

CFU Calling

25 MARCH 2011

EXECUTIVE NEWS

This week your team has attended an unusually large number of workshops discussing scenarios concerning the agricultural industry in various aspects and its future concerns. One point that has come out strength five has been the viability of agricultural investments in Zimbabwe, and that is even before bringing in the very important point of security of tenure, and investment.

Whilst we listen to recently released numbers about the viability of farming at the moment, which shows that a good 50% of those farming are merely 'turning over money without making any profit', we view the situation extremely seriously indeed. Although we do agree that the workshops do have their place in the current environment any decisions made would probably only be able to be implemented at some time in the distant future. We therefore look forward to the time when the plight of the farming community will be taken very seriously and in the right context of what is best for our country.

With these thoughts in mind we wish President Deon Theron and Vice President Charles Taffs every success on their current important trip in which they are also taking time out to meet with, and update, as many ex farmers as possible out there in the diaspora.

Although we had previously advertised the **Open Farmers' Meeting** for Wednesday 6 April 2011, it has been decided in their absence to move the date forward to **13 April 2011** to give them a forum to report back to the membership once they have returned. Therefore rather than speculate over these public means on any possible outcomes of the trip we prefer to wait their return and to put it across personally.

The following are the dates for the future **Open Farmers' Meeting** to be held at your Union's offices in Harare, for next few months. All farmers are welcome to attend the meetings which start at **2.30 pm** in the afternoon. Please let your friends know and your spouses are more than welcome to attend, in fact we would encourage this.

Wednesday 13 April 2011

Wednesday 11 May 2011

Wednesday 8 June 2011

Wednesday 6 July 2011

Please note that the meeting on the 6th April 2011 has been postponed to 13th April 2011.

The Council meeting scheduled for 5 April 2011 has also been pushed a week forward to 12 April 2011.

In the absence of the President, Mr Mike Clark – Regional Chairman for Masvingo will be Acting President. All are urged to support him in this time.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT – SI 154/2010

The following has been extracted from an advertisement in CFU Classified this week as a reminder of the pending requirements for all passenger vehicles in terms of Statutory Instrument 154/2010

Equipment required to 31 May: Per the ZRP Traffic Section – Equipment list for passenger vehicles.

Equipment required from 1 June: Per Statutory Instrument 154

Fire extinguisher 1kg

To 31 May: Recommended

From 1 June: Mandatory (1kg light vehicles, 1.5kg heavy duty vehicles). To be SAZ approved – look for the logo.

Warning triangle

To 31 May: 1 triangle mandatory

From 1 June: 2 triangles mandatory. Not required to be SAZ approved but must meet the criteria specified in SI154

Fluorescent safety jacket

To 31 May: Recommended

From 1 June: Recommended

Fertiliser and Crop Chemicals

Farmers who require any fertilizer or chemicals are urged to make contact with the Union.

Should anyone be interested in taking advantage of this they should send details of their cropping programme as well as fertiliser and chemical requirements to Neil Wright on nw@cfuzim.org

Telephones

People telephoning the Union using **309800** have been experiencing problems getting through at the moment. We have found that it is far better for people to use **309811/20** and they should find they will get through much easier.

Information

Of concern at the moment is the failure by many to report disruptions to farming to the Union. It is important that we receive all information first hand and timeously. There is still the need for your assistance to slot together all the information on farm invasions and disruptions like a jigsaw puzzle to make the recording exercise accurate, credible and worthwhile.

This week we have seen an increase in the number of violent evictions, yet the majority of the reports about the incidents came to us through third parties. We need to have all the facts available to us as soon as any incident happens so that we are in a position to either assist or advise on possible remedies. Accurate information also assists us in combating any damaging rumours.

Any information, including court dates, should please be sent in to Mike Clark at the Union or mashc@cfuzim.org Every little scrap of information will be very useful. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Accommodation

Every now and again there are still farmers being violently evicted from their properties and we need to be in a position to identify **suitable accommodation** for them as soon as possible. Harare seems to be the destination of choice due to the medical facilities but the very high rentals are generally out of reach of many of the farmers whose income has been severely curtailed over the last few years.

Please let us know, through ARAC of any suitable properties which may be available immediately and affordable by affected farmers and their families.

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UPDATE ON ZETDC – The formation of Wheat farming clusters (from the desk of Marc Carrie-Wilson)

This is a must read for those farmers who are considering growing a crop which will require irrigation in the coming winter season. Once again I interrupt the series of articles on viability challenges to give an important update on electricity supply.

Today the President and I were invited to a meeting at ZESA head office to discuss the modalities of ensuring a guaranteed and reliable supply of electricity to farmers in the coming winter season. In order to ensure that you are supplied with guaranteed electricity we need to compile a list which indicates the following:

PROVINCE	DISTRICT	FARM NAME	CUSTOMER NAME/NAME OF FARMER	PROPOSED NUMBER OF HECTARES UNDER IRRIGATION BY CROP
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This list must be submitted to ZETDC by no later than Monday the 28th of March in order to plan for prioritised grids.

Other issues discussed were as following:

Bill Payments and payment arrears:

The General Manger of ZETDC reported that from the Mashonaland provinces alone there are outstanding bills in respect of the Commercial Farming areas amounted to about 40 million dollars.

We agree with the GM that it is outrageous that ZETDC be expected to continue to supply electricity when however we stress that where there are reasonable unresolved disputes over estimates etc there must be substantial negotiation.

Demand Side Management:

Members are encouraged to take all measures necessary to conserve electricity (when it is supplied of course). The use of energy saving bulbs is encouraged and management of large appliances such as heaters, pool pumps and geysers.

Electricity Safety:

We will be liaising with ZETDC to provide safety briefings in the future. Please ensure any electrical wiring is done according to the minimum safety standards. In the event of a fault or downed cables please make a report as soon as possible.

Theft and Vandalisation:

This is an enormous problem. Reports of this to ZETDC should be made as promptly as possible. ZETDC is encouraging that farmers place guards on transformers and where possible set up neighbourhood watch schemes to protect electricity lines.

LABOUR UPDATE (from the desk of Marc Carrie-Wilson)

LABOUR UPDATE - (from the desk of Marc Carrie-Wilson)

We have no doubt that many of our members are experiencing pressure from the NEC to remit dues to them. This article is intended to update members on this issue.

To recap SI 101 of 2010 published in June 2010 sets out a purported Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA") which was concluded in February 2009. It sets the dues payable to NEC as 1 USD deducted from each employee matched by a further 1 USD paid by the employer for each employee.

In terms of the Labour Act a CBA becomes binding when it is registered and published as a SI by the Registrar of Labour, so in this case this was in June 2010. The Act further provides that it is a criminal offence to not abide by the terms of a legally binding CBA.

However, acting on direction from the ALB we have advised all members to keep these dues aside until the conclusion of a legal challenge instituted in the Labour Court. The reasons for this are that there are allegations which have come to our attention of very gross breaches of the financial and other provisions of the NEC Constitution by the NEC and its secretariat as follows:

- The NEC has not produced an audited set of accounts for the past five years. (This is in violation of Article 24(2) of its Constitution).

- The NEC has regularly not had an annual budget ratified by the full Council, or if so, not all the Councillors were invited to attend the meeting where such ratification took place, nor have they had sight of such budget. (This is in violation of Article 22(2) of the NEC Constitution).
- The NEC has not recorded proper and accurate minutes of all the meetings of the council or the Collective Bargaining Processes. (Contravening Article 19 of the NEC Constitution).
- No proper notice of meetings of the NEC is sent to all NEC Councillors. (See Article 16 (4) of the NEC Constitution).
- CBAs concluded at subcommittee level are not ratified by the full Council of the NEC before being forwarded to the Ministry of Labour for Registration. (See Article 13(1) of the NEC Constitution).
- NEC Councillors are being paid extravagant meeting allowances of approximately USD 200 for every meeting they attend. This is more than the salary of many Civil Servants.

It has also been reported that requests to view the audited accounts have not been entertained. Thus we can only assume that there is substantial validity in these allegations. How can any reasonable person continue to remit funds to the NEC when its fundamental structures of governance and financial accountability have seemingly collapsed? Instead we advise that these dues be held aside by members until these issues are settled by the Labour Court. If on the other hand the NEC is able to show you the authentic and duly audited accounts for the past 5 years, which accord with proper budgets made in terms of the NEC Constitution, then you are encouraged to remit your dues to the NEC without delay.

The NEC's only remedy which it will pursue is to make a complaint of a criminal offence against members who to the ZRP in order to institute Criminal Proceedings. However this matter is already before the Labour Court and it would be advisable for the Labour Court (which has the status of the High Court) to make its determination on this matter before a Magistrates Court consider the criminal case. We would ask any member presented with this challenge to contact our offices (Tongai or Marc) for advice on this point.

Rumours of NEC personal seizing the property of certain members are extremely alarming if these are true. To be clear, no one has a right to seize property in recovery of an alleged debt unless they have obtained an order from a court in their favour and the seizure is presided over by a court official. Such activity should be reported to the Police.

Other developments are that the CBA setting the General Agricultural Wage at USD44 per month, back dated to September 2009, has finally been Gazetted as a Statutory Instrument in the form of SI 25 of 2011. Once again our representative body in these negotiations has informed us that they were not party to this Agreement notwithstanding the fact that they are named as a party in the Agreement. They have informed us that they will be exploring the possibility of a legal challenge against this and we will keep you informed accordingly. The publication of this Agreement as a Statutory Instrument is confusing because of the presumption against the retroactive application of legislation. Therefore it is submitted that the SI does not oblige employers to make back payments. It is absurd to think that any legitimate employer would willingly agree to pay 7 months or more back pay in the current multi currency economy. This seriously undermines the viability of business.

National Social Security Authority (NSSA)

The following report was taken from a newspaper:

Harare, March 21, 2011 - The financially beleaguered National Social Security Authority (NSSA) has increased pension payouts from US 25 per month to US\$ 40.

This comes after much and heated debate by pensioners that the payouts were very low.

The Minister of Labour and Social Services, Paulina Mpariwa, approved the increases by NSSA.

The new payouts will be backdated to January 01.

Mpariwa said her ministry had consulted with the Worker's Compensation Insurance Scheme who had agreed to backdated the increases to January 1, this year.

The ministry said the increases were currently "being processed" for everyone but would become effective in April. Under the National Pension Scheme (NPS) retirement pensions for those who retired during the worthless Zimbabwe dollar period would get US\$40 monthly, up from the paltry US\$25.

NSSA said survivors and invalidity pensions would now go up from US\$10 to US\$25 per month, while funeral grants remained at US\$200 per member.

"Minimum retirement pensions under this scheme will be set at US\$40 per month with effect from January 1, 2011," NSSA said in a statement made available to Radio VOP.

In terms of the Workers' Compensation Insurance Scheme (WCIF) all work injury pensions would be increased by 50 percent with effect from January 1, 2011.

The organisation said minimum work injury pensions would be increased from US\$15 per month to US\$30 per month, which is a 100 percent increase much to the delight of cash-strapped citizens.

The pension society said minimum spouses pensions would also shoot up from US\$10 per month to US\$20 monthly with effect from that date.

"Minimum children's and dependent's allowances are to be set at US\$10 per month," NSSA said. "Funeral grants will, however, remain at US\$200 under the WCIF.

NSSA said insurance premiums, on the other hand, would be reduced by 20 percent across all industries with effect from January 1, 2011.

"NSSA pensioners will receive pension payments at the new rates on the April, 2011 payroll including adjustments for the months of January, February, and March, 2011," NSSA told pensioners in its statement.

The organisation had come under fire and has had various management changes due to alleged inefficiency with accusations of rampant corruption levelled against it.

COMMODITIES

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DAIRY FARMERS (from the desk of Rob Van Vuuren)

We remind all dairy farmers and encourage them to attend the up-coming regional meetings in their respective area to hear the way forward for the NADF based on guidelines generated by a strategic planning meeting held on the 21/2/2011.

Regional meeting have been set as follows:

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|---------------------|---|--|
| Mutare | : | Tuesday 29 th March 2011 Mutare Club at 10.00a.m. |
| Chipinge | : | Monday 28 th March 2011 at 10.00a.m. and the venue is likely to be the Polo Cross Club. |
| | | Contact Regional Chairlady Elaine Leach for details on 0227 – 2877 or 0772 520 354 or 0712 630 870 |
| Mash B | : | Wednesday 6 th April 2011 Beatrice Club at 10.00a.m. |
| Midlands | : | Wednesday 30 th March 2011 – CFU Offices Gweru at 10.00a.m. |
| Matabeleland | : | Thursday 31 st March 2011 Members Pavilion – ZTIF Showgrounds at 9.00am for 9.30a.m. |

The Mashonaland A Regional meeting was held at NADF this week and it was a well supported, informative meeting with training by Dr Rachel Stewart about tick dips, tick resistance and dipping methods. Dr Stewart also did a presentation on good milking methods. I thank Dulys and Country Choice Foods for their kind sponsorship of this meeting. Dulys put a vehicle on display and banners were put up and excellent teas and eats were enjoyed by everyone who attended. Dulys have also promised sponsorship and participation with some of the other regional meetings. Thank you Dulys for your support of NADF.

CATTLE PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

GRADE	AVERAGE PER KG/LIVE WEIGHT PRICES			
	HARARE	GWERU	BULAWAYO	ESIGODINI
SUPER		-	-	-
COMMERCIAL		1.46	1.46	1.50
CHOICE		-	1.90	-
ECONOMY		1.31	1.30	1.25
COMMERCIAL ECONOMY		-	1.35	1.34
MANUFACTURING		-	1.08	1.10
BULLS		-	1.40	1.50
WEANER HEIFERS		2.67	-	2.40
BULLING HEIFERS		1.77	-	1.90
LONG WEANER HEIFERS		2.24	-	-
COW & CALF		-	-	-
WEANER STEERS		1.76	-	1.60
LONG WEANER STEERS		1.80	-	2.00
FEEDER STEERS		1.69	-	-
COMMERCIAL WEANER HEIFERS		-	-	-
BREEDING COWS		-	-	-
BREEDING BULLS		-	-	-
STANDARD MUTTON		-	-	-

ZIMBABWE CROP PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION (from the desk of Richard Taylor)

Local as at 25 March 2011 R6.88 - US\$

Commodity	GMB	Agrifoods	Intergrain	Staywell	Croplink
White Maize	275	275	280	245	
Yellow Maize	275		280	245	
Maize Bran	150	150		160	
Soyabeans	300	500	460	500	
Soyabean Meal		730		700	
Wheat	466		440@30 Days 400@7 Days	500	440 (imported)
Wheat Bran		155		(130 Buy)	170
Groundnuts	470 (unshelled)		(shelled)	900 (shelled)	(shelled)

South African Foreign Exchange (SAFEX) as at 9 March 2011

Commodity	Rand/Tonne	US\$/Tonne	Import Parity Rand/Tonne	Import Parity US\$/Tonne
White Maize	1588	231	1748	254
Yellow Maize	1645	239	1805	262
Wheat	3140	456	3300	480
Soyabeans	3845	559	4005	582
Sunflowers	4310	626	4470	650

International Gulf

Commodity	US\$/Tonne		Import Parity US\$/Tonne
Wheat	329		479
Maize	293		443
Soyabeans	527		677

Source: South African Grain Information Service (SAGIS)

As can be seen the Soya bean price has dropped dramatically. Why, simply because the Zim crop is starting to become available. If I was a farmer and had the capacity to store his/her crop, I would and then play the market, as these prices will increase with demand. There is probably only between 25,000 and 40,000 tonne's of beans that have been produced this year. This will not go far before the traders will need to import again thus driving prices higher.

I did ask last week if any farmers would be interested in growing wheat this winter to contact me as there is a finance package available. CFU have been in negotiations with ZESA to try extract a guarantee that there will be uninterrupted power to wheat producers. ZESA have assured us that certain wheat producing areas will be given priority for uninterrupted supply. I will get the names of the areas that will have ZESA priority and let all know. ZINWA still remains a problem.

Dear Commercial Growers,

Northern Farming is a sister company to Northern Tobacco.
We provide finance for maize, wheat, soya beans and sugar beans.

We are holding a field day at ART Farm on the 1st April 2011 and anyone is welcome. ***Please note this is NOT restricted to our contracted growers.***

During the course of the day, the following topics will be covered:

- Conservation Agriculture
- Agronomy on row crops
- Nutrition in soil
- Storage of grain
- New machinery & equipment available

We will start with tea at 9.30am – 10.00am
Followed by the Farm Tour 10.00am – 11.30am
And finally a Discussion in the Hall 11.30 – 13.30

If you are interested in attending this field day, please RSVP to myself on 0772218826 or email to rodneyc@nt.co.zw before the 25th March 2011.

Look forward to seeing you all there.

BUSINESS SECTION (from the desk of Richard Taylor)

We now have just over 250 companies as partners offering varying discounts with more and more companies interested and joining. If you are interested in joining the discounters club as a member and benefit from these discounts then please come on board. Should you wish to see the list of the companies that are partners and offering discounts then contact us and we can email the list to you. Negotiations continue with some of the supermarkets, with Ballantyne Spar having joined as a partner offering pensioner's who hold a discount card 5% discount. So ladies and gents, this discount card would be a great gift for those who have parents or mates who are of the pensioner's age.

Supreme and Surf & Turf have joined with immediate effect and not as of the 1st of April as was indicated in our last communication.

Subscription to become a discounter's cardholder is only \$5 per month (\$60/yr) so join now.

For more info on the discounters club, contact myself rich@discountersclub.com or Robyn robyn@discountersclub.com

COMMENTS AND VIEWS

Please let us know your comments and views on items contained within this issue or any other issues of CFU Calling by sending an email to us on dir@cfuzim.org

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