

COMING
SOON!

SACAU e-WEEKLY

Keeping us Connected

Issue

2

3 March 2014

SACAU Annual Policy Conference 2014

Where: Lesotho

Save the date! 26-28 May 2014
(including a field-trip day)

SACAU Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2014

Where: Lesotho

Save the date! 29 May 2014

UPCOMING EVENTS

- MONSANTO CONFERENCE SUN CITY SOUTH AFRICA 2—5 MARCH 2014
- LIVESTOCK AND OILSEED COMMITTEE MEETINGS 11 – 14 MARCH CENTURION SOUTH AFRICA 2014
- SACAU BOARD ADVISORY AND BOARD MEETING –19-20 MARCH 2014 PRETORIA SOUTH AFRICA
- FAO REGIONAL MEETING 21-22 MARCH 2014, TUNISIA

A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Last week we published our first issue of the e-W and we received great commentary from you-our reader. We would like to thank you and we look forward to continuing our journey with you as we delve into more interesting topics and updates each week.

We appreciate your feedback and support.

Sincerely,

Information and Communications Team



In the spotlight!

INVESTING IN ALL FARMERS

The President of SACAU, Dr Theo de Jager, proposed for a review of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Farmers' Forum steering committees to make it more inclusive and representative of all categories of farmers and regions. He led a SACAU delegation to Rome, which comprised of Mr Benito Eliasi (Secretariat), Mrs Jane Ngulube (Board Member) and Mrs Innocentia Thwala from the Swaziland National Agricultural Union (SNAU).

De Jager explained that SACAU is striving for the same cause as IFAD, but from a different angle. "We fight for the same cause, but not in the same way. We believe in addressing poverty through the creation of wealth. Therefore, a conducive environment needs to be created for farmers so they can thrive in their businesses. In our view there can be a symbiotic relationship between all categories of farmers, with a complimentary existence to benefit each other and the agricultural sector at large," de Jager said.

The Forum is an on-going process of consultation and dialogue amongst small farmers' and rural producers' organizations. According to de Jager, SACAU is not a member of the World Farmers' Forum, despite representing both small-scale and rural poor farmers, as well as commercial farmers in Africa. In its closing remarks IFAD undertook to address the concerns about the representation of Steering Committees raised by SACAU. The fifth global meeting of the Farmers' Forum took place at the beginning of the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF 2014).

FORWARD FOCUS ON AGRI-VALUE CHAINS

Raising awareness on the drivers of the agricultural value chain finance in Africa and increasing collaboration amongst development partners are just two of the objectives and focus for the upcoming Brussels Policy Briefing themed "Revolutionising finance for agri-value chains". Looking at long-term survival, the key elements will revolve around discussing how policy, laws, support from government and large donors can improve not only the use and implementation of technology (ICT) but also the importance of promoting integration and efficiency in agricultural value chains.

Dr Theo De Jager, SACAU President will be attending the briefing in Brussels on the 5th March 2014 at the ACP Secretariat.

TECHNOLOGY BOOST FOR FARMERS

Smallholder farmers in Zambia will wake up to a new day of increased focus on new innovations and technologies that will strengthen them in the agriculture sector. This is as a result of a new deal between the Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) who have signed a K38 Million deal. The deal will assist small-scale farmers to increase their productivity, technology improvement and assist smallholders across the country.

[Click on the link below to read the full article!](#)

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201402250563.html>

UN WARNS OF WATER SCARCITY

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has alerted countries about increased water scarcity which will have a dire impact on food security. By 2050, it is expected that 50% of fresh water availability in the countries of the near East and North Africa will drop.

FAO advises ministers of agriculture and national officials to prepare to tackle the issue at a meeting next week Monday which will be the 32nd FAO Regional Conference under the theme "For a resilient and food secure region."

[Click on the link below to read the full article!](#)

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201402201582.html>

AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA A KEY FOCUS AT MONSANTO

Customers from different global regions will be present at the Monsanto *Key Account Customers* conference. The focus will be on large customers who are game changers and provide a greater impact on the agricultural industry in Africa. Key Account customers from across the globe will gather for deliberations and information sessions on agriculture in Africa looking at the challenges, needs and opportunities. Speakers from various spheres in agriculture will share their views with the delegates where after two groups will depart on tours one of them leading to the western grain production areas within South Africa. This will be the second time Monsanto hosts this global event and this year the chosen country is South Africa. The conference is taking place in Sun City from the 2-5 March 2014.

Quote of the Week

"The discovery of agriculture was the first big step toward a civilized life"

Arthur Keith

FARMERS IN COOPERATIVES 'THRIVING IN CONGO'

Dr Theo de Jager, Vice-President of AgriSA, has dismissed reports that South African farmers in the Republic of the Congo "are penniless and struggling to survive" in the country. This follows media reports that only 9 of a group of 28 South African farmers who moved to the Congo are still farming. Failed harvests, internal wrangling, bad weather and a lack of money have been named as some of the reasons why most of the farmers are going through hardship.

"Farmers who clustered their interests and went into cooperatives are thriving. Those who decide to go at it alone, find it harder to get access to finance. I think the lessons here are that; cooperatives are the magic choice to move forward and make things happen in agriculture," de Jager explained. AgriSA encouraged its members to explore opportunities in the Congo, when the Congolese government invited South African farmers in 2011 to bring their expertise to the country.

FERTILISER SUMMIT: FROM DECLARATION TO ACTION

Following the Abuja Fertiliser Summit in 2006, not much has been done by African governments to improve access to fertiliser for smallholder farmers. The African Fertiliser Financing Mechanism (AFFM) only received US\$ 5 million from Nigeria. Seed and fertiliser will feature prominently in transforming the agriculture agenda in Africa and to kick-start the continent's long overdue green revolution.

The year 2014 has been declared; "THE YEAR OF AFRICAN AGRICULTURE." The seed sector in Africa has grown faster than the fertiliser sector in recent years. There is need for technically sound and implementable models for fertiliser; a need to improve infrastructure for the distribution of fertiliser. From presentations at the Summit, delegates among others learned that it is cheaper to land fertiliser in the region from the Middle East, than it is to produce on the continent.

A meeting was convened last year in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia as a follow-up to the Abuja Declaration to review the progress that has been taken in the fertiliser sector. The outcomes will feed into the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) partnership platform meeting in Durban in March, 2014 and the African Union Ministers of Agriculture meeting in July, 2014. The aim is to find technically sound and implementable models for fertiliser distribution and to achieve consensus of fertiliser policy actions, which are implementable. A steering committee will take up the recommendations before the partnership platform meeting in Durban, South Africa.

A VATICAN EXPERIENCE!



Benito Odala Eliasi

The highlight for me during the trip was the meeting between SACAU delegation (led by the president) and the IFAD Country Program Manager (CPM) for South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. The CPM and the SACAU delegation agreed to collaborate in formulating programs that will benefit small scale farmers in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland.

I have been to Italy for several times but for the Farmers' Forum, this was my second time having attended the event before in 2010. During the first forum there was inadequate interaction between participants of the forum and the IFAD governing Council and I expected this to improve. It was interesting to note that progress has been made on this to the extent that the last session of the forum was attended by more than 10 members of the IFAD governing council and those who spoke pledged their support to work with Farmers' Organizations. Visiting the Vatican was also one of the highlights of the trip. Though it was raining we managed to brave the rains to visit the Saint Peter's Square.

I was astonished to see that there are a number of con-men in Vatican who promises to guide you in a tour at a very exorbitant price. My advice to those who would want to visit the St. Peter's or any historical places in Vatican is to be aware of these people. Otherwise their Pizza was also nice.

STRENGTHENING YOUTH AND WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE



Innocentia Thwala

My first trip to Rome, Italy has been an exciting one. I had to travel to Mozambique to process my visa which was delightful and I would like to thank our local Italian Embassy (Consulate) for providing support to me. I expected that the discussions in the forum would cover issues on support to farmers on production to improve food security, livelihoods and agricultural commercialization. Indeed my expectations were met since the discussions did include food security interventions towards family farmers.

I am excited by IFAD's commitment to work with farmer organizations especially women and youth. I wish more support would be given to national farmer organizations because they are better positioned to develop local farmers and contribute to the improvement of the agriculture sector performance. There was a session on gender issues.

It was specifically prepared for women. It was aimed at mainstreaming the participation of women in key leadership roles in agricultural organizations. Overall, the forum was exciting especially in addressing concerns regarding family farmers.

On another note, I was rather traumatized by news that one of the planes we boarded to Rome was hijacked the following day. That was very terrifying, thinking of how I would handle that situation had I been in that plane. I will not forget the experience I had of missing my luggage at the dispatch port in Rome. Fortunately it was recovered the next day. I was also glad to meet my country Project Manager Mr Thomas Rat in the Forum.

TELL US SOMETHING!

Each week we feature an opinion/written piece-have your say and let us place it in the newsletter- send us your thoughts!

"EVERY PROBLEM IS A FINANCIAL PROBLEM..."



Lincoln Morolong speaks to the SACAU family about the work he do and the value of sound financial management for the organization.

I am the accountant at the Secretariat and I joined the SACAU family in 2012. Greetings to everyone and the interesting and friendly individuals from the member organizations I have had the opportunity to meet since joining SACAU.

As an accountant I am passionate about finance and I feel obliged to highlight: "The importance and value of sound financial management in organizations." I once read a quote that says, "If you think rightly, every problem is a financial problem or eventually becomes one."

This reminded me of the integral part financial management plays in the operations and success of an organization. An organization without funds is like a vehicle without fuel, on the side of the road and not able to reach the next destination.

Efficient accounting and management of funds in an organization ensures that the necessary distance will be travelled through timeous action in order to reach its strategic goals and outputs. I am of the opinion that financial management should be a priority item in all organizations and an on-going investment with regards to time, skills etc.

Sound financial systems, control measures, processes and dedicated passionate staff is invaluable for credibility, sustainability and development. Sound financial reporting is imperative to maintaining and improving standards.

SACAU ensures that these standards are upheld continuously and my message to all members, donors and stakeholders on behalf of SACAU's Finance unit is that we stay true to our organizational values of transparency and accountability.

(Image-source lerablog.com)

SOCIAL MEDIA!



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Thank you for reading this week's edition

PLEASE SEND YOUR COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND ANY INTERESTING INFORMATION TO:



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