

CFU Calling

06 MARCH 2011

EXECUTIVE NEWS

The very useful end of season rains which fell a week or so ago have heralded in the winter season, which can definitely be felt in the evenings and early morning. It also sets the stage for the traditional planting period of the winter cereal crop which our country so desperately needs. The conditions are absolutely ideal for the planting of a successful crop and most of the irrigation dams are full, or at least have sufficient water. Unfortunately though, it looks like another season is going to pass us by as the majority of the most experienced farmers in the country are forced to sit it out in the towns and cities, unable to take advantage of their skills and lifetime of experience.

This is not only distressing for the farmers themselves, who are being prevented from practicing their trade, but is also a huge national loss as we see the desperate need to import yet another essential commodity that could easily be grown in Zimbabwe to satisfy our own needs.

It is essential therefore that we continue to strive to find a way forward as soon as possible before this country, not only loses its skilled citizens, but also has to constantly call on the already overtaxed fiscus to fund the (unnecessary) importation of essential foods. We continue to call upon the Inclusive Government to kindly listen to us and to allow all Zimbabweans to take an active part in the redevelopment of the agricultural industry so that we can substantially increase national food production together. If this could happen now it would not be soon enough as too many valuable years have already been lost.

To this end a successful preliminary workshop was held last week to thrash out the principals of the establishment of joint commodity associations through cooperation with the other unions. Although there will be a more comprehensive report further on in this bulletin, it was quite clear that across the board all sectors involved in agriculture in Zimbabwe are all facing the same problems of insecurity and lack of investment caused mainly by the total lack of the security of tenure.

We are unfortunately still seeing our productive farmers being brought to court for prosecution under the Gazetted Land (Consequential Provisions) Act. This week we received news of another farmer who had been convicted and evicted through the courts, disregarding the fact that he had already vacated his property some time ago. There are several more cases lined up to be heard fairly soon and unfortunately the prognosis of the outcome of those cases is also not very encouraging. Although there are a number of outstanding cases to be heard in the Supreme Court, which have been filed by farmers we understand these will all be set down fairly soon and grouped together, which is not very encouraging, to say the least.

We have noted that a single property on the outskirts of Harare was gazetted for acquisition for urban development on 15 April 2011. This has been copied and circulated to the lawyers as well as being uploaded onto the website www.cfuzim.org

If we are going to start moving forward it is essential that the powers that be call an immediate halt to all of these constant prosecutions and evictions so we can sit around a table to analyse the current situation and to discuss an amicable way forward, which will be an advantage for the future of Zimbabwe as a whole.

As reflected in last week's bulletin we are definitely seeing some encouraging signs in other areas and in line with this we have recently held a very positive meeting with regard to the continued stocktheft. As a result of this we have been requested to put together a dossier of all cases of stocktheft which have occurred since the commencement of the fast track land acquisition exercise.

A dossier will be put together at the office as soon as possible and we request that all the information be emailed to mashc@cfuzim.org or else handed directly to Mike Clark. In order for these cases to be followed up the following is requested:

- RRB Number (if available)
- Description of registered brand
- Farm Name

- Owner's Name
- District
- Number and Description of Cattle Stolen
- Name of Suspected Person
- Date of Theft / Slaughtered

There have recently been a number of rumours doing the rounds with reference to compensation which need to be addressed. Should you hear of any of these rumours please feel free to clear them through us before jumping into the deep end and committing yourself. The subject will be addressed at our forthcoming **Open Farmers' Meeting** which will be held at the Union offices on **Wednesday 11 May 2011** at **2.30 pm**.

When you come to the farmers' meeting please bring your wallet in preparation to take advantage of the extended period of the raffle to win two days free on **The Zambezi Trader**. Although the ticket sales have gone well we are trying to sell as many tickets as possible as the money will be in aid of the Pensioners' Fund.

The prize is for the use of the whole boat so you can entertain up to 40 of your own guests who will be accommodated and fed free for the two days, complete with tender boats etc. The only thing you pay for is the drinks – unfortunately for some. The time limit has also been extended in that the timing of the cruise can be negotiated with the owner of the boat and is no longer specified as it was before.

What a wonderful opportunity for a special wedding venue; a 21st Birthday; 60th Birthday; 50th Wedding Anniversary; etc. Furthermore, if you want to assist in selling the remaining tickets the books contain 11 tickets – 10 are for sale and the other one is free to the seller. Please help us to help the aged.

The following email was received from the **Anti-Hijack Trust**, together with the below special warning:

“A friend of mine was caught. The ZRP take you to the Police Station; book you through to the Magistrate's court. You appear and are slapped with a fine. This is serious and the ZRP don't PLAY. If you think of paying a bribe THINK AGAIN those days also seem to be coming to an end.”

MOTORISTS caught using cellular phones while driving now face stiff penalties following the launch of an aggressive police exercise to reduce road accidents. New regulations also empower officers to check the cellular phone of a driver involved in an accident to determine whether or not the mishap was not a result of operating the communication device. National police spokesperson Inspector Tinaye Chigome last week said officers have been deployed countrywide to arrest errant drivers.

He said his department was taking serious steps to curtail the practice, which is among the major causes of road traffic accidents. +We have to implement the law, as the police force's traffic monitoring department, - he said.

Those arrested will be fined. They will be taken to court, as stipulated by the country's laws, if they fail to pay the fine. +The use of mobile phones by motorists while on the wheel is common in urban areas. Therefore, our officers will man designated points to arrest individuals caught breaking the law.

Insp Chigome said an increasing number of accidents were linked to cellular phone use, which often distracts the driver. +When an accident occurs, units attending the scene will look at the concerned persons' call records to determine if they were using cellular phones (at the time of the accident),- he said. +It is now a trend that both minor and serious accidents are a result of individuals using cellular phones.

National police spokesperson Senior Assistant Commissioner Wayne Bvudzijena warned motorists against committing the offence. +It has always been an offence, if you are found on the wrong side of the law you will be arrested on the spot. This is an offence all over the world, - he said.

The Government introduced regulations criminalising the use of cellular phones by motorists following an upsurge in road traffic accidents. Although the measures have been in place for years, police cited manpower shortage as an impediment to implementing them. Similar legislation is also in place in other parts of the world such as America and Europe where law enforcement agents use street cameras to detect offenders.

BE WARNED - THIS IS A BIG STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION WHICH ANTI-HIJACK HAVE BEEN TRYING TO HAVE EXECUTED FOR QUITE A WHILE

Our **Labour Consultant** has been on a well earned break over the last few weeks but we look forward to him being available from next week to advise and assist on you labour issues.

We once again remind you that our doors are always open to listen to your advice, your problems and to advise you where we can. Don't listen to rumours, come and clear them through us and hear what we are trying to achieve at the moment – you may be pleasantly surprised!

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY (OST) MEETING BETWEEN MEMBER OF THE ZFU AND THE CFU WITH THE THEME OF FORMING A JOINT COMMODITIES COUNCIL
(from the desk of Marc Carrie-Wilson)

For some months, if not years, the idea of integrating the interests and representation of small and large scale farmers for mutual benefit has been discussed in many quarters. Not least of which by the CFU and the ZFU, who respectively represent large and small scale farmers. In order to formalise the cordial liaison between these two Unions that has developed over the years, and also to seek a closer working relationship, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed late last year.

One of the many potential joint initiatives which the Unions could pursue is the formation of a joint commodities council. This would have the aim of bringing together the parallel voices and interests of large and small scale agricultural producers under one formal and efficient body. The chief advantage of this would be that a joint commodities council could lobby for more favourable commodity specific and general agricultural policies with greater effectiveness. However, whether members of the Unions want this council, how this council will be structured and who will be represented and how are questions which need to be, and are yet to be, answered.

As a first step towards answering these questions a meeting between approximately 140 small scale farmers (members of ZFU) and around 30 large scale farmers (members of CFU and others) was held last week on the 29th of April 2011. The meeting was organised and funded by the German Development Service (DED also known as GIZ) a German development agency that already provides technical assistance to ZFU. The meeting was conducted using a relatively new technique called Open Space Technology (OST). The meeting was facilitated by Theo Groot a Dutch expert in OST meetings.

"Open Space Technology" is the name given to a meeting without a predetermined agenda. Developed in the late eighties by Harrison Owen, this meeting methodology is now used around the world as an effective process for facilitating change in both organisational and community settings. The theme of the meeting was **How can a joint commodity council help commodity associations to improve the service to their members?** And the objectives were as follows:

- leadership and members of key commodity associations raise and discuss issues they consider important related to the creation of a joint commodity council. The results of those conversations will be captured in a report.
- members of both ZFU and CFU get an opportunity to meet and to discuss issues of common interest
- participants in the OST meeting rank the different topics discussed and identify the key issues that need to be addressed first

It was explained by the Facilitator that Open Space Technology operates on four principles and one law. The principles are:

1. Whoever comes are the right people. The participants included people from all the different layers of the unions: leaders as well as farmers, men, women and young people. During the meeting people were free to choose the topics they have interest in and they want to commit themselves to. The result of this was interesting the participants chose lots of issues that were general to farmers and not related to how to form a Joint Commodities Council. Issues included Viability challenges, Access to Inputs, Affordable credit, marketing, link to market. imports etc
2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have. This kept the attention on the best possible effort in the present, not worrying about "what we should have done". Focus was not on analysing problems from the past but finding solutions for the future. This does not ignore the context and the past, but avoids the past to dominate the future. It also refers to the need for leadership of the unions to allow voices to be heard. In the present OST participants are invited to contribute to the

reflection and to suggest possible ways forward. Final decisions will be taken in the appropriate organs of the unions. It is important that the status of the meeting is clear to all.

3. Whenever it starts is the right time. This reminded people that creativity cannot be controlled. With an OST we create an environment where it is safe for people to speak their mind and heart but we cannot force them to do so.
4. When it's over, it's over. This encourages people to continue their discussion so long as there is energy for it. Some sessions finished well within the anticipated time. Others ran longer than the time allotted.

The one law or rule is called The Law of Mobility, also known as The Law of Two Feet. This indicates that people can enter or leave a conversation session as they choose. If the session was not meeting the participant's needs for either contributing or learning, they could go to another one. Nothing drains energy more than being in a meeting that has no interest to you, where you do not learn and where you cannot make a contribution. In that case people were invited to move to another group.

The meeting began with a large "Opening Circle" where people were free to choose and write down topics which they wanted to talk about in smaller groups. These were written down and posted on a large notice board. Each topic was assigned an area where anyone of the group who was interested could go and discuss the topic. Once the participants had broken out into their smaller groups they discussed the topic in depth (translators were provided) and the points were captured on a flip chart by a person from in the group. There was one break out session in the morning and one in the afternoon. At the end of the day there was a large closing circle where many positive things were said about the day's discussions and the idea of the two Unions working together in this way.

Whilst nothing substantially concrete was decided about how to form and how to structure the joint commodities council what was clear was that everybody was in support of the idea of working together. It provided an opportunity for members to interact and get to grips with the idea of integrating their interests and representation under one formal structure.

ARAC (from the desk of Ben Gilpin)

Please find below the Agenda for the ARAC AGM on Wednesday 11th May 2011 at 2.30pm in the dining room, Agriculture House.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Kind regards

ARAC - Agricultural Recovery & Compensation

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AGENDA FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TO BE HELD IN THE CFU DINING ROOM ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH MAY 2011 AT 2,30PM

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1. Welcome
 2. Apologies

3. Adoption of Previous AGM Minutes
4. Chairman Report Back
5. Adoption of Chairman's Report
6. Financial Report
7. CFU Report – President: Mr D Theron, Vice-President: Mr C Taffs
8. Compensation – Vice-President Charles Taffs
9. Farm Family Trust – Mr R Brooker
10. Election of Office Bearers
11. Project Report – Wynand Hart
 - a) Consequential Losses
 - b) SADC Documentation
12. Other Projects and Peer Assessment - Ben Purcell Gilpin
13. Announcement of new Committee
14. Any Other Business
15. Thanks

COMMENTS

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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