

# Food wastages and loss directly affecting Africa's food security

The Chief executive Officer of the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) Mr Ishmael Sunga, chaired the first session of the day at the Brussels development briefing session on losses and waste along the food chain. The briefing session was held in the European Commission, Borschette Building in Brussels, Belgium on the 27th of June 2012.

The discussion was aimed at addressing the concerns revolving around global hunger, food security, sustainability and waste recovery. The main focus was on raising awareness of the causes and impact of food losses and waste in low, medium and high-income countries. Roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year — approximately 1.3 billion tonnes — gets lost or wasted.

A variety of different actors — farmers,

retailers, governments and consumers — involved in the food supply chain contribute to large amounts of global food losses and waste. Speaking at the briefing session, Onya Akonopeesa, farmer leader and Board Member of the Uganda National Farmers Federation highlighted the impacts and effects of Post-harvest losses on food security in Africa. According to Akonopeesa "Post — harvest losses constitute the majority of Africa's food waste and losses."

However, the global food loss due to wastage is greater than that of post-harvest losses. Europe's number of food wastage as compared to developing countries food losses is very high. Food is wasted to a significant extent at the consumption stage, with food usually being discarded in spite of its suitability for human consumption. Processing, distribution and retailing are also responsible for the amount of food losses. Over-ordering of stock,

cosmetic imperfections (weight, size, shape and appearance) and other issues contribute to food waste.

Andy Dawe, Head of Food and Drink, Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP), believes that higher 'appearance quality standards' from supermarkets for fresh products have led to increased food waste in Europe. Expiration dates are also a leading cause of food wastage and are often considered as 'safety dates', resulting in food being discarded although it is still edible.

The speakers at the session all shared the same sentiments that good waste management begins with the prevention of waste. Food loss reduction strategies should take into account the various sectors that are strongly interrelated, for instance, investing in storage and cold chain infrastructure alone is not enough to be effective.

## Mr Jumbe elected vice president of PAFO

Mr Felix Elia Jumbe, the President of SACAU was elected to the position of Vice President of the Pan-African Farmers' Organization (PAFO). The elections were held at PAFO's second General Assembly that was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 23rd to 25th of August 2012. The new President is Mr. Bagna Djibo of Niger who represents the Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA). Mr Bagna took over from Mrs Elizabeth Atangana of Cameroon representing Central African Regional Farmers' Organization (PROPAC). The following is the full PAFO executive board for the next two years:

*President:* Mr. Bagna Djibo (ROPPA)

*Vice President:* Mr. Felix E. Jumbe (SACAU)

*Treasurer:* Mr. Phillip Kiriro (EAFF)

*Women Representative:* Mrs. Elizabeth Atangana (PROPAC)

*Youth Representative:* Mr. Ahmed Jarallah (UMAGRI)

Among other items, the assembly discussed the PAFO Constitution and Strategic Plan. SACAU delegation at the assembly comprised of representatives from Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT), Coalition Paysanne de Madagascar (CPM), National Association of Smallholder Farmers' in Malawi (NASFAM), Farmers

Union of Malawi (FUM), Swaziland National Agricultural Union (SNAU), Lesotho National Farmers' Union (LENAFU), Seychelles Farmers' Association (SeyFA) and Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU).



**New Vice President:**  
Mr. Felix E. Jumbe  
(SACAU)

**2** SEYFA fights against removal of tax exemption policies for farmers

**3** ACT helps Tanzanian farmers access new markets through networking

**3** LENAFAU member appointed minister of Agriculture in Lesotho

**4** Cotton prices lower compared to last season



**Reporting on Progress ...** Five members of SACAU namely; Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT); Coalition of Farmers in Madagascar (CPM); Lesotho National Farmers' Union (LENAFU); Seychelles Farmers' Association (SeyFA); and Swaziland Agricultural Unions (SNAU) are participating in an institutional capacity development program for farmers' organization in Africa. The program which is aimed at improving the capacity of African farmers' organisations to influence policies in their respective countries is funded by IFAD and the European Commission. The first phase of the project is coming to an end this month. The five farmers' organizations met in Pretoria at the beginning of the month to share their experiences in the program which has been running for the past three years. In general the program has been instrumental in improving the visibility and credibility of participating organizations most of which are young and had no secretariat prior to the project. Farmers' voice in the policy arena in their respective countries has also improved and in some cases organizations have been able to influence government policies that affect farmers. SACAU together with other four regional farmers' organizations are negotiating with IFAD and EC for the extension of the program.

## SeyFA fights against removal of tax exemption policies for farmers

The Support for Farmers Organisations in Africa Programme (SFOAP) has helped Southern African farmer organisations to establish themselves and make an impact in their communities. The Seychelles Farmers Association was established in 2002 and has been a pillar of support for the Seychelles farmers since then.

However, in 2008, the political and economic situation in the Seychelles forced the government to remove tax exemption policies for farmers. Farmers were no longer going to benefit from tax exemption and the agricultural industry was no longer going to be one of the tax beneficiaries in the country. This change affected the growing farming sector and forced a number of farmers to scale down their production. By early 2009 the inflation rate in the country had risen to 20% and this meant that without the benefits of tax exemption some farmers could not afford to buy raw materials. So inevitably more than 60% of farms closed down and the rest reduced their production.

With the financial help of SFOAP, SeyFA managed to establish and set up an active office where members of the organisation began to plan on how to lobby the government to return the tax exemption policies. Government lobbying is often expensive but the support that SFAOP provided helped to mobilise the farmers to speak with one voice. SeyFA managed to start negotiations with the government and these negotiations lasted for two years. At the beginning of 2012 the government finally decided to agree to re introduce tax exemption policies for farmers and this is seen as a major victory for



**Successful lobbying ...** Mr Andre Sopha and Mrs Petrina Marie from SeyFA explain how they managed to successfully lobby for the removal of tax policies against farmers in the Seychelles.

SeyFA and its members who were struggling to make ends meet.

SFOAP helped set up a SeyFA secretariat office. This makes it easier for SeyFA to lobby and engage the government on agricultural issues. Thanks to SFOAP and its financial support the SeyFA, is able to help farmers in Seychelles re establish themselves and to strengthen country's food security.



## SNAU lobbies for increase in Swazi maize selling price

Over the years Swaziland farmers have been failing to meet the demand for maize in the country. Climate changes and lack of adequate capacity has seen the Swazi agricultural sector importing maize from its neighbouring South Africa. This move was implemented to ensure that there is food security in the country.

However, the Swazi farmers felt that they were not being treated fairly by the Ministry of Agriculture when it came to the purchasing price of a bag of maize from them as compared to a South African farmer. Swazi farmers never had a unified voice to present their concerns and complaints until the Swaziland National Agricultural Union (SNAU) was created with funding from "the Support for Farmers Organisations in Africa Programme (SFOAP)" in 2009.

The establishment of an agricultural union enabled farmers to be represented in the price setting commission that mainly consisted of millers, consumer boards and officials from the marketing commission. The inclusion of farmers meant that they could have a say towards the setting of the selling price for a bag of maize produced by a Swazi farmer. Initially the price commission would set a low buying price for maize harvested in Swaziland and would pay high prices for the imported maize.

Although the Swazi farmers knew that there was not much room for negotiation on the imported maize price they felt that the amount they were being paid for a bag of maize was far too little to sustain them as farmers. So SNAU with their representative in the pricing commission began to lobby for



**More money for maize ...** Ms Nozipho Maphanga and Ms Zanele Phiri from SNAU take pride in having successfully negotiated for a higher selling price for maize for Swazi farmers.

farmers to sell their maize at a higher price and their lobbying succeed.

Now members of SNAU have the potential to increase their yields as they are getting more money for their harvests than before.



## LENAFU leads farmers to central policy structures

The Support for Farmers Organisations in Africa Programme (SFOAP) has managed to help the Lesotho National Farmers Union (LENAFU) to establish a formidable farmers union. Harsh climatic conditions and lack of financial support for farmers has decreased Lesotho's food production. So it was very important for LENAFU to create a platform for farmers to come together and brainstorm solutions to overcome the food crisis in the country.

Over the last three years, LENAFU

has grown in membership and support in Lesotho. This growth has paid off as some of its members have managed to be elected into decision making bodies in the national government. The support SFOAP has provided to LENAFU is commended because without their funding and guidance the farmers union would not have been able to establish themselves as an organisation that the government can consult when creating policies around food security.

**Left: Getting their voice heard ...** Mr Motsau Khuele, the CEO of LENAFU explains how important it is for the Lesotho agricultural reform to have member of LENAFU appointed as the minister of agriculture.

## ACT helps Tanzanian farmers access new markets

In August every year, Tanzania holds an Annual agricultural show to celebrate and showcase the work of farmers across Tanzania and Eastern Africa. The agricultural show is a prestigious show and most Tanzanian farmers strive to showcase their produce at the event.

In 2011, the Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT) decided to gather some of its most successful members and exhibit their goods and products at the fair. ACT had a farmers pavilion at the show and it managed to win the first place award for the best exhibitors' pavilion in the private sector category. This achievement meant a lot for ACT as it had recently managed to revive its self as an established agricultural council thanks to the help of the Support for Farmers Organisations in Africa Programme (SFOAP).

With funding from SFOAP, ACT had managed to grow their membership and improve their support for their existing members. Farmers

who got an opportunity to showcase their products in the ACT pavilion were exposed to new markets as well as having an opportunity to network with fellow farmers. The response from the visitors at the show towards the farmer's work and produce gave the farmers some form of achievement and appreciation.

One of ACT's main goals is to boost the morale of farmers in Tanzania and to expose them to new markets and exposing them to such events is certainly one of the ways to do so. Organising such an event is very costly but thanks to the funding provided by SFOAP, ACT could manage to transport and accommodate the selected farmers from some selected districts in Tanzania. The experience the farmers obtained from the fair will always enable them to work harder as they (gained) more cognizant of the impact and role they have to play as farmers in Tanzania.

# Investment for African livestock farming

**S**ACAU participated in the 19th ALive Executive Committee and the 7th General Assembly from 17 to 19 July. The Executive Committee met on 17 and 18 July in preparation of the General Assembly with the theme 'Governance of Veterinary Services in Africa.' These meetings were held in Nairobi, Kenya at the African Union Interafrican Bureau of Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) Headquarters.

ALive (African Livestock) is a multi-stakeholders platform which aims at facilitating discussion, advocating for increased resource mobilization, advancing policy advice and enabling access to global knowledge for the stakeholders in African animal agriculture and programs that advance the CAADP livestock sub-sector agenda. The stakeholders involved in ALive include African livestock institutions, researchers, farmers, international institutions and development partners. The ALive

Secretariat is hosted by AU-IBAR.

One of the highlights of the discussions was that investments in the livestock sector were not commensurate with the contributions the sector makes towards national economies. Another issue was around the status of veterinary professionals in Africa, in particular, veterinary officers trained not being adaptable to current and coming problems, inadequate number of veterinarians as well as the fact that retiring veterinarians are not being adequately replaced.

Relatedly, animal diseases are a major issue in Africa, and as such, improving the quality of animal health services is essential to increase productivity of the livestock sector. In addition, there is need for coordinated efforts to control animal diseases, in particular Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs), harmonization of livestock policies, and addressing issues of water and pastures for animals. An interesting presentation was made on the applica-

tion of the Livestock Sector Investment and Policy Toolkit (LSIPT) in Zambia after it was first tested in Mali. The LSIPT application in Zambia brought up interesting information on the contribution of livestock to the country's GDP which was found to be underestimated. The results also showed that the Zambian cattle population can be increased by more than five times, there are no feed constraints in Zambia, 15 years projections that the increase in demand of milk and meat will outstrip supply, and budget allocations to livestock are not in line with agriculture's share of agriculture GDP and total GDP amongst others.

Finally, the importance of using the World Organisation for Animal Health's Performance of Veterinary Services (OIE PVS) Gap Analysis reports to prepare projects; the need to narrow the gap between veterinarians and farmers; and for all livestock practitioners to work in an integrated manner was also highlighted.

## SACAU facilitates cotton price discussions

**T**he 2011/2012 cotton marketing season has been characterised by low prices for seed cotton. Following the high prices realised by cotton farmers in the region during the 2010/2011 season the area under cotton was increased with more smallholder farmers growing the crop. The expectations of the smallholder farmers were of high prices during the 2011/2012 season as well. The majority of the cotton grown in the region is grown under various contract farming arrangements with smallholder farmers. The inputs for growing cotton are supplied by the cotton buyers and ginners on loan for production and recovered when the cotton is sold back to them.

The cotton buyers and ginners offered prices that were in some cases less than half of the prices paid during the previous season when cotton price negotiations began.

As a result much of the season was characterised by farmers holding on to their crop with no sales taking place. Agreement on the prices could not be reached in a number of countries. Disgruntlement over the cotton prices resulted in physical confrontation, demonstrations, violence and arson. Sales were limited to farmers who sold cotton out of desperation for cash to pay for their daily needs. The main challenge for cotton farmers in the different countries was that there was inadequate informa-

tion. Some cotton buyers and ginners were buying cotton in more than one country. Therefore they were using information from one country to gain advantage in another country where farmers were not informed.

SACAU was involved in the monitoring of the seed cotton prices which were being offered and in supporting the different national cotton associations to access relevant information on cotton. There was a need for cotton farmers from the respective countries to share information on the prices being offered. Issues of the viability of the prices on offer also needed to be discussed with a view to finding mutually beneficial solutions for smallholder farmers. This would

help them to make informed decisions and prevent the situation where cotton buyers and ginners were dictating prices because they were better informed.

The issue of the availability of relevant information for farm level decisions by smallholder farmers remains important. This would help for planning purposes as the world stocks of cotton, the demand for cotton and the activities in the economies that draw the textiles would all influence cotton prices going forward.

The consensus in the region is that the prices paid for cotton thus far have been low. Farmers in the different countries have been looking at possibly growing other crops which may have a better return for next season.

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### SACAU Member list:

SACAU members include: Agricultural Council of Tanzania – ACT; Agri-South Africa – AgriSA; Botswana Agricultural Union – BAU; Commercial Farmers Union – CFU Coalition Paysanne de Madagascar – CPM; Confédération des Agriculteurs Malagasy – FEKRITAMA; Farmers Union of Malawi – FUM; Lesotho National Farmers' Union – LENAFU; National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi – NASFAM; Namibia Agricultural Union – NAU; Namibia National Farmers Union – NNFU; Seychelles Farmers Association – SEYFA; Swaziland National Agricultural Union – SNAU; União Nacional de Camponeses – UNAC; Zambia National Farmers Union – ZNFU; Zimbabwe Farmers Union – ZFU.