

**21 APRIL 2011**

## **EXECUTIVE NEWS**

### **CFU PRESIDENT'S REPORT BACK ON RECENT UK TRIP:**

When Charles and I undertook the trip to the UK to discuss "The Way Forward" proposal, we could not have imagined how valuable it would turn out to be.

I need to thank our two sponsors. Without their support it would not have been possible for us to undertake this trip.

Mike, Hendrik and the rest of the team, thank you for holding the fort in our absence. Also a big thank you to David Sandeman, David Abel Smith and Bob Fernandes for their incredible support in the UK.

Lastly I need to thank all the displaced farmers that travelled from far and wide to attend our meeting at Cirencester. Your support and encouragement after the meeting is highly appreciated.

We had a very busy schedule, meeting with 35 people during 20 meetings, as well as a meeting with over 60 displaced farmers at Cirencester on a Sunday.

In brief, we had meetings with Minister Bellingham (Minister for Africa), various parliamentarians, donor agencies, top officials within the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC), DFID, legal practitioners, the National Farmers Union, the Zimbabwe Trust Fund, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, Phoenix Africa, the Policy Advisor as well as various other members of the All Parliamentary Group, and big businesses such as the British Sugar Group and Associated British Foods.

Without exception we were well received at each meeting. Doors were opened that will assist in finding a way forward for the recovery of commercial agriculture, as well as bringing the dispute over land (including compensation) to a successful and satisfactory conclusion.

Being able to meet with policy makers who are influential and able to make decisions was hugely beneficial. There was full engagement and prolonged discussions regarding our proposal, and we were thanked for the professional presentation of farmers concerns and on the proposal of the way forward. In this regard I would like to thank Charles Taffs and the CFU team, Graham Mullett and his team, John Laurie, RAU and everyone else that has played a role in building our comprehensive database, formulating the Recovery Proposal and the making of our DVD.

That we were requested by all we saw to maintain close contact is testimony of their valuation of the Union's worth and the role we will play on behalf of farmers in the future.

The recovery of commercial agriculture in Zimbabwe was recognized as a priority, and I was pleasantly surprised at how well informed they were. I believe that we have their full support and commitment to working with both CFU and our government to ending land disputes and making this recovery possible.

There was a new understanding of the trauma farmers face, as well as the hardship, injustice and suffering experienced by evicted farmers. They appreciated that without addressing compensation and bringing the dispute over property rights to a satisfactory closure, meaningful recovery would not be possible.

The desperation by especially the elderly to bring closure through fair compensation was well received, and I am pleased that they have agreed to look at various proposals that we put to them. They understood that time is not on our side, and this aspect is therefore receiving urgent attention. We will also continue engaging our own government, as they have recently compensated a few farmers for improvements, albeit at a deflated value.

SADC are working on a roadmap with the Zimbabwe government that should lead to free and fair elections, and we therefore need to ensure we are well prepared, well connected and well represented. We need to be realistic about our circumstances, but with democracy instilling itself throughout Africa there is real hope.

I have been greatly encouraged by this trip and recent events in the Region. I am confident that if we keep engaging all stakeholders through dialogue, pressure, determination and unity we will find a way forward that will bring satisfactory closure for us all.

Lastly I need to thank all our paid up members. You have made it possible for CFU to survive financially.

To all those that have allowed their membership to lapse - please consider renewing your membership. All I ask is that we each carry our share of the weight in this battle by paying our \$600 or \$100.

The Union needs your moral and financial support.

United we increase our chance of success.

**Deon Theron**

The CFU Calling team is taking a break this week but will be back with a full bulletin next week.

We wish you all a peaceful and happy Easter long weekend.

Please drive safely.

## **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](mailto:dir@cfuzim.org)Disclaimer: This email and files transmitted with it contain confidential and privileged information and are intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please -- do not read, disseminate, distribute, copy or take action in reliance on this email and- delete it immediately and arrange for the deletion thereof on your server, and- notify the administrator immediately. Any unauthorised, use duplication or interception of this e-mail or any files transmitted with it is expressly and strictly prohibited. No representation, guarantee or undertaking (expressed or implied) is made or given- As to the confidentiality or security of the e-mail system' or as to the accuracy of the information in this email and any files transmitted with it is virus-free. No responsibility or liability is accepted for: the proper, complete transmission of the information contained in this email or any files transmitted with it or any delay in its receipt; or rising from or as a result of the use of or reliance on the content of this email or any files transmitted with it. Any views expressed in this email or any files transmitted with it are not necessarily the views of the Commercial Farmers' Union. Queries regarding this email or any files transmitted with it should be directed to [dir@cfuzim.org](mailto:dir@cfuzim.org). This disclaimer forms part of the content of this e-mail for purposes of section 11 of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 2002 (Act No. 25 of 2002).