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## EXECUTIVE NEWS

This is the first week that we are now writing this bulletin on a Thursday in order to get the completed article to our new PR man to go through and put some of his more experienced ideas into before distribution on Friday afternoon as per the normal routine. It may prove a bit difficult getting all the facts and figures together by the end of Thursday because they have traditionally only been released on a Friday, but we will do our best so please bear with us.

We are pleased to hear that Tinks Zietsman is recovering well from her terrible ordeal following some operations and treatments, but of course the mental scars will unfortunately remain for some time to come. We thank everybody for their prayers and enquiries. Colin's memorial date has yet to be decided but we will keep you informed as soon as the decision on the date and venue is made.

We held our first Council Meeting and Open Farmers' meeting since Congress at the end of July so much of this report will be dominated by the news from there.

Today, both President Charles Taffs and Vice President Peter Steyl are attending the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) Annual Congress at the Sheraton Hotel in Harare.

### **The Zambian Farmers' Union Annual Congress.**

Last week both the CFU President and Vice President attended the Zambian Farmers' Union Congress in Lusaka, which was attended by over 1000 delegates, including the Zambian President and several government officials. Zambia has a two-tiered system of small-scale and large-scale farmers working together as a single union, which our delegates found very impressive and practical.

The only slightly adverse comment was that Zambian agriculture has concentrated on its expansion programme revolving around the increased production of a single commodity, being maize, which is now over produced with limited storage space etc. Unless the payments for last season can be otherwise secured there may be less of that important commodity being grown next year.

However, the theme of the conference was 'Diversification and Development' which would encourage the production of new commodities during the coming season. What was very evident at the Congress was the truly democratic process of voting in the new leadership through their 150 farmers' associations. The Zambian President Banda and the ministers were all farmers as well as members of the union all of whom had developed sound policies to encourage agricultural production, development and security in Zambia.

Following the Congress our team met with some 25 ex Zimbabwean farmers now farming in Zambia and we were extremely impressed on their level of development and scientific approach to farming on their farms. However, when asked if they would return to farm again in Zimbabwe should the situation be turned around most of the younger farmers said that they would be here like a shot but the older farmers were not of the same view.

## **The Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU) Annual Congress (RSA).**

The Director Hendrik Olivier attended the TAU Annual Congress in South Africa, which was somewhat different in its approach and themes. What was noted was that they have been proactive in the courts trying to secure the future of farming in South Africa as many speakers at the congress expressed the real fears of their current farmers soon experiencing the same as what has happened to Zimbabwean farmers since the 'fast track' commenced.

Whilst they certainly expressed great sympathy as to what has happened to Zimbabwean farmers over the last 11 years they have published a book which exposes their own over 3 000 farm murders in South Africa against our 22 farm murders (2000 – 2011). Although assistance was offered to us by publishers we have a huge amount of work that still has to be done in data collection and recording before anything like that can happen here.

It is in line with this that Mike Clark once again appealed to Councillors at CFU Council for their cooperation in passing on information on what is continually happening in their districts. A paper was given to them giving examples of what information is required for the current day-to-day reports as well as the precise details of what has happened in the period from 2000 – 2007. All reports should be sent directly to [mashc@cfuzim.org](mailto:mashc@cfuzim.org) or given to Mike Clark personally. He particularly needs accurate information to come out of Matabeleland as the information from that province is extremely sparse at the moment.

Please be assured that any information supplied is held in strict confidence and no personal details will be published without the source's personal consent.

## **The CFU Council Meeting.**

Our CFU Council was far better attended than normal this time, although we still have some vacant positions, which desperately need to get filled as set out below:

**Midlands – a non-farmer**

**Matabeleland North – one farmer and one non-farmer**

**Matabeleland South – one farmer and one non-farmer**

**Mashonaland West South – one farmer and one non-farmer**

**Mashonaland East – one farmer**

**Manicaland – one farmer**

**Corporate member representative**

- 1) Adrian Swales from ZTA expressed concern that the traditional funding for farmers is not yet in place for the season and that tobacco farmers were almost 100% borrowed. Currently farmers need to produce 3 000kg/ha and average US\$ 3.00/kg to cover costs yet the previous average was only in the region of 2 600kg/ha so basically farmers would have to seriously up their game, especially as the prices have probably reached a ceiling. The times are difficult but farmers would have to weather the storm. They would need to be well prepared as we may soon be entering the international arena where our production costs are too high to enable us to compete. In Zimbabwe the fuel used for curing is about 15% of the total cost of production whereas in Brazil it is a mere 2%. The cost of the finance here is almost 10 times that of Brazil's US\$ 350/ha.

- 2) The general advice agreed around the table was that it is very unwise to align oneself with any political group but instead to stick to using the local structures like the DA and the law.
- 3) The main problem in the Masvingo Province was over the imposed partners on businesses in the conservancies but they have been told by the powers that be to come forward with their own proper business proposals. However, in another conservancy there is renewed pressure by large numbers of new invaders who are chopping and burning the natural habitat of the elephant herds.
- 4) Foreign and Zimbabwean investors in agriculture continue to be prosecuted in the courts under the Gazetted Land (Consequential Provisions) Act despite our constant appeal for a moratorium so the country may move forward and get back into production.
- 5) Probably the most important message at Council was the drive to bring your union onto a business footing and to ensure that we earn sufficient finance to adequately recompense both our staff and the elected leadership. There was quite a lengthy discussion over this including the option of the sale of the building or to turn it into a business park. The mandate from Council was given to Agriculture House P/L for them to make recommendations on the final decision, which would come back to Council for approval. At the moment your Union is paying a high rental just to occupy its own building, which needs to be addressed.
- 6) On the membership subscriptions due for payment at the end of this month the accounts have been sent out either on email or by post where no email address is available. The South African farmers who have been benefitting from the excellent work carried out by Louis Fick would also be asked to contribute as normal members. *The judgment on their latest case in the South African Courts is due to be handed down next week.*

All members, or members whose membership has lapsed, are requested to please respond and to pay their subscriptions as soon as possible whether they do receive an account or not. You are also encouraged to pay strictly according to your correct category as described in the rules. It should be noted that all ARAC accounts sent out have put the amount as US\$ 100, but should you be over 70-years old please notify us when making the payment.

There is a form to be completed whether you are a new member or simply renewing membership. Although we know how we all hate completing forms we do request that they are completed in full as this will assist us in updating records so we can keep in contact with you.

- 7) As was announced at Council we are just starting a bulk text message (SMS) service, which will enable us to send out important messages to you through our computers. The service will be expanded as we move along to provide accurate crop prices, weather reports, dates of meetings, field days, etc. all through your mobile phone, so we need your numbers.

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- 9) Council was introduced to Victor Marawu of Rotciv Marketing who is our new PR consultant responsible for improving the image of your Union and who will be giving input and redesigning this CFU Calling as well as being responsible for press statements like we issued on Monday in response to the murder of Colin Zietsman. The information was translated and distributed in several local languages and Afrikaans for South Africa, which was well received. He will also be going over any speeches and statements we put out as well as keeping in contact with the main media players.

He will also be working with us on producing a weekly half-page insert in the Financial Gazette giving crop prices, costs of fertilisers and other inputs, production costs, cattle prices and crop forecasts, which will provide accurate indicators to all payers in our industry. There is also a further space available monthly for us (open to all) to write about anything relevant to our industry. This is in line with the paper's revamping of its agricultural section for its readers.

- 10) Another Internet service we will be providing is **PayPal** that would enable overseas members a cheaper service to pay their subscriptions and also to allow non-members to pay for certain services which are being developed which will be offered through the Internet.
- 11) We were also introduced to Audra Wilson-Max of Brandafrica who will be assisting, redesigning and advising us on our websites, Facebook and Twitter etc. This is all part of our way of moving forward so that we can present ourselves more as an agricultural organisation assisting and promoting production in agriculture. This is very exciting indeed, especially getting away from the 'fire fighting' which seems to have taken up most of our time over the past 11 years and taken us away from our core business – being farming. We will therefore be promoting the 'Buy Zimbabwe' campaign.
- 12) In our next step in moving forward Vice President Peter Steyl gave us a presentation of a plan, which he has put together with ZFU on the new proposed commodity structures. Although some of Council felt it was impractical under the current circumstances where farmers on the ground were so insecure, it is being done so that when things do turn around we are well prepared and can 'hit the ground running'.

In Peter's presentation of the Joint Commodity Council he used wheat as an example explaining that each farmers' association (ZFU and CFU) would elect a wheat representative (obviously only in the wheat growing areas). They would then represent their members at the Provincial Wheat Producers' Committee who would send representation of both CFU and ZFU to a Joint National Commodity Producers' Association consisting of 16 members in total. This group would then elect two reps from each union who would be representatives on the 'Apex Committee'.

This is viewed as the most practical method of retaining equal representation from both unions and has very good support. Of course this will take time to implement and bring about especially as most of our structures exist in name only but it is planned to take on a few of the more essential commodities first and progress further only once they are in place. Cooperation was sought from everybody, especially at FA level and any practical ideas or suggestions would gladly be discussed.

Already monthly meetings have started to be held between the presidents of all the agricultural unions in the country and it is surprising just how much in common our views are on a wide range of subjects, especially the security of tenure and security of investment, which is apparently lacking under the current environment.

- 13) Whilst talking about the farmers' associations we wish to remind the previous secretaries and chairpersons that we are urgently getting together a register of all assets which belong to the farming communities and associations around the country. This is not only to safeguard these assets but also to see just what is out there that may be utilised in the future. Lists and descriptions of Farmers' Association assets should please be sent to the Director – [dir2@cfuzim.org](mailto:dir2@cfuzim.org)
- 14) Although we are definitely making more progress on the compensation side our efforts and discussions on equity release in the form of pensions for farmers whilst the compensation is being finalised is not achieving much support and may not become a reality. More emphasis would rather be placed into achieving compensation as quickly as possible through the model that we are proposing in our Way Forward.

Below is taken from the latest Valcon Newsletter that gives us an insight into some of the work which is also being done by us behind the scenes:

*Special General Newsletter*

*6/9/11*

*The Seminar "Zimbabwe Agriculture - Past, Present and Future", which was donor funded and attracted high-level participation is we believe an important step in "The Way Forward". Compensation is a live issue.*

*John Laurie reports:*

*I was asked to attend the above-mentioned three-day seminar and speak on "Agriculture The Past". The interim report is a brief summary of what took place at this seminar where over one hundred delegates, almost all Indigenous Zimbabweans, attended. I was impressed with the calibre of debate together with the factual highlighting of the realities in where we are today and the need to address so many negatives now if agriculture is once more to play a major role in this economy in the future.*

*The task force, which was set up after the seminar has a lot still to do but will I hope produce an in-depth document that will genuinely give the situation as it is and what needs to be done as a matter of urgency. This interim report and its final documents will be sent to Government.*

## **Interim Report**

A three-day seminar facilitated by Dr Douglas Ncube and Professor Mandi Rukuni was held in June 2011. The subject was “Zimbabwe Agriculture - Past, Present and Future”, where debate was full, frank and realistic.

The objectives were:

- a) To learn and discuss how Zimbabwe’s agriculture was successfully built in the past;
- b) To analyse, debate and develop a consensus on the current status of agriculture;
- c) To map out the strategic and practical action needed to accelerate production, productivity and competitiveness of the sector in the future.

At the close of the seminar a Task Force was set up to pursue in greater depth, the areas highlighted during the seminar, with the key recommendations being:

- a) What to continue doing;
- b) What to stop doing; and
- c) What to start doing.

The subject is a huge one, and over the coming months will require a lot of in depth work and assessment before a final paper can be presented to Government.

However, below we give an interim report with further updates as and when necessary. We emphasise that this is only an interim report where changes may be made if deemed necessary.

The interim report recommends as follows:

1. What to Continue Doing
  - 1) Liberalisation of the economy;
  - 2) Private sector participation in the Agricultural Sector;
  - 3) Crop and livestock diversification; and
  - 4) Positive tobacco production.
2. What to Stop Doing
  - Dependency on donors;
  - Politicization of the whole agricultural system;
  - Replication of duties and roles in Government Ministries;
  - Fresh land invasions;
  - Issuing of free inputs to farmers.
3. What to Start Doing
  - a) Foster unity and co-ordination amongst all stakeholders in the agricultural sector;
  - b) Take farming as a genuine business at all levels;
  - c) Prioritise resources;
  - d) Allocate additional resources to the agricultural sector;
  - e) Enforce bylaws, rules and regulations protecting the environment;
  - f) Produce quality tobacco;
  - g) Train farmers in proper farming;



## **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DAIRY FARMERS** (from the Desk of Rob Van Vuuren)

The first Executive Meeting under the newly elected Chairman, Veneka Bwerinofa, and Vice Chairman, Craig Follwell, took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> September 2011. A new platform is being set up for the NADF with emphasis on service delivery to members, and continued support for the development of the Zimbabwe dairy industry.

The NADF will be involved with all industry stakeholders – redrafting the Dairy Act, encouraging the Zimbabwe Dairy Industry Trust (ZDIT) to become more pro-active, participating in A.M.A. meetings and engaging E.M.A., for example. A key issue requiring resolution is the independent laboratory for testing of milk and milk products. These tests determine individual milk prices for our members.

The NADF has signed a sub-award with Land-O-Lakes who are sponsored by USAID to implement a development programme for the small-scale sector that will involve initially, 10 milk collections and slowly increasing to hopefully 20. The programme will run until April 2013.

## **LIVESTOCK INFORMATION**

We have in stock and available at our offices at present:

**Animal Foods of Central Africa Technical Handbook @ US\$10,00 each**

**Stock Registers @ US\$5,00 each**

**Daily Milk Records of Individual Cows @ US\$5,00 each**

**Recommended Guide to Good Dairy Farming Practices @ \$2.00 each**

**Dairy Handbooks @ US\$40,00 each**

**Cattle Producers' Association Beef Production Manual @ US\$40,00 each**

**Go Green Mastitis Mint @ US\$10,00 each**

**Automatic Syringe Kits @ \$100,00 each**

Should you be interested in purchasing any of the above items, please call at Commercial Farmers Union, Agriculture House and see the NADF Offices.

**C.P.A** We are receiving a number of calls regarding availability of livestock and are assuming that producers may not be aware that C.C Sales have moved to Mt. Hampden. Contact details are given below:

Agatha Nyandoro: 0712 601083

Mark Hayter: 0712 604623, 0772286828

Kevin Higgins: 0712 602565

Jason Ridley: 0712 408614; 0772 210 404



**BEEF OPEN MARKET PRICES (PLEASE NOTE THESE PRICES ARE ONLY A GUIDE)**

VENUE	MT. HAMPDEN		BULAWAYO SHOWGROUNDS	
DATE	28-08-2011		9/9/2011	
	AVE. PRICE	AVERAGE	AVE. PRICE	AVERAGE
GRADE	NO. OF CATTLE	PER KG LV WT	NO. OF CATTLE	PER KG LV WT
SUPER	N/A	N/A		2
CHOICE	N/A	N/A		N/A
COMMERCIAL	48	1.6		1.67
ECONOMY	51	1.46		1.45
MANUFACTURING	6	1.42		1.17
WEANER HEIFERS	13	1.62		N/A
BULLING HEIFERS	11	1.51		N/A
WEANER STEERS	9	1.51		N/A
LONG WEANER HEIFER	16	1.54		N/A
LONG WEANER STEER	7	1.83		N/A
FEEDER STEERS	26	1.98		N/A
COMM WEANER STEERS	1	1.33		N/A
COMM WEANER HEIFERS	6	1.34		N/A
BULL	12	1.53		1.5
STD MUTTON	13	3.6		N/A

## ZIMBABWE CROP PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION

### Producer Prices

Local Purchaser Trading Prices as at 8<sup>th</sup> September 2011 R6.99 - US\$

Commodity	GMB	Agrifoods	PHI Commodities	Staywe II	Croplink	ProGroup
White Maize	320	Not available	240	245	245 - 250	Not available
Yellow Maize	320		220	235	230	
Maize Bran	150		150	150	150	
Soya beans	500		600	625	600	
Soya bean Meal	-		680-700	670	680	
Wheat	900		Premium 460	500	500	
Wheat Bran	-		-	200	200	
Groundnuts	950 unshelled		950 shelled	900 shelled	800	

### Producer Prices

South African Grain Information Services (SAGIS)  
South African Foreign Exchange (SAFEX) 8 August 2011

Commodity	Rand/tonne	US\$/Tonne	Import Parity Rand/Tonne	Import Parity US\$/Tonne
White Maize	1862	260	2022	282
Yellow Maize	1873	262	2033	284
Wheat	2950	412	3110	434
Soyabeans	3320	464	3480	486
Sunflowers	3895	544	4055	566

## **BUSINESS CHAMBER** (from the desk of Richard Taylor)

On Friday I assured everyone that I would be giving you all answers as to what procedures; people to see etc, will be required. I also started my letter with, “time rolls on”. Indeed time marches on, which is of huge concern to not just us, but NMB and African Century.

We did have our meeting with NMB and African Century, but unfortunately the Afrexim Bank representative was called to Malawi this morning. So answers that we were all looking for on Monday, (ourselves and the two local financiers) could not be provided due to the main external financier being absent.

Questions we all want answered:

- 1) When is Afrexim Bank going to transfer the funds to the local financiers?
- 2) Once the local financiers receive these funds how long before the money is availed to the applicants on approval of their loan facility?
- 3) What is the actual interest rate, +/-10%?
- 4) What is the minimum deposit for Capex?
- 5) The seasonal facility will definitely be a roll over facility?
- 6) What are the requirements for security against the loans?

Afrexim Bank has definitely approved the finance for this scheme. Our concern is that should this money only be transferred to the local bank and African Century in six weeks – eight weeks time, farmers wanting the finance for Maize and Soya Beans will have already passed their planting dates, let alone finance required for inputs, land prep etc. Should this be the case then NMB have expressed their concern and would not like to finance these crops.

I don't see that this will be a problem that we cannot overcome, as we do have our preferential trading partners who have schemes to cover the input costs. What will be more of a problem is getting bridging finance to cover one's running expenses for 60 – 90 days till the loan money is available.

We will be meeting with all the players on Wednesday and will be asking for a written guarantee from Afrexim Bank as to when the money for this scheme will be transferred to the local banks. We need to know this so that we can give a definite timetable to you, in order for farmers to adjust their plans accordingly.

I am sorry that we don't have any real positive news as to the dates for this money, but I assure you that we continue to work tirelessly to secure better deals for you all.

For further info on any of the above please email me [rtaylor@cfuzim.org](mailto:rtaylor@cfuzim.org)

### **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)

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