

CFU FARMING OSCAR AWARD 2017

The Zimbabwean Farming Oscar Award has a long and proud history, having been introduced in 1961 by the late Mr. C. G. Tracy during his term as Vice President of the Commercial Farmers' Union as an award in recognition of "those who have generally done well for agriculture."

The annual Oscar has become known as the "Farming Oscar" to be given to some person or persons who have given outstanding service to agriculture, and has been awarded to people who have contributed to the Industry in its widest sense.

Over the years, winners have been chosen from the practical and scientific disciplines of agriculture, as well as from the administration and leadership roles with winners selected in recognition of having contributed significantly to the agricultural progress in Zimbabwe.

This year's winner is no exception and fits the required profile as having given outstanding service in the advancement of Agriculture.

Our recipient was born in the UK in 1949 and came to the country with his parents in 1954. He was raised a "townie" but early on developed a love of agriculture and farming.

After completing school at Churchill in 1965 he worked on a mixed farm in the Goromonzi area before completing his national service. He then joined the Veterinary Department and after completion of his training was first deployed as an Animal Health Inspector to Gwanda in 1968.

In this role he was responsible for the control of foot and mouth disease on the low-veld cattle ranches and the control of tsetse fly along the border of Mozambique, mainly in the Gona re Zhou area where he spent considerable time with his few staff whilst in charge of this exercise.

In 1978 he was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal on recommendation by the Ministry of Agriculture Veterinary Department for his outstanding work, particularly in regard to control of Foot & Mouth and vaccination measures in the exceedingly difficult circumstances pertaining during the war.

In spite of promotion and good prospects in the Veterinary Department, he took early retirement in 1982 to pursue his life-long dream of farming in the area he loved most, Mwenzezi.

He had a tough start to farming during the 1982/83 drought, though not all was bad as he met and married his wife at this time. Whilst establishing his mixed farm, Umbono, he was also partner in a business at Rutenga for some years. His farm was first designated in 1992 putting paid to long term development plans.

Over the years he has served in a number of ways:

- *He was an agent responsible for organising cattle auctions in Mwenzezi sale pens.*
- *As a Rural District Councillor for several years.*

- *On the Mwenenzi Farmers Association initially as Secretary from 1991, he became Vice Chairman and then Chairman in 1994, and ultimately Regional Representative for the whole of the Masvingo Province for the CFU, to this day still represents the Region. He remains a positive and influential member of CFU Council.*
- *Since moving to Harare in 2008 he has worked as a volunteer at CFU and has been the principal party responsible for the weekly production of CFU Calling and ensuring that contact is maintained with members past and present wherever they are across the globe. He has compiled many of the obituaries that pay tribute to former members who are no longer with us. Most significantly, he continues to comprehensively document and archive farm disruption reports. His work has been complimented by experts in the field, not just for its historical value but for the superb methodology.*

This month will see the distribution of the 120th report to key stakeholders as he continues his work on advocating for a just resolution and the restoration of human and property rights.

Whilst the land issue is emotive and we have struggled long and hard to get compensation and justice for farmers, strong evidence-based documentation is key to accountability and advocacy. Human rights issues do not go away and they stick to the perpetrators wherever they go.

Many farmers are not even aware of this valuable service: but for the passion and commitment of this individual, it would not have happened. We are indeed fortunate to have such a competent and insightful archivist with a deep and particular understanding of his subject matter and its importance.

A number of people have commented that he is a keen dog lover and since his earliest days in the Vet Department he has kept Staffies. His family have often joked he is like one of them. Indeed, the breed is well loved for many great qualities, amongst them: loyalty, dedication, perseverance and tenacity. Our Oscar Winner is much more than these.... a self-effacing servant of our farmers who works with efficiency and devotion from dawn till dusk, doing all he can to restore justice for our constituency. A broad-based recovery to the country and its agricultural sector is not possible and will not happen without comprehensively dealing with these matters.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my honour to present the Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe Farming Oscar Award for 2017. I kindly ask our guest to step forward and present this award to:

Mr Michael Anthony Clark.

Awarded with gratitude during the 74th Commercial Farmers' Union Annual Congress on Wednesday 20th September 2017 at the Richard Winkfield Auditorium, Art Farm, Harare.

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A. Pascoe, Vice President

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P. Steyl, President

