of payment.

The CFU Council further resolves and recommends to Congress the adoption of payment for licenses applicable to all members as illustrated in the following schedule:

CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBER FEE PAYABLE

LARGE OPERATING LICENSE - US\$2000 per annum or US\$200 per month

MEDIUM OPERATING LICENSE - US\$1000 per annum or US\$100 per month

STANDARD OPERATING LICENSE - US\$500 per annum or US\$50 per month

SMALL OPERATING LICENSE - US\$300 per annum or US\$33.50 per month

ARAC SINGLE TITLE LICENSE - US\$100

ARAC MULTIPLE TITLE LICENSE - US\$200

CORPORATE MEMBERS - US\$2000 per annum or US\$200 per month

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS - US\$500 per annum or US\$50 per month

NB: ZWG rates will be available from the office on enquiry

NOTES

- Large operating license turnover of more than US\$ 1 million
- Medium operating license turnover between US\$500 000 and US\$1 million
- Standard operating license turnover between US\$150 000 and US\$500 000
- Small operating license turnover up to US\$150 000
- Multiple site operators to be treated according to the size of each operation



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6. Congress Reports

Regional Reports 2026

MANICALAND REGION CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT TO CONGRESS 2026

Introduction

The Manicaland Region presents its report with appreciation for the continued resilience, engagement, and commitment of members during another year of transition and challenge within Zimbabwean agriculture.

The report highlights membership growth, leadership changes, and the evolving strategic context of the CFU.

Membership Growth

Regional membership has shown strong growth:

- **2023:** 11 members
- **May 2026:** 58 members

This reflects renewed confidence in the CFU and continued reliance on collective representation. The Region thanks members for their ongoing commitment to paying subscriptions and supporting the Union.

Governance and Leadership

The Region records its sincere appreciation to **Kevin Stirrup**, who steps down having completed three years as Vice Chairman and CFU Council member. His contribution and consistent support of the Chairman are acknowledged with gratitude.

We also thank the **CFU President and Vice President** for extending their service beyond their initial term, ensuring continuity during a critical period. Their continued advocacy for farming interests and the President's commitment to maintaining the compensation process remain deeply appreciated.

Strategic Context

The CFU is at a **key crossroads requiring structural reflection**, with two emerging areas of focus:

The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe



- A **dedicated compensation structure**
- A **dedicated farming structure**

The potential separation of these functions must be carefully considered through the **constitutional process of the CFU**.

Any decisions, votes, or expressions of preference will be limited to **paid-up members and those with valid compensation claims**, ensuring good governance, transparency, and respect for membership status.

Members are urged to engage fully with the **upcoming survey** and to consider its context carefully before responding, ensuring an informed understanding of the implications ahead of the **2026 Congress deliberations on the proposed separation process**.

Appreciation to Members

The Region thanks all members for their continued support and engagement, which remains central to the strength of the CFU in Manicaland.

Members are encouraged to maintain this commitment as the Union navigates future decisions relating to:

- The outcome of the **2026 Congress on structural separation and compensation**
- The strengthening of active farming structures
- Broader institutional developments within the CFU

Conclusion

The Region approaches this AGM with optimism, grounded in membership growth and strengthened engagement, but also with clear awareness of the strategic decisions ahead.

We remain committed to constructive participation in CFU processes and to supporting outcomes that secure both **fair and equitable compensation outcomes arising from the 2026 Congress decisions on the proposed separation process** and the sustainability of active farming.

Suzie Heyns
Chairperson - Manicaland Region



MASVINGO REGION CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT TO CONGRESS 2026

The 2025/2026 agricultural year in the Masvingo Region was characterised by exceptionally high and well-distributed rainfall, with most districts receiving between 650 mm and over 1,000 mm—well above average. This resulted in full dam levels, strong grazing conditions, and generally favourable agricultural production outcomes across both communal and commercial sectors. Despite a mid-season dry spell, soil moisture remained adequate, and scattered rains continued through to the end of April. Mtirikwi (Kyle) and Turgwe Makosi dams both reached spill levels and remained full for extended periods.

Agriculture and Crops

Crop production was dominated by small-scale farmers, with limited commercial cropping outside irrigation schemes in the Victoria East grain belt and sugarcane in the Lowveld. Maize prices fluctuated between US\$5 and US\$7 per bucket, though reliable production statistics remain limited due to high levels of local consumption and informal trade.

Infrastructure and Transport

Significant infrastructure progress was recorded, including completion of the Mucheke Bridge and improved traffic flow into Masvingo City via a new dual carriageway. However, sections of the Masvingo–Beitbridge Road remain in poor condition, particularly near Ngundu–Rutenga. Heavy rains caused widespread road damage across the region. Nationally important road and urban upgrades in Harare have improved traffic flow, including the Mbudzi flyover.

Sugar Industry

The sugar sector performed strongly, producing approximately 443,000 tonnes in 2025/26, with projections of 457,000 tonnes for 2026/27. The industry maintained a favourable cane-to-sugar ratio (8.5:1) and stable pricing at around US\$71/t. Water availability was generally secure, although Mkwazine remains under pressure. The Maputo rail link, previously disrupted by floods, is now operational again.

Mwenezi and Livestock

In Mwenezi, rainfall exceeded 1,170 mm in some areas, supporting strong grazing and vegetation regeneration. However, overstocking in certain areas is expected to lead to future grazing pressure. Livestock health challenges remained significant, with outbreaks of lumpy skin disease, Theileriosis, and sporadic foot-and-mouth cases. Vaccination compliance remains a key concern.

Poultry Sector

The poultry industry expanded strongly, with increased participation from small producers,



new hatcheries, and improved market availability of broilers, layers, and eggs. Demand remains high, especially in urban areas, supported by growth in fast-food outlets and live bird markets.

Cattle Industry

The cattle sector continues to face structural pressure from disease, informal market dominance, and weak formal slaughter systems. The national herd is declining faster than replacement rates. Disease outbreaks and uncontrolled movements have affected productivity. Masvingo abattoir processes around 15,000 head annually, but pricing remains under pressure. Market competition from Harare abattoirs continues to disadvantage local producers.

Conservation and Wildlife

In the Save Valley Conservancy, wildlife populations remain strong, with approximately 400 rhinos and stable elephant and buffalo populations. Anti-poaching efforts have been highly effective, with no rhino poaching incidents reported and improved security infrastructure. Human-wildlife conflict remains an emerging concern due to increasing livestock and human presence.

In Bvumba Valley Conservancy, above-average rainfall supported strong veld conditions and water availability. Security operations remain robust, with reduced poaching pressure and strong community engagement, including clinics, schools, and welfare programmes.

Membership and Governance

CFU membership in Masvingo remains low due to ongoing land tenure uncertainty, with only 46 paid-up members recorded (36 non-farming, 9 farming, 1 honorary). The report acknowledges the work of CFU leadership and staff and calls for continued member support to sustain union operations.

Conclusion

Overall, the 2025/2026 season was defined by exceptional rainfall, strong ecological recovery, and mixed economic performance. While agriculture and wildlife systems benefited significantly, structural challenges remain in livestock disease control, market access, infrastructure, and land tenure security. Continued coordination between farmers, industry bodies, and government remains essential for long-term sustainability in the region.

Hendrik Boshoff
Chairman - Masvingo Region





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MIDLANDS REGION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO CONGRESS 2026

Rainfall

Rainfall across the region ranged between 850mm and 1,500mm, resulting in generally favourable conditions for both livestock and crop production.

Livestock

Good rains throughout the season provided excellent grazing conditions, contributing positively to livestock performance across the region.

Crops

The 2025/26 season was generally a good one for both maize and soya production.

Paprika production, however, was less favourable.

The marketing of soya beans continued to present challenges, with buyers maintaining strong control over grading standards. Offloading of produce has also been extremely slow, creating additional pressure on producers.

Finance

Finance remains expensive, and access to funding continues to be difficult, with banks still not forthcoming in supporting agricultural operations.

ZESA

Electricity supply has generally improved across the region. However, the usual faults and interruptions persist as the system continues to age.

Labour

Labour relations remain stable, with no significant problems reported. Appreciation is extended to the CFU team for their continued commitment and representation at NEC meetings.

Title Deeds

Most farmers have begun the title deed process, although many are finding the process slow and tedious.



The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe



Taxes

Efforts to reduce the tax burden are appreciated; however, taxes continue to pose a significant challenge to farmers.

Appreciation

Thanks are extended to all members for their continued support and commitment to the Union.

Bryan Elsworth
Chairman - Midlands Region

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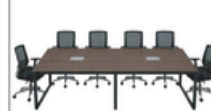


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MASHONALAND EAST REGION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO CONGRESS 2026

Rainfall and Water

Early rains delayed harvesting of the wheat crop.

Until the end of December 2025, there was some good rainfall over most of the region. January 2026 was hot and dry, which affected the growth of the Maize crop. Lighter rains for the rest of the season were seen.

The dams on the eastern side, e.g., Marondera, are all full. In Beatrice, some dams are still empty, and quite a few are 15 to 20%, while others are full.

Dairy

A new dairy has opened. The cost of feed and the running of generators have made the industry almost not viable. Producers have secured silage reserves and are actively baling hay and soybean stocks to guarantee an adequate supply of roughage. These measures are being implemented to support the zero-grazing management system for dairy herds, ensuring consistent feed availability and maintaining herd productivity.

Cattle

Recent rains have spurred strong grass growth, though veld fires remain a major concern. Cattle are in good condition, with promising production, where herds were well managed through last winter. Prices rose in October 2025 and have remained firm. Sporadic cases of lumpy skin, three-day stiffness, and a few instances of January disease were reported.

Maize

Maize was planted in stages on red soils following early rains, with continued rainfall delaying field operations. The January dry spell reduced yields and led to some crop losses. Harvesting is now in full swing.

Soya Bean

The crop yield is down.

Tobacco

Due to limited dam water, extensive dry-land tobacco was planted. Yields per hectare are lower, though quality remains strong. Early-season prices were up, but later harvests have fallen in price. Seedbeds for the upcoming season are currently being established.



Land

There has been great concern about the new title deeds; it would appear there has been no progress to date.

ARAC

The resignation of some elected committee members has undermined confidence among displaced farmers. However, appreciation is extended to those continuing efforts to secure compensation.

Appreciation

Mr President Liam, I have enjoyed working with you. I admire your enthusiasm and leadership. Thanks for what you are doing for us.

Daniel, thank you.

Louise, you are a great asset to the Union. I do not know of any person who has been so dedicated and on top of everything. Well done to you and your team.

Dirk Odendaal
Chairman - Mashonaland East Region





MASHONALAND WEST (NORTH) REGION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO CONGRESS 2026

Rainfall

The rainfall in Mashonaland West has generally been quite good across most areas where The rainfall has varied from 600mm in some parts of Banket to 300mm in the northern parts of Karoi. The rainfall distribution was a lot better than last season, as the first rains began in mid-November and they cut off at the End of March, resulting in an above-normal season for most areas.

Dam Levels

Due to the good rains, most dams in the area are full or at least above 70% full. This is at least positive, as early indications show that we might be going into strong El Niño conditions this upcoming summer.

ZESA

The Zesa supply has been very good for the past few months, with farmers' main concern being that the new smart meters that have been installed at most ZESA points are recording higher ZESA usage compared to the old meters running the same motors, though. There have also been many complaints of late bills or no bills, resulting in unnecessary and untimely disconnections.

Crops Planted

Tobacco

The commercial tobacco sector planted its normal hectareage, and the crop got off to a good start with the onset of the early rains; however, most areas got above-normal rains in January, which resulted in high levels of leaching and some waterlogging, putting guys under pressure during reaping, resulting in a lot of farmers losing tobacco as it was ripening faster than they could reap it. The average price for the commercial crop is similar to last year in most cases, with lower reaping and trashy grades being depressed. As a result, farmers' returns are lower than were anticipated.

There was a big increase in small-scale tobacco production this year as the rainy season looked promising, and because the small-scale guys did well in the previous two drier seasons and because it is one of the few crops where there is finance available. Due to the increased plantings, there is an oversupply of tobacco, resulting in a strong reduction in average price across the industry, which has resulted in many small-scale growers not covering their loans and thus no disposable income for them. The international oversupply of tobacco will most likely result in average prices being lower than in previous seasons. This may translate into less small-scale tobacco being grown this coming summer.



Maize

Due to the predicted good rains, a fair bit of commercial and seed maize was planted. Most seed maize growers are in full harvest, with yields looking fair. Some commercial producers have started harvesting, with yields also looking fair, but farmers are concerned about maize imports that will drive the local price down, resulting in viability issues. The increased cost of production due to geopolitics and increased fuel prices is a big concern as we advance into the next season. Theft of maize is also a huge concern going forward, as less of it is being planted as more small-scale farmers are opting to grow tobacco or other horticultural cash crops.

Cattle

The cattle industry seems to be firm, as producers are reporting good prices for stock sold, and grazing has improved vastly from the above-normal rains. There were, however, high casualties of communal cattle in January from Tirollosis (January disease) as dipping facilities are in a shambles; thus tick populations are out of control. Veld fires will be a big problem going into the winter, as there is an increased moribund load and very few fireguards and firefighting kits out there.

Challenges

The main challenge farmers are facing is the high cost of production of most crops, with very limited finance options and late payments for the produce due to the liquidity constraints in the economy.

There has also been an increase in the amount of theft of irrigation equipment and electrical cables, as cases are being reported weekly.

Availability and cost of casual labour are also a cause for concern going into the future, as the High gold prices have attracted many into the artisanal mining scene.

We, however, remain hopeful that the rest of the year will bring greater prosperity, peace, and stability for all our members and the farming sector as a whole.

Diaan Lubbe
Chairman - Mashonaland West (North) Region



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MASHONALAND WEST (SOUTH) REGION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO CONGRESS 2026

The region was fortunate to receive a generally favourable rainy season, with rainfall ranging between 800mm and 1,100mm. However, an exceptionally wet start to the season, while welcome, prevented some growers from completing their planting programmes. Most dams concluded the season at between 80% and 100% capacity, providing a strong water reserve for the months ahead.

Despite these encouraging water levels, the rapid expansion of large-scale irrigation schemes by new entrants has placed increasing pressure on already stretched water resources. Water allocation and abstraction remain largely unregulated, with limited planning or oversight of water allocations and agreements by ZINWA. The prevailing approach appears to be one of unrestricted usage—drawing as much water as possible, as quickly as possible—with little consideration for sustainable management later in the season. As a result, many producers face the risk of water shortages midway through crop cycles, with few mechanisms in place to mitigate these challenges.

The livestock sector has enjoyed a positive year. Grazing conditions have been excellent, cattle have remained in good condition, and no significant disease outbreaks have been reported. While abundant grass remains available, the onset of veld fires has already begun and could quickly diminish grazing reserves.

In the poultry sector, ZERA's rating of VAT continues to place compliant operators at a disadvantage. Substantial investment is underway, with several large hatchery projects expected to come online before year-end. These facilities are projected to produce up to 1.1 million day-old chicks per week, while processing plants are reaching capacities of approximately nine tonnes of meat per hour. At the same time, the high cost of locally produced maize continues to make it uncompetitive to compete with imports of protein and reduces the competitiveness of domestic poultry producers against imported protein products. Maize growers argue that grain prices remain insufficient, highlighting the persistent vicious cycle of the high cost of doing business in agriculture.

The citrus industry has faced a particularly challenging export season, largely due to escalating shipping costs and logistical disruptions linked to ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Combined with VAT obligations and rising operational expenses, these factors have significantly eroded the profitability of exporting Class 2 fruit. As a consequence, mandarin exports are expected to decline by an estimated 40–50% this season. Attention now turns to the Valencia harvest, which is due to commence in the coming weeks, with producers optimistic about both yield and quality.

Meanwhile, a dramatic expansion of gold mining activity across the region has placed considerable strain on Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) infrastructure. Existing substations are increasingly unable to meet rising demand, resulting in frequent and prolonged power outages. While these interruptions are not classified as formal load shedding,

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recurring faults and supply failures have become a significant operational challenge for businesses and farming enterprises alike.

The mining boom has also had a pronounced impact on the labour market. Competition for workers has intensified, drawing labour away from agriculture and leaving many farmers facing acute staff shortages. To retain and attract employees, producers are increasingly paying wages well above National Employment Council (NEC) rates, further adding to the cost pressures confronting the sector.

Marius Grove
Chairman - Mashonaland West (South) Region





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MATABELELAND REGION PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO CONGRESS 2026

It is my honour to present the Matabeleland Regional Report for the 2025/2026 season.

Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge the members of Matabeleland for their continued support, resilience and commitment during another extremely challenging year. Despite the many pressures facing agriculture, farmers across the region continue to adapt, diversify and persevere under very difficult conditions.

I would also like to sincerely thank the Presidium, Council members and office staff of the CFU for their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to the industry. The Presidium, in particular, has undertaken extensive engagements and negotiations with the Government, continually pursuing solutions and accountability regarding the many concerns, challenges and regulatory burdens faced by farmers. Their ongoing dedication to representing and defending the interests of the agricultural sector is sincerely appreciated.

The formal agricultural sector continues to operate under severe pressure from taxes, levies, permits and numerous compliance costs. Rising production costs, coupled with policy uncertainty and infrastructure challenges, continue to place a significant strain on farming businesses. Despite the statement issued by the Ministry of Finance last year regarding the review and reduction of levies, tariffs and regulatory charges, very few departments have meaningfully implemented these directives. Members continue to raise concerns that many charges remain excessively high and, in some cases, are not being aligned with the prescribed statutory instruments and approved pricing structures.

The 2025/2026 season has generally been positive across much of the region, with most areas receiving average to above-average rainfall. Rainfall figures ranged from approximately 530mm in Beitbridge to an exceptional 1360mm in parts of Gwanda. Many dams across the region reached capacity early in the season, providing welcome relief after several difficult years and significantly improving grazing conditions. However, Bulawayo supply dams, unfortunately, received little significant inflow, which remains a concern for the city and surrounding areas. Whilst many dams are currently full, there are growing concerns regarding the lack of maintenance and repairs by ZINWA, resulting in substantial water losses and wastage through leaking infrastructure and poorly maintained systems.

The livestock sector experienced mixed fortunes throughout the year. The season commenced with cattle prices remaining relatively low, particularly when compared to other regions of the country, placing considerable pressure on producers within Matabeleland. However, as the season progressed, the region experienced a strong upward trend in prices, with many farmers and auctioneers describing it as one of the strongest cattle markets seen in several years. Slaughter steers traded upwards of USD2.10/kg and reached as high as USD2.35/kg at peak periods. Commercial and economy cattle generally performed above average for this time of year, largely due to reduced national supply and movement restrictions associated with Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks, which further tightened availability. However, the market has



recently softened following a sudden influx of cattle to abattoirs.

The Trade Fair Sale recorded improved prices compared to previous years, although turnout numbers remained relatively modest. Encouragingly, quality stock continued to attract strong interest, with the champion steer selling for USD3,000.

The region has also suffered severe animal health challenges this season. Significant outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease, January Disease and widespread Lumpy Skin Disease were experienced across many areas, with numerous farmers describing the Lumpy Skin outbreak as the worst seen in many years. Many farmers privately sourced and administered vaccinations at considerable cost, yet substantial losses were still experienced despite these efforts. The Veterinary Department has reported completion of the Bi-Country Foot and Mouth vaccination programme along the Botswana border.

The region has, once again, experienced a worrying increase in stock theft cases. Farmers continue to suffer substantial losses, with many expressing frustration over the limited assistance, investigations and recoveries achieved through law enforcement channels. Stock theft remains a major threat to confidence and viability within the livestock sector.

The dairy sector continues to tread water, with increasing fuel prices placing additional pressure on already constrained margins between production costs and producer prices. Farmers continue diversifying and side marketing in efforts to remain sustainable under extremely difficult trading conditions.

The majority of cropping farmers have reported a successful season, although concerns remain regarding the availability and rising cost of inputs for the upcoming production year. A notable development within the region has also been the continued expansion of tobacco production into parts of Matabeleland, reflecting farmers' ongoing diversification efforts and changing production patterns.

Electrical power remains a huge constraint across the country, severely affecting all sectors of the industry. The season commenced with extensive load shedding, placing considerable strain on farming operations and production schedules. Whilst scheduled load shedding has since improved significantly, farmers are now predominantly experiencing ongoing faults, maintenance issues, poor service delivery and delayed responses to breakdowns. The recent installation of smart meters on farms has also caused significant confusion and chaos regarding billing, balances and reconnections, with many members struggling to access accurate information on the online platform. Members have reported considerable frustration with the system, describing it as unreliable, not user-friendly and poorly communicated.

Road infrastructure throughout the region continues to deteriorate significantly, with very little visible effort toward maintenance or rehabilitation. Major road networks across Matabeleland, particularly those servicing key agricultural areas and tourism destinations, have become increasingly difficult to navigate. The poor condition of these roads is now severely affecting the efficient movement of supplies, deliveries and agricultural inputs, with transport delays becoming a growing concern for both farmers and businesses within the region.

The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe



The extraction of pit sand, river sand and topsoil in areas surrounding Bulawayo remains a major environmental concern. The destruction of river systems, uncontrolled extraction and illegal dumping continue to pose serious threats to both water management and the environment. Illegal artisanal mining activities continue to create tension and insecurity in farming areas. In addition to security concerns, these activities continue to contribute to environmental degradation and damage to grazing land and water systems.

Despite the many challenges facing agriculture, the resilience, adaptability and determination of farmers in Matabeleland remains commendable. Agriculture continues to play a critical role in the economy and food security of the country, and it is essential that the industry receives the support, policy consistency and infrastructure required to remain viable and productive.

It remains for me to wish all farmers the very best for the coming season; may it be productive, successful and rewarding.

Pam Rauch
Chairperson - Matabeleland Region



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Commodity Association Reports 2026

Horticulture Development Council Report

The Current State of Zimbabwe's Horticulture Industry

1. Introduction

The Horticultural Development Council (HDC) is pleased to submit this overview of the current state of Zimbabwe's horticulture industry to the CFU Congress. The horticulture industry remains one of the most important growth opportunities within Zimbabwean agriculture, with strong potential to generate export earnings, create employment, attract investment, support rural livelihoods and contribute meaningfully to the country's agricultural transformation agenda.

Despite a difficult operating environment, the industry continues to show resilience. Several export-oriented value chains, including blueberries, citrus, avocados, peas, macadamias, tea, coffee and chillies, have maintained production momentum or are positioned for growth. There is continued international demand for Zimbabwean horticultural produce, and there are encouraging prospects linked to new and emerging export markets, particularly China and India.

However, this growth is under increasing pressure from a combination of fiscal, policy, financing and infrastructure constraints. Rising production costs, unrecoverable taxes, foreign currency retention losses, limited long-term financing, freight pressures, labour challenges and policy inconsistencies are materially affecting competitiveness and slowing expansion. Without urgent policy alignment and practical support measures, the industry risks losing momentum at a critical stage of growth.

This submission outlines the current performance of key horticultural subsectors, highlights the main constraints facing industry, and sets out priority areas requiring policy attention and support.

2. Overall Industry Position

Zimbabwe's horticulture industry remains one of the country's strongest agricultural export prospects. It is already making a substantial contribution to employment, foreign currency generation, value addition and investment attraction. The industry is also increasingly important in supporting youth employment, women's participation, skills transfer and rural incomes.

The outlook across several value chains remains positive:



- **Blueberries** continue to be one of the fastest-growing export horticulture industries in Zimbabwe, with strong international demand and growing investor interest.
- **Avocados** are showing signs of strong recovery after a weak 2025 season, with improved production expected and continued progress on export market access.
- **Citrus** remains a major export industry, with ongoing packhouse expansion, improved quality and growing regional and international market reach.
- **Macadamias** are expected to record strong production growth this year following improved rainfall and strong market demand.
- **Peas** and chillies continue to provide important export earnings and significant smallholder participation, though margins remain under severe pressure.
- **Tea and coffee** remain important plantation and smallholder industries, especially in the Eastern Highlands, but require investment and policy support to unlock growth.

At the same time, the broader industry is facing a much tougher cost and policy environment than many of its regional competitors. The cumulative burden of taxation, customs and VAT treatment, power and fuel costs, freight, export retention losses and financing constraints is now threatening viability in several subsectors.

3. State of Key Horticulture Subsectors

3.1 Blueberries

Blueberries remain the standout growth industry within Zimbabwean horticulture. The subsector has continued to expand in planted area, production and export earnings, and remains highly attractive to investors due to strong global demand and Zimbabwe's favourable production window.

In 2025, Zimbabwe had approximately **650 hectares** under blueberry production, with exports of around **9,500 tonnes**. For the 2026 season, hectareage is estimated at **approximately 800 hectares**, with exports expected to reach **11,500 tonnes**. Additional hectareage is expected to come into production in 2026 and beyond, and there are plans for a further **150 hectares of new planting** if operating conditions improve.

The opening of the **Chinese market** and anticipated access to **India** could materially strengthen the growth outlook for the industry. Blueberry growers also continue to invest in skills development and local capacity building, including internship programmes and on-farm middle management training.

However, the sector remains constrained by:

- Limited access to long-term affordable finance for establishment and expansion
- High interest rates and short-tenure facilities
- Slow progress on Special Economic Zone considerations and investment facilitation
- Export retention losses under the 70/30 foreign currency framework



- Unreliable power supply and high generator costs during harvesting and packing
- Unrecoverable VAT on packaging and capital equipment
- Labour cost disputes and uncertainty around labour regulation

Without targeted policy and financing support, the blueberry industry risks stagnating just as new export markets are opening.

3.2 Avocados

The avocado industry remains one of Zimbabwe's most promising horticultural export sectors. After a difficult 2025 season, the industry is expecting a significant rebound in 2026.

The 2025 avocado season was exceptionally poor, with exports falling to approximately **2,500 tonnes**, roughly **50% below** 2024 levels. The decline was attributed mainly to biannual bearing patterns and adverse climatic conditions, particularly high temperatures during flowering, which reduced fruit set. However, the outlook for 2026 improved significantly, with flowering conditions reported to be excellent and production forecasts rising to **around 6,000 tonnes**.

Progress on market access remains important for the subsector. The **China avocado protocol** has been signed, although operational issues and inspection requirements delayed exports. There has also been progress on access to **India**, with Zimbabwe's application acknowledged and an inspection visit expected. Successful finalisation of these protocols will be critical to unlocking better returns and diversifying markets.

Key challenges affecting the avocado industry include:

- Slow finalisation and operationalisation of export protocols, especially China and India
- Lack of long-term finance for orchard establishment and expansion
- Depressed international prices due to global supply pressures, particularly from Peru
- Concerns around profitability of smaller fruit sizes in export markets

The avocado industry remains optimistic, but sustained growth will depend on improved market access, finance and investment support.

3.3 Citrus

The citrus industry remains a major contributor to horticultural exports and continues to show encouraging growth in production, packing and market development. The 2026 season began positively, with strong lemon volumes, good fruit quality and encouraging prospects for soft citrus and Valencia oranges.

Packhouses in **Mvurwi, Mazowe and Dodhill** have remained active, while southern growers are expecting substantial volumes of grapefruit and Valencia, depending on export market pricing relative to cost. In 2025, growers exported significant volumes into Europe, Russia, the Middle East, East Africa and other regional markets. Packhouse capacity is increasingly stretched as new orchards mature, indicating confidence in the industry's long-term prospects.



However, profitability is under pressure from a range of cost drivers and operational risks:

- Increased shipping and freight costs, worsened by conflict-related disruptions in the Middle East
- Rising fuel and fertiliser costs
- Export retention losses, with the 30% surrender requirement materially reducing reinvestment capacity
- Power supply challenges and reliance on diesel generators
- Packaging cost increases and the burden of unrecoverable VAT on export packaging
- Road infrastructure constraints affecting product quality and logistics to ports
- Water allocation concerns in some production areas
- Risks to plant health from uncertified propagation material and poorly regulated backyard nurseries

Citrus remains a strong growth industry, but the cost of doing business and the need for policy support on export competitiveness remain pressing concerns.

3.4 Export Fresh Produce: Peas, Chillies and Related Lines

The export fresh produce industry remains a critical part of Zimbabwe's horticulture industry, particularly because of its strong participation by smallholder farmers. Peas, fine beans and chillies continue to generate export earnings and provide an entry point for smaller-scale producers into formal export value chains.

Pea exports have shown growth, with exports estimated at **around 10,000 tonnes** in the current reporting period, and smallholder farmers contributing approximately **30–40%** of volumes. This is an important success from an inclusion perspective. There is also clear international demand for Zimbabwean chillies.

However, this subsector is under the greatest margin pressure in horticulture. Producers are facing:

- Sharp increases in airfreight costs, with freight to London rising from around **US\$2.21/kg** last season to **US\$3.83/kg** this season.
- No corresponding increase in market prices, leaving growers as price takers.
- High fuel costs, particularly for smallholder farmers relying on diesel irrigation.
- Seed quality and supply challenges, including contamination of sugar snap seed.
- Continued phytosanitary challenges for chillies, particularly phytophthora and false codling moth.
- Limited viability of current airfreight-heavy models and the need to transition toward more sea freight, which in turn requires improved cold chain and pre-cooling infrastructure.
- Continued concern over the 90-day timeframe to acquire CD1 forms for exports.

This subsector remains strategically important because of its inclusivity and employment footprint, but it is highly exposed to cost escalation and policy inefficiencies.



3.5 Macadamia Nuts

Macadamia Nuts continue to show encouraging growth potential. Following improved rainfall and better seasonal conditions, producers are expecting a **20–40% increase in productivity** this year compared to the previous season. Market demand remains strong, and industry players report growing international interest and frequent market enquiries.

The main requirement for the macadamia industry is continued support for investment, market development and production expansion so that Zimbabwe can fully capitalise on this growing export opportunity.

3.6 Tea

Tea remains an important plantation and outgrower crop in the Eastern Highlands. Production performance has been mixed. Eastern Highlands Plantations has maintained relatively stable output, while Tanganda's tea production has come under pressure, with one report indicating a substantial decline due largely to labour-related challenges.

The tea industry continues to face:

- Labour shortages and migration of workers to the informal economy
- Rising pressure to mechanise harvesting in response to labour constraints
- The need for reliable 24-hour energy supply for processing
- Climate-related production pressures, including heat and erratic rainfall
- The need to revitalise outgrower tea plots, many of which have become underutilised or abandoned

Investment in mechanisation, energy security and outgrower rehabilitation will be important to the future of the tea industry.

3.7 Coffee

Coffee remains a niche but high-potential horticulture industry with strong revival prospects, especially in the Eastern Highlands. Industry production remains modest, but there is clear grower interest and room for expansion.

Recent projections suggest coffee production could rise to **around 400 tonnes or slightly above by 2026**, supported by increased smallholder participation and new plantings. There is also renewed interest in coffee production and industry recovery, as reflected in sector engagement and the coffee conference held in Mutare.

The coffee industry's growth is constrained by:

- Lack of long-term finance for plantation development
- Need for inputs and irrigation equipment, particularly for smallholders
- The importance of EUDR compliance and support systems for participating growers



Coffee should remain part of Zimbabwe's medium-term horticulture growth strategy, particularly given its suitability for smallholder participation and export branding.

4. Cross-Cutting Challenges Facing the Horticulture Industry

While subsector performance varies, there is a clear set of cross-cutting challenges affecting the competitiveness and growth of the horticulture industry as a whole.

4.1 Fiscal Tax Burden

The single greatest concern across the industry is the increasing fiscal burden on exporters. Recent changes to customs and VAT treatment have had serious unintended consequences for horticulture, particularly around export packaging and capital equipment.

Although duty suspension frameworks exist for some agricultural and post-harvest machinery, VAT remains payable and is often unrecoverable because horticultural exports are treated as VAT-exempt rather than zero-rated. This means that VAT on imported packaging and equipment becomes a direct production cost.

This is especially damaging because:

- Locally available packaging is often insufficient in quantity or does not meet export specifications
- Packaging is essential for export compliance and market access
- Competitor countries such as Kenya and South Africa operate more export-neutral VAT systems

HDC's position is that Government should urgently consider:

- **Zero-rating VAT on packaging used exclusively for horticultural exports**, or
- Introducing a **targeted VAT rebate mechanism** for export packaging and qualifying inputs

4.2 Export Retention and Foreign Currency Losses

The **70/30 export retention framework** remains a major concern across export horticulture. For industries with a predominantly US dollar cost base, the surrender of 30% of export proceeds creates a significant loss of value and directly reduces the ability of businesses to reinvest in expansion, maintain infrastructure and service offshore obligations.

Growers continue to report that the retention requirement is materially affecting capital deployment and investment planning. This issue is especially pronounced in blueberries, citrus and other high-input export industries.

4.3 Cost and Access to Finance

A persistent shortage of affordable long-term finance remains one of the biggest constraints



to horticulture growth. Plantation crops such as blueberries, avocados, citrus, coffee and macadamias require significant upfront capital and long payback periods. Current lending terms are generally too expensive and too short to support new establishment at scale.

The industry requires:

- Longer-tenure financing products aligned to crop cycles and investment horizons
- Greater comfort for both domestic and external lenders
- Clearer investment policy and stronger investor protection
- Deliberate engagement between Government, financiers and industry to unlock blended and patient capital for horticulture

4.4 Freight and Logistics

Freight costs continue to undermine competitiveness, particularly for airfreighted products such as peas, chillies and fine beans. Ongoing disruptions in global shipping and air cargo markets, including those linked to conflict in the Middle East, have pushed up costs significantly.

For some products, margins are now being severely eroded or eliminated by freight. This is especially damaging for smallholder-inclusive value chains. The industry will need support to strengthen cold chain infrastructure, pre-cooling and logistics systems in order to transition a greater proportion of exports from airfreight to sea freight where feasible.

4.5 Power, Fuel and Utilities

Unreliable electricity supply remains a major cost driver for horticulture, particularly in packhouses, cold rooms and irrigation systems. Although there have been some periods of improvement, growers continue to incur significant costs through generator use, diesel pumping and backup systems.

Fuel costs have also risen sharply, affecting field operations, irrigation and transport. Smallholder producers are especially vulnerable where production depends on diesel irrigation and where they are not connected to the grid.

4.6 Labour and Formal Employment Pressures

The horticulture industry is labour-intensive and employs a significant workforce, including seasonal and low-income workers. The reduction of the PAYE threshold from US\$300 to US\$100 has placed additional pressure on workers and employers alike. Industry is concerned that the current threshold is undermining formal employment by reducing already-fragile earnings for low-income and seasonal workers and pushing labour into informal arrangements.

At the same time, unresolved labour disputes, rising wage costs, uncertainty around interpretation of labour regulations and migration of labour into informal activity are affecting several subsectors.



4.7 Market Access and Phytosanitary Compliance

Progress on market access to China has been a major positive development for avocados and blueberries, and access to India remains a high priority. However, operationalisation of new protocols has been slow and often delayed by inspection and compliance processes.

At the same time, phytosanitary issues remain a challenge in several value chains, particularly chillies and citrus. Continued support for NPPO systems, inspection capacity, compliance training and protocol implementation will be critical.

5. Outlook for the Industry

Despite the many pressures facing industry, the outlook for Zimbabwean horticulture remains fundamentally positive. Global demand exists for Zimbabwean blueberries, avocados, citrus, macadamias, coffee and speciality export crops. New markets are opening. Investor interest remains present. Several subsectors are expanding in hectareage, output and export value. The industry has also demonstrated that it can support both large-scale commercial production and smallholder participation.

What is now required is a more enabling environment that allows the industry to convert that potential into scaled production, exports and jobs.

If the right support measures are put in place, horticulture can make a far greater contribution to:

- Export earnings and foreign currency generation
- Employment creation, especially for youth and women
- Rural incomes and smallholder inclusion
- Value addition and agro-industrial growth
- Zimbabwe's broader agricultural growth and transformation targets.

6. HDC Recommendations and Priority Areas for Action

HDC respectfully submits the following priority areas for urgent consideration by Government and industry stakeholders:

1. **Resolve the VAT and customs treatment of export packaging and capital equipment** by zero-rating qualifying export packaging or introducing a practical rebate mechanism for horticultural exporters.
2. **Review the 70/30 export retention framework** for export horticulture in order to reduce value erosion and improve reinvestment capacity.
3. **Revisit the PAYE threshold for low-income and seasonal workers** so as to protect formal employment and avoid pushing labour into informality.
4. **Accelerate finalisation and implementation of export protocols** for China and India, including practical support for inspection and compliance processes.
5. **Facilitate access to long-term, affordable horticulture finance**, especially for plantation



crops and capital-intensive export projects.

6. **Improve policy clarity and consistency** across ministries and agencies, particularly on customs, VAT, export procedures and investment rules affecting horticulture.
7. **Support investment in cold chain, logistics and sea freight readiness** to reduce dependence on expensive airfreight for selected crops.
8. **Prioritise reliable electricity and water supply to productive horticulture areas** and support investment in alternative energy systems where appropriate.
9. **Strengthen phytosanitary systems, certified planting material controls and grower training** to protect market access and long-term industry sustainability.
10. **Continue structured public-private dialogue with HDC and commodity associations** to ensure policy decisions are informed by operational realities on the ground.

7. Conclusion

Zimbabwe's horticulture industry remains one of the country's most compelling agricultural growth opportunities. The industry has demonstrated resilience, innovation and continued investment despite a difficult operating environment. Blueberries, avocados, citrus, peas, macadamias, tea and coffee all point to the same conclusion: there is real productive capacity, strong export potential and meaningful appetite for growth.

However, the industry is now at an important turning point. The cumulative effect of current fiscal, policy and operational constraints is beginning to erode competitiveness, delay investment and reduce producer margins. If these issues remain unresolved, Zimbabwe risks losing momentum just as market opportunities are expanding and investor interest is growing.

HDC therefore urges that horticulture be treated as a strategic export growth industry requiring coordinated policy support, investment facilitation and practical reforms to the cost of doing business. With the right enabling environment, horticulture can play a major role in achieving Zimbabwe's production, export, employment and economic transformation ambitions.

**Prepared by HDC for
Peter Sole**

HDC Representative for CFU Council

YOUR BUMPER HARVEST WITH SEED CO WHEAT



SC W9104

Yield potential: $\pm 10.5\text{t/ha}$
Maturity period: Medium – Late (145 – 150 days)
Disease resistance: Good resistance to Yellow and Leaf rust
Milling and Baking Quality: Very Good, consistently white flour colour ($\geq 13\%$ Protein Content; $> 28\%$ Wet Gluten Content)
Adaptation: All wheat growing areas



SC NDUNA

Yield potential: $\pm 10\text{t/ha}$
Maturity period: Early – Medium (135 – 140 days)
Disease resistance: Moderate resistance to Leaf rust
Milling and Baking Qualities: Very Good consistently ($>12.1\%$ Protein Content; $\geq 27.2\%$ Wet Gluten Content)
Adaptation: All wheat growing areas



SC SELECT

Yield potential: $\pm 10.1\text{t/ha}$
Maturity period: Early – Medium (135 -140 days)
Disease resistance: Good resistance to Leaf rust
Milling and Baking Qualities: Excellent ($>12.8\%$ Protein Content; $>30.9\%$ Wet Gluten Content)
Adaptation: All wheat growing areas



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Cattle Producers Association Report

Veld fires: The silent threat to Zimbabwe's land, water, and livestock

In 2025 alone, an estimated 936,000 hectares of land in Zimbabwe were destroyed by fire. That is not just a statistic—it is a stark reflection of a growing crisis that is silently eroding the backbone of our rural economy and natural heritage.

As a farmer who depends on the land for both livelihood and legacy, I have witnessed firsthand how uncontrolled veld fires are reshaping our environment, diminishing our water resources, and crippling the cattle industry.

What is perhaps most troubling is that the lighting of uncontrolled fires has, over time, become normalised in many rural communities. Whether for land clearing, hunting, or mere negligence, this practice continues with little regard for its devastating long-term consequences, yet the cost of this behaviour is far greater than many realise.

Effect of the fires

When fires sweep across the land, they leave behind more than blackened earth. They destroy grasses that feed livestock, trees that stabilise soils, and the countless insects and animals that sustain ecological balance.

The immediate visual damage is only the beginning, but beneath the surface, the loss of vegetation strips the soil of its protective cover, exposing it to intense heat—often exceeding 50°C. At these temperatures, vital soil microorganisms are killed, and plant root systems are irreparably damaged.

The knock-on effects are severe, as without vegetation to slow water movement, rainfall runs off rapidly instead of soaking into the ground, leading to increased soil erosion and the silting of rivers and dams—our primary water sources.

As infiltration decreases, groundwater reserves are not replenished, resulting in drying rivers, depleted dams, and worsening water scarcity.

For farmers, these changes are not theoretical—they are deeply personal as poorer soil health leads to reduced crop yields and diminished pasture for grazing. Lower grass availability translates directly into undernourished cattle, reduced calving rates, and declining herd quality.

It is estimated that these “man-made droughts,” caused by wanton burning, are robbing Zimbabwe of between 150,000 and 200,000 calves each year. This represents a massive economic loss, not only to individual farmers but to the national agricultural sector.

The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe



Uncontrolled fires also destroy critical infrastructure—fences, barns, and equipment—placing further financial strain on already vulnerable farming communities. In the worst cases, fires claim lives—human, livestock, and wildlife alike—leaving lasting scars on families and ecosystems.

Solution to the crisis

The solution to this crisis is neither complex nor unattainable, but it requires collective will and sustained action.

First, education must be at the forefront; from schoolchildren to farmers to local leaders, all Zimbabweans must understand both the ecological and economic consequences of veld fires, as awareness alone is not enough.

There must also be widespread understanding and enforcement of the laws governing fire use so that those who deliberately or negligently start fires face real consequences. Without enforcement, regulations become meaningless.

Equally important is the need for consistent national fire prevention campaigns. From June to November—the peak fire season—radio, television, and social media platforms should be used aggressively to spread awareness and promote responsible land management practices.

That said, fire itself is not inherently destructive because when used correctly, it can be a valuable management tool. Controlled burning, particularly in wetland areas after the first rains, can help remove old, moribund grass and stimulate fresh growth for grazing. The key distinction is control, timing, and purpose.

Responsibility lies with all

Ultimately, the responsibility lies with all of us since if we are to protect our land, preserve our water resources, and sustain our cattle industry for future generations, we must put an end to the reckless burning of Zimbabwe's natural assets.

If we succeed, the benefits will extend far beyond the farm to healthier ecosystems which support greater agricultural productivity, increased livestock numbers, and improved rural livelihoods. In doing so, we can take a meaningful step toward reducing poverty and advancing Zimbabwe's Vision 2030.

The choice is clear: continue down a path of destruction, or act decisively to safeguard the resources that sustain us. For the sake of our land—and our future—we must choose wisely.

Mark Hook
Cattle Producers Association Representative



AGRICULTURAL RECOVERY AND COMPENSATION

ARAC Chairman's report - Monday, June 15th 2026

Fellow Members and Stakeholders,

It is my privilege to present this Report on behalf of the Agricultural Recovery and Compensation Committee (ARAC) for the 2025–2026 reporting period.

This year has been one of continued engagement, reflection, and reassessment as ARAC has remained focused on its central mandate – that is, the pursuit of full, fair, and internationally recognised compensation for our community of affected title deed holders (TDHs) following Zimbabwe's land reform programme.

Throughout the period under review, the compensation process continued to evolve within a complex political, legal, and economic environment. Discussions surrounding the Global Compensation Deed (GCD), valuation methodologies, funding mechanisms, representation structures, and implementation pathways generated both support and concern across our community. These discussions, while at times difficult, reflect the importance of the issues involved and the deep interest our members continue to have in the future direction of the compensation process.

ARAC recognises that we all continue to experience uncertainty and deep concern regarding progress, timelines, transparency, and practical outcomes. Given the prolonged nature of the process and the significant personal and financial losses suffered over many years, these concerns are perfectly understandable. At the same time, the Committee remains of the view that engagement must continue in a structured, constructive, and disciplined manner capable of maintaining credibility and advancing the long-term interests of all affected title deed holders.

During the year, ARAC continued engagement with the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU), the Compensation Steering Committee (CSC), compensation stakeholders, regional representatives, and our members regarding developments connected to compensation and representation matters. Particular attention has been given to ensuring that all affected title deed holders remain recognised within the broader pursuit of compensation and justice, irrespective of organisational affiliation or differing viewpoints.

The Committee also considered important constitutional and governance matters relating to representation structures moving forward. The process of separating compensation matters from active farming representation is now well advanced and is expected to be concluded following the CFU Congress in July 2026. Discussions regarding associated mandates, structures, and future operational arrangements remain under active consideration and will continue through the appropriate consultation processes within Council and Congress structures. Throughout these discussions, ARAC has remained mindful of the importance of maintaining continuity, preserving effective representation, and supporting processes that strengthen collective engagement on compensation issues.



Committee Changes

The year under review saw significant changes within ARAC.

Deon Theron resigned to focus on commitments within SAAI.

Ian Barker and Aidan Bruk-Jackson stepped down, citing limited capacity to contribute effectively.

Gordon Chance, Mike Odendaal, and the late Graham Howson also resigned.

We pay tribute to Graham Howson, whose dedication to the interests of affected farmers was unwavering. His experience, perspective, and support reflected a genuine commitment to the compensation process and the farming community. On behalf of ARAC, we offer sincere condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.

Despite these changes, the remaining members—Angus Selby, Alain Fayd'herbe, Iain Kay, and Liam Philp—maintained independence, continuity and stability during a sensitive period, discharging their responsibilities with commitment and professionalism. Their collective focus remained on pursuing fair and full compensation for all TDHs.

Some of the more recent committee resignations arose following debate surrounding the survey on proposed constitutional changes within the CFU framework. Discontented members held the view that all affected title deed holders, irrespective of ARAC / CFU membership status, should be included in constitutional consultation and decision-making processes connected to representation on compensation matters. While perspectives on these matters may differ, the Committee recognises that all views expressed have been motivated by concern for the long-term interests and representation of affected farmers. However, whilst ARAC, in principle, represents the broad church of TDHs seeking compensation, the Committee can only take instructions from its members.

The financial report demonstrates where our members' subscriptions have been spent – ARAC have shouldered the entirety of the measurable costs of both the CSC and ARAC, whilst at the same time, appreciating the immeasurable cost burden borne by SACFA and SAAI(Zim). Thank you to both these organisations for their mutual support. We urge all frustrated TDH to join and subscribe to one or more of these organisations, so that your input and views can be formally appreciated.

Aside – If you want to contribute or be heard, join an organisation or three – ARAC, SACFA and SAAI(Zim) jointly form the CSC, which is the lead organisation.

Throwing stones or offering pearls of wisdom for the benefit of the social media gallery is counterproductive and merely serves to amuse and inform those on the other side of the table who can watch our every move, regardless of the encryption used.



Current Position

The compensation process has entered a particularly sensitive phase where unity, respectful engagement, clear communication, and responsible leadership are essential. Differences of opinion are inevitable, but constructive dialogue must prevail.

ARAC and CSC effectively represent the 1500-odd compensation claimants who do not accept the settlement terms for improvements offered under the FCA. Consequently, the government has ignored ARAC and CSC while continuing to accept FCA applicants. This is logical: it would be inconsistent for the government to enter negotiations for alternative acceptable terms with those who find the FCA unacceptable, while others continue to sign up.

The government, over the last two and a half decades, has settled compensation for improvements for a number of our colleagues, including:

- Individual private settlements.
- The FCA
- Those covered under BIPPA's

This aspect is now behind them and of no further interest to our colleagues.

The CSC notes that land compensation has been paid to foreign nationals and black Zimbabwean farmers, raising a constitutional issue that must be addressed. White Zimbabwean TDHs are an outlier in this respect, and the CSC is determined to seek a fair and equitable resolution on this matter.

We respect colleagues who have accepted the FCA—it is a personal decision. However, in the interests of the remaining 1,500 TDHs who find the FCA unacceptable, we urge colleagues who believe the FCA, under legal and financial advisement, to be acceptable, to do so with alacrity and draw this avenue to compensation to a natural conclusion. This conclusion would thereby enable the authorities to engage with the CSC on alternative and palatable routes to compensation for the rest of us. PROFCA has played an important role in assisting colleagues to process the FCA, particularly after the concomitant curtailment of the Interim Relief Program. We commend them for their service to our distressed colleagues. However, the CSC understand neither the incentive nor the motive of our former colleagues running PROFCA to continue to campaign for acceptance of the FCA.

There is no longer any doubt that compensation for improvements is due and payable. What remains to be negotiated and agreed, for those 1500 TDH's, is the quantum and payment terms. You will also be aware that our government is increasingly realising the importance of agriculture to the economy and making efforts to unlock the land's potential. This internationally mandated necessity means a bankable title to the land. Currently, a bankable title is compromised by the irresolution of land compensation. Initiatives are currently underway which may resolve this impasse in respect to land previously titled to BIPPA farmers, black commercial farmers and a few white commercial farmers who have special circumstances. If these initiatives are successful, the land held under these categories will then

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be held under bankable freehold title. ARAC through the CSC is working towards a resolution for the land remaining outside of this – i.e. the land held under your title - for the benefit of all TDH.

I sincerely thank the regional representatives, committee members, administrators, and members who have continued to give their time and effort in often challenging circumstances. Your contributions and ongoing engagement are vital to sustaining our mandate and ensuring that the concerns of affected farmers continue to be represented. ARAC, the CSC, and I owe a particular and special debt of gratitude to Suzie Heyns, who has managed the administrative work of these organisations with great efficiency. Thank you, Suzie, for all your support and contributions.

I also acknowledge the ongoing support structures within the CFU framework, and thank, personally and on your behalf, those engaged in the technical, legal, and administrative processes connected to compensation matters for their efforts.

As ARAC moves into the next reporting period, the Committee remains committed to:

- Maintaining structured engagement on compensation matters;
- Supporting transparent communication with members;
- Preserving broad and constructive representation of affected TDHs;
- Evaluating governance and mandate structures where necessary; and
- Continuing to pursue outcomes that are satisfying, lawful, credible, and equitable.

The road ahead remains challenging, but the importance of remaining organised, constructive, and focused on the shared objective of fair compensation for our community cannot be overstated.

I thank all members for their continued support and participation – without membership, we are nothing.

Ian McKersie

ARAC Chairman - ARAC AGM - Monday, June 15th 2026



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Labour Affairs Report

Introduction

The period under review, July 2025 – June 2026, was characterised by continued engagement with members on labour compliance, collective bargaining, workplace discipline, employment contracts, occupational safety and health, and dispute resolution. The Labour Affairs Department continued to provide advisory services to farmers across all agricultural sub-sectors, assisting members to navigate an increasingly complex labour relations environment.

While the agricultural sector continued to face economic and operational challenges, members demonstrated a strong commitment to compliance with labour legislation and constructive engagement with employees, workers' committees, trade unions, the National Employment Council (NEC), and government institutions.

The Department recorded a significant number of enquiries from members covering disciplinary procedures, contract management, retrenchment-related issues, workplace injuries, wage negotiations, allowances, and interpretation of statutory provisions. The high volume of enquiries reflects the increasing recognition among farmers that proactive compliance is often less costly than resolving disputes after they arise.

Member Support and Advisory Services

A key function of the Labour Affairs Department during the year was the provision of labour advisory services to members. Farmers sought guidance on a wide range of labour matters including disciplinary hearings, contract administration, termination of employment, wage obligations, employee benefits, collective bargaining issues, and workplace safety requirements.

The Department continued to encourage members to seek advice before implementing labour decisions. Experience has shown that many disputes arise not from deliberate non-compliance but from procedural errors that can be avoided through timely consultation.

Emphasis was placed on assisting members to understand the implications of employment contracts and the risks associated with contract renewals that may inadvertently create permanent employment relationships due to capping regulations in each sub-sector. Continued awareness and education in this area have assisted members in reducing exposure to unnecessary labour disputes.

Due to the need to avoid disputes, as a department we took the initiative to introduce weekly labour bulletins covering the topics we believe could be beneficial to the farmers. The benefit of these bulletins is that farmers can revert to them from time to time and we have put them on the CFU website and these can be downloaded on this link: [CFU Weekly Labour Bulletin - CFU Zimbabwe publishes every week](https://cfuzim.org/cfu-news/cfu-weekly-labour-bulletin/) (<https://cfuzim.org/cfu-news/cfu-weekly-labour-bulletin/>)



Discipline and Dispute Management

Workplace discipline remained one of the most common areas in which members sought assistance. Cases brought to the Department generally involved allegations of misconduct, absenteeism, desertion, insubordination, and theft.

While many employers demonstrated a good understanding of disciplinary procedures, some disputes continued to arise due to procedural shortcomings during investigations and disciplinary hearings. Labour Court and arbitration decisions emphasise that substantive reasons for discipline must be supported by procedural fairness.

The Department therefore continued to provide guidance to members on conducting investigations, drafting charges, convening disciplinary hearings, and implementing sanctions in accordance with the code of conduct in the seventh schedule of S.I 41 of 2022.

Collective Bargaining & Industrial Relations

Collective bargaining remained a central feature of labour relations within the agricultural industry during the period under review. Engagements within the National Employment Council focused primarily on wages, allowances, and the continued implementation of reforms adopted after the job evaluation exercise regarding the grading of employees on the farms.

Wage negotiations remained challenging due to differing economic realities across agricultural sub-sectors. Nevertheless, social dialogue continued, allowing parties to reach agreements that tried to balance employee welfare with the sustainability of agricultural enterprises. During the period under review, 4 sub-sectors reached agreements: Timber, Tea and Coffee, Horticulture, and Agro. The remaining 3 sub-sectors, General Agriculture, Sugarcane and Kapenta, are still engaged in negotiations. Kapenta sub-sector, however, reached its last agreement in August 2025.

The decentralisation of allowance negotiations to individual sub-sectors continued to shape bargaining dynamics, enabling sector-specific considerations to be taken into account.

Due to negotiations being held once a year, there have not been many changes to the wages and allowances for the period under review. Below are the wage and allowance changes over the period under review:

Wages

Sub-sector	Wage July 2025	Wage June 2026	Date of last wage change	% Increase
Agro	137	148	Feb 1, 2026	8.03%
General Agric.	80	80	Jun 1, 2025	0%
Horticulture	99	109	May 1, 2026	10.10%

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Kapenta	129	140	Aug 1, 2025	8.53%
Sugarcane	133	133	Jun 1, 2025	0%
Tea and Coffee	85	92	Jun 1, 2026	8.24%
Timber	142	150	Jan 1, 2026	5.63%

Allowances

Sub-Sector	Allowance	Jul 2025	Jun 2026	% Increase
Agro	Accommodation	40	50	25%
	Fuel	12	12	0%
	Light	8	8	0%
General Agric.	Accommodation	38	38	0%
	Fuel	12	12	0%
	Light	8	8	0%
Horticulture	Accommodation	42	42	0%
	Fuel	13	13	0%
	Light	9	9	0%
Kapenta	Accommodation	38	57	50%
	Fuel	11	13	18.18%
	Light	7	10	42.86%
Sugarcane	Accommodation	45	45	0%
	Fuel	11	11	0%
	Light	7	7	0%



Tea and Coffee	Accommodation	41	46	12.20%
	Fuel	13	14	7.69%
	Light	9	10	11.11%
Timber	Accommodation	38	41	7.89%
	Fuel	11	13	18.18%
	Light	7	9	28.57%

***NB: All the other allowances have remained the same during the period under review.**

National Employment Council

The industry continued to implement outcomes arising from the comprehensive job evaluation exercise undertaken across agricultural sub-sectors, which came into effect on 1 September 2025. The exercise represented one of the most significant developments in the agricultural labour relations framework in recent years. The separation of grading structures according to sub-sectors is new to the industry, and continued engagement is expected as stakeholders adapt to the practical implications of the revised grading framework.

Challenges

The major labour challenges experienced during the period included:

- Continued pressure for wage increases amid economic uncertainty.
- Compliance risks associated with fixed-term and seasonal employment contracts.
- Workplace disciplinary disputes arising from procedural deficiencies.
- Occupational safety and health compliance obligations.
- The administrative burden associated with changes in labour legislation and regulatory requirements.
- The need for continued labour relations training and awareness.

Outlook for 2026/2027

Looking ahead, the Labour Affairs Department will continue to focus on:

- Enhancing member awareness of labour legislation and compliance requirements.
- Supporting members in disciplinary and dispute resolution processes.
- Monitoring developments in employment law and labour policy.
- Assisting members with occupational safety and health compliance.
- Participating in collective bargaining processes and NEC engagements.
- Promoting sound labour relations practices that contribute to productivity, stability, and sustainability within the agricultural sector.

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Conclusion

The period under review demonstrated the importance of proactive labour relations management within the agricultural sector. Through continued engagement, advisory support, and participation in industry processes, the Labour Affairs Department assisted members in addressing labour challenges while promoting compliance and constructive workplace relations.

Members are encouraged to continue seeking guidance whenever labour issues arise so that disputes can be prevented, compliance enhanced, and productive employment relationships maintained throughout the industry.

Joel N. Farirai
CFU, Labour Affairs



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CHALLENGES WE ADDRESS FOR TOBACCO FARMERS

- Delayed assessments.
- Unavailability of evidence when assessors undertake the assessment.
- Disagreements on loss estimates.
- Long waits for payment.
- Unexpected policy changes.
- Conflicting reports.



CHALLENGES WE ADDRESS FOR WHEAT & SOYABEAN FARMERS

- Inaccurate wind damage assessments.
- Harvest losses from lodging overlooked.
- Underestimation of harvesting losses in lodged wheat.



CHALLENGES WE ADDRESS FOR FARM ASSETS & LIVESTOCK

- Farm Machinery & Equipment**
 - Inadequate policy interpretation.
- Livestock**
 - Undervaluation of livestock. Limited pre-insurance risk management.
 - Insufficient evidence at the time of loss.



7. 2026 Congress Sponsorship

The Commercial Farmers' Union would like to extend its sincere appreciation towards all those who have contributed to the Union's Annual Congress for 2026.

Without the generous support of these organisations, institutions, individuals and staff, it would not be possible for the Union to host such an event.

Please accept our heartfelt appreciation.

Mr Liam Philp
President
The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe



8. IN MEMORIUM



The Commercial Farmers' Union remembers those members that have passed away during the last year and extends its heartfelt condolences to their next of kin.

Psalms 116:15

*Precious in the sight of the LORD
[is] the death of his saints.*





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