

ARAC AGM CHAIRMANS REPORT 2012.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to welcome and thank all of those of you who have managed to attend today's AGM. An AGM allows us to reflect back upon what we have and have not achieved during our year's term in office. It gives us the opportunity to report back to you; our membership, on our efforts to fully represent your best interests within the CFU.

ARAC Representation in CFU and elsewhere:

ARAC has since its inception, been afforded considerable space and position within the CFU, besides our own ARAC committee, your Chairman, committee and staff members sit on a number of other CFU committees.

These committees are:-

1. The CFU Council. This is the policy and decision making body of the Union. At Council level we are able to ensure that displaced farmer issues are kept high on the CFU agenda. It further allows us the opportunity to support the President and his team in fully representing and addressing our property rights issues, which have all too long been overlooked.
2. The EXCO Committee deals with the management of the Union. Here too we are given an insight of the financial state of the Union.
3. The Compensation Committee in conjunction with Valcon. This Committee is chaired by the President and includes the V/President, the ARAC Chairman and Manager, ARAC committee member Byron Dardagen, John Laurie in his individual capacity, as well as both Graham Mullet and Tony Purkis representing VALCON. Hopefully in the near future there will be some representation from Matabeleland, which is viewed as being essential to the representation of their best interests.

A number of issues which have come to light on this committee and we ARAC members believe the President needs to address these in the near future.

They are:

- a) CFU and Valcon need to negotiate a new MOU which must clearly describe the roles to be played by each organization when dealing with Government and or donors.
- b) Under no circumstances must a figure be put to the global figure, until the parameters and values have been agreed on or set by International court rulings or acceptable regional values have been applied.
- c) Valcon press statements concerning compensation should be vetted and the content of such correspondence agreed upon by the CFU President. This will help to avert any possible misunderstandings that allow CFU detractors to draw swords. The reality of compensation points at some form of resolution some time after a legitimate Government has taken control of the country. In the lead up period to sound governance all that we can do, is get our figures right, they must be based on the principal of equivalence and must be neither overstated nor understated.
4. The Strategic Legal Initiative Committee. This is a very small committee chaired by either the President or V/President and includes the ARAC Chairman and two others. It meets informally a couple of times a month or on an as and when basis. This committee strategizes legal initiatives and direction; to keep pressure on Government, and seeks ways in which to promote our compensation cause in both the International Courts and the International arena.
5. The welfare Committee of Farm Families Trust, until recently headed by Richard Brooker, who due to health reasons has had to hand over to Bob Swift assisted by Barry Munro, continues to make an impact as and where they can depending on what limited funds are available to them.

ARAC Projects:

A number of projects have been initiated or carried out during the year. We thank Wynand Hart, who was assisted by Rose Brent in putting together the ARAC Consequential Claim Model for Disturbance and other Losses. We thank an unnamed sponsor who funded this initiative. The final draft document is currently under scrutiny and evaluation by Andy House and is still to be ratified.

We wish to thank Simon De Swardt too for his work on putting together a report and interactive CD on the *Doma Trashings* and short DVD which gives a current snap shot of *Three Generations of Farmers* ten years after Fast Track, and Rory Pilosof for his work on the BIPPA Report and Land Policy Review since the formation of the GNU. These projects have been funded by the British Government and will be used for advocacy.

All of these projects are still to be completed and have hit the wall so to speak due to a lack of funding. Your committee is working on this issue with EXCO and it is hoped that in the near future this issue will be resolved.

Farmer Employment / Regional Relocation Project:

We also received sponsorship from the British Embassy which enabled some 40 farmers to be trained in conservation farming methods through Foundations for Farming and Brian Oldrieve. This training is particularly useful for development work and teaches the necessary soft skills for skills transfer both in this country and the region.

We continue to facilitate the dissemination of job opportunities to farmers looking for positions and a number of people have been assisted to find useful employment during the year.

A fresh initiative at farmer relocation has recently been started by CFU. The initiative plans to provide agricultural expertise in the form of consultancy work which will benefit to our ARAC membership, and the relocation of farmers to other African countries aided by those countries governments.

In this regard it is hoped that something may come of an approach by the Zambian Government which is looking for upwards of 60 Zimbabwean commercial farmers. This may well be an ideal opportunity for our young farmers. Richard Taylor is currently in Zambia and it is hoped that together with the assistance of Patrick Ashton and David Sole something will transpire.

The ARAC office has been challenged by EXCO to get more projects going of this nature so as to assist with the funding and staffing of the ARAC office. This initiative will have to be vigorously perused by the incoming committee.

ARAC now and into the future:

At our last meeting committee meeting, I asked the committee members present, "In view of the fact that the CFU has fully taken on board the 'compensation initiative', is ARAC necessary or relevant?" The answer was, to my surprise, a resounding "Yes"!! Virtually all those present felt that, we still have a huge role to play by being an internal pressure group which is capable of influencing and making changes from within the Union, as well as monitoring progress and results. It was however agreed that we should reduce our number of meetings to 3 or 4 a year as opposed to monthly. This I'm pleased to say was agreed to.

A number of issues remain to be resolved within ARAC. Firstly our mandate has never fully been drawn up and spelt out and ratified. Secondly funding of our office and staff is of paramount importance if we are to continue existing as we are. Both these issues need to be tackled by the new committee as a matter of urgency.

All that remains for me now is to thank the following for their loyal and consistent support throughout this last year: Wynand Hart. The somewhat reluctant participant on the ARAC board, but whose steadfastness and dedication to the cause of "full and fair compensation" is beyond question or doubt. I wish you all the best with your health battles and know we can always rely on your help in the future. I shall miss our long personal debates, even the heated ones!

I would also like to thank Rose Brent for her hard and dedicated work, especially on the information gathering for the Consequential Loss project. I hope that funding can be found to prevent the relinquishment of her services.

We thank Richard Brooker for the many years of dedicated work with Farm Families Trust and wish him well with his knee and hip problems.

We would also like to thank the Zimbabwe Pensioners Support under Hannes Botha. We have been able to distribute food parcels to a number of our resource challenged members on a regular basis and we are indeed grateful to those who continue to give so generously.

I'd like to thank President Charlie Taffs and V/President Pete Steyl for their consistent dedication and extreme hard work, in all respects of the running of the Union, in the best interests of all those farming and not farming. I wish to thank my fellow committee members for all their help, encouragement and support during this last year. I applaud you all for putting in so much of your time and for your concern and dedication to the cause of compensation.

Finally I'd like to thank Ben Gilpin for the tremendous amount of work he has had to do behind the scenes; not only for ARAC but CFU as well, for all the people he's had to deal with that come through our office and for keeping ARAC going in the right direction seen by its membership of around 420 farmers. I know that at times, it's been both frustrating and disheartening thankless work, but we appreciate your dedication and concerns for both ARAC and the Union.

Presented today 29/05/12, Rod Swales, Chairman ARAC.