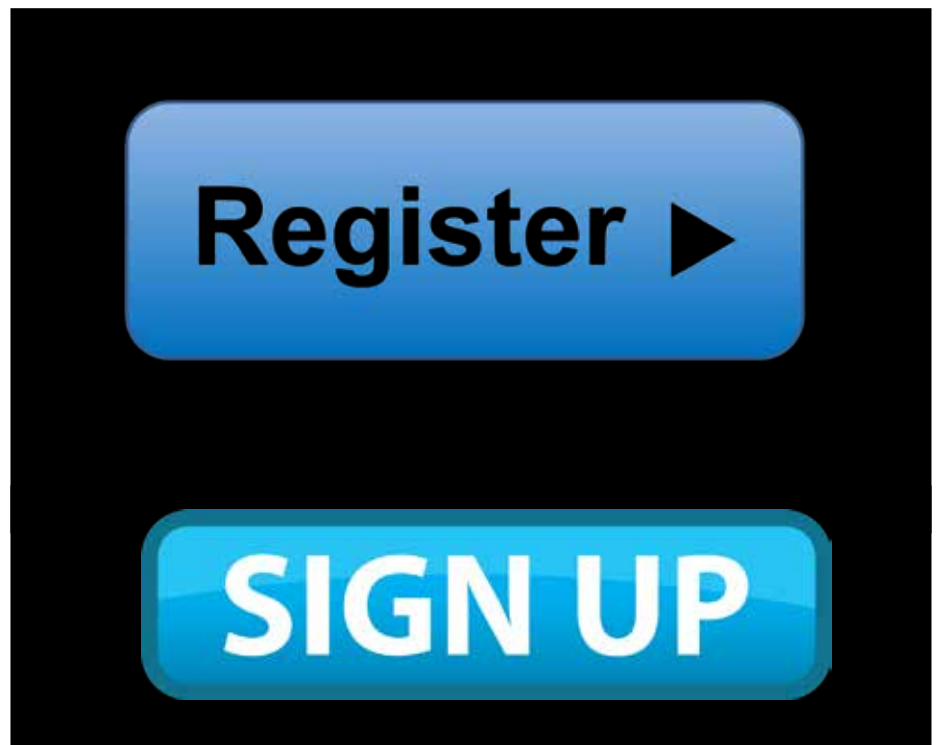


Farmers' Registrations

It is common knowledge that basic socio-economic data specifically on farmers is generally not widely available and easily accessible. As representatives of farmers, it is thus imperative for Farmers' Organisations (FOs) to invest in building complete and credible databases of their members.

Having data on farmers will enhance communication between and among large numbers of farmers, enable farmers to access information, knowledge, financial and other services, and to connect with markets and other facilities. This can also enable service providers to provide various public and private goods and services to large numbers of farmers.

The process of registering farmers involves farmer sensitisation, mobilisation and education, as well as practical on-boarding of key farmer socio-economic data, including GPS coordinates, onto a digital database(s), amongst others. The experience of SACAU has shown that it is difficult to on-board smallholder farmer data digitally without human interface, not least due to technical challenges and the need for data verification. The costs associated with the development and management of databases can



also be high.

SACAU has already embraced digital technology and its various roles, including in membership management, enhanced service delivery through organising and mobilising skills development to scale, aggregated economic power, negotiation, policy influence and advocacy, as well as their own financial and long-term sustainability.

As a result, it has invested in a Digital Farmer Aggregation Platform which it successfully piloted in Tanzania in partnership with its member, the Agricultural Council of Tanzania. SACAU is ready for rolling out, and is already registering farmers in Swaziland and Lesotho using a digital agriculture service platform (AgriSP) - a joint venture it established with a digital company.



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CEO's Letter



By Ishmael Sunga

August came and went, and time continues to fly by so fast. In this issue, we highlight to you some of the things that kept us busy and your feedback would be most welcome as usual.

At the end of this month, the Board of SACAUC held its first meeting since the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which was held in May. Three key

decisions were made by the Board, the first being the appointment of a woman farmer leader from one of our members onto the Board. This development is in response to the outcome of the AGM elections which saw the only woman on the SACAUC Board leaving and not being replaced. The Board had to intervene to address this retrogressive development by using its prerogative to appoint as enshrined in our constitution. The newest Board member will be formally presented once all the necessary formalities have been concluded.

Secondly, the Board proposed amendments to the constitution relating to cessation of membership, members' fees, and the rights of members not in good standing. These will be circulated to members for their consideration.

Finally, the target date for the launch of SACAUC's agri-agency was agreed. This will be at the 2018 AGM which will be held in Zimbabwe. This decision followed a workshop of the Board and Secretariat on the matter which reviewed ongoing support from Agriterria and related developments, among others.

Back to our day to day activities,

members of the Women Farmers' Forum met in Tanzania where they were trained in leadership and negotiation skills and visited a farm of their fellow farmer in Dar es Salaam. Representatives of dairy associations from the region and some of our members went to Kenya for their annual Regional Dairy Meeting where they had the opportunity to learn first-hand on the dairy sector of that country. I invite you to catch a glimpse of these events in this newsletter.

Without touching on our representation function, our work would not be complete. We participated in two regional events where we got insights into the climate outlook for the coming rainfall season and contributed to the development of a regional investment plan for COMESA. We also finalised preparations for our participation in the 2017 African Green Revolution Forum in which we are a partner and spread the word on the event as the countdown to this began. We look forward to the opportunities that this will bring to the farming community in the continent and to our young farmers' ambassadors, some of whom will be joining us as we journey to Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire!

2017/18 Climate outlook for Southern Africa



The 21st Annual Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF-21) met in Gaborone, Botswana, from 23-25 August 2017 to discuss a consensus outlook for the 2017/18 rainfall season over the SADC region. The outlook was formulated by climate scientists from the SADC National Meteorological/Hydrological Services (NMHSs), and the SADC Climate Services Centre (CSC).

The summarised 2017/18 forecast indicated that the Southern African region is likely to receive normal to below-normal rainfall for most of October, November and December (OND) 2017 followed by normal to above-normal rainfall for January, February and March (JFM) 2018. However, the northern Democratic Republic of Congo and northern Tanzania, island states, eastern-most Madagascar and the southeastern part of the region are likely to receive normal to above-normal rainfall throughout the 2017/18 rainy season.

For the latter areas, the new season looks promising and presents a good opportunity to maximise agricultural production. For the rest of the region, however, there is a likelihood of receiving late rains. Therefore, the planting season could be delayed towards late 2017 or early 2018, a condition that could impact the crop and livestock sub-sectors in various ways.

While the regional outlook may inform national planning processes, the information provided thus far is not adequate for farm-level decision-making as the forecast is more probabilistic in nature and does not completely account for all the factors that influence regional and national climate variability, such as local and month-to-month variations. Therefore, farmers are strongly advised to refer to national forecasts, which are generally deterministic and more relevant to their local circumstances. National Service Centres are expected to provide

regular short-term forecasts, which should be simplified and packaged in languages comprehensible to local users, particularly farmers. The meeting also agreed that information should be disseminated through various channels that are accessible to farmers. Farmers themselves have a responsibility to be on the look-out for updates and respond accordingly.

The event, in which the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAUC) participated, was hosted by the Department of Botswana Meteorological Services, with support from the government of the Republic of Botswana, SADC, World Bank, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, African Development Bank and other partners.

The detailed 2017/18 outlook can be accessed from:

https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/sarcof_21_statement_2017.pdf

SACAU women farmer leaders sharpen their leadership and negotiation skills

Thirty-nine women farmer leaders from 17 members of SACAU were trained in leadership and negotiation skills from 21-25 August 2017 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The training, which was organised as part of SACAU's Women Farmers' Forum and facilitated by African Women in Agriculture Research and Development (AWARD), was responding to challenges women farmers face in exercising their leadership roles in various structures in their organisations.

Among other things, delegates were trained on how they could source and apply information from various sources to strengthen their leadership and managerial effectiveness. They were advised that institutions, including farmers' organisations, are becoming complex and, as such, any leader should keep abreast with current developments to respond to such complexities. They were also informed that they should increase their self-awareness through identifying their personality preferences. "In leadership, you

should not try to copy anyone, be yourself and recognise that you are unique regarding your emotional intelligence, as such have confidence in yourself," said Ms Monica Kapiriri, one of the trainers.

The trainers also differentiated the role of elected leadership and management. They indicated that elected leaders have the function of producing adaptive change in their organisations if they are to be effective. "Elected leaders should be aware of the type of people they work with and move them to positions in which they are genuinely better," said another trainer, Ms Florence Ambayo.

Leadership processes, on the one hand, are concerned with establishing direction, aligning, motivating and inspiring people. On the other hand, management processes are concerned with planning and budgeting, organising and staffing as well as controlling and problem solving. Together, managers and leaders are responsible for creating an agenda on what needs to be done, creating networks for achieving the agenda, executing

the agenda and realising outcomes. Thus, elected leaders and managers working together lead to more tangible results than if they worked in isolation.

Lastly, the training also looked at the importance of considering gender differences in leadership. Women were advised that there are remarkable differences in the way men and women tend to think. Women integrate more details faster and arrange bits of data into more complex patterns, and as such they make decisions that tend to weigh more variables, consider more options and see a wider array of possible solutions to a problem. Women's brain architecture for web thinking has endowed them with another natural talent called 'mental flexibility'. Mental flexibility is also linked to imagination and women's ability to see different worlds/possibilities. This should be taken as an advantage for women in leading their various organisations. Overall, the training was successful and delegates appreciated the knowledge they acquired.



Participants of the leadership and negotiation course

Meet our August young farmer ambassador, Maness Nkhata

Maness Nkhata is a young female agripreneur from Malawi. She graduated in Business Administration from the University of Malawi, Polytechnic, in 2008. After not finding a formal job, Maness started commercial farming at her Kakoma Estate in Kasungu. She grows cassava, soybean and sunflower. Later on, she decided to add value to the crops grown on her estate and established Lakeshore Agro-Processors Enterprise (LAPE). Over time, the demand for raw materials increased beyond what her estate could supply and she then started contract farming with smallholder farmers to supply these products. She currently works with more than 5 000 business partners that are engaged in contract farming for cassava, soybean and sunflower.

In 2013, she set up a cassava mini-processing factory for high-quality cassava flour in one of the regions where she contracts the smallholder farmers. She also supports cassava farmers with clean planting materials, extension services and by offering a ready market. Of late, she has partnered with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) to conduct research for promotion of cassava varieties that have high processing efficiency.

Because of her work as a youth, Maness was selected to study at Southern University Agri Center in Louisiana, the US, and CGIAR (formerly the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research) in Nairobi, Kenya, where she obtained certificates in Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship and in Women Leadership and Management. Because of her achievements in farming and agro-processing, she became the first ever board chairperson below the age of 30 for the National Youth Council of Malawi in 2014.



Maness in her sunflower field

In order to further share her experience, Maness has partnered with the University of Malawi, Polytechnic, and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) for their internship programmes. As part of these programmes, she hosts between 15 and 20 interns per year from Polytechnic and LUANAR who undergo incubation training in entrepreneurship at LAPE. The idea is to motivate young graduates to start thinking of self-employment and job creation instead of waiting to be employed. The interns are involved in both cassava processing for high-quality cassava

flour production and sunflower processing for cooking oil and seed cake.

She is a member of Farmers Union of Malawi, and through her involvement in agricultural value chains, she has also become a SACAU young agripreneur ambassador.

Maness believes that agriculture can be a gold mine for young people and recognises the role that the sector can play in reducing unemployment. She also thinks that successful young agripreneur models are important in encouraging young people to participate in the sector.

COMESA develops a Regional Agriculture Investment Plan

The Malabo Declaration of 2014 reaffirmed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as the key policy framework for Africa's agricultural transformation and provided targets for action. Subsequent to the endorsement of the CAADP Compact by stakeholders in November 2014, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) is collaborating with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of strategic interventions that individual member countries cannot achieve on their own by 2025. To this end, COMESA has developed the CAADP Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP).

The RAIP focuses on four Regional Investment Priority Areas (RIPAs), namely: production and productivity of commodity value chains within selected agricultural corridors;

agricultural trade and markets; resilience, food and nutrition security; and coordination and cross-cutting issues.

Having compiled a draft RAIP with implementation measures and a results framework, COMESA hosted a two-day stakeholders' workshop (28-29 August, 2017) in Johannesburg, South Africa, to review the work that has been compiled thus far and make recommendations towards the development of a final submission. The workshop was also intended to draw inputs into the indicative costing as well as potential financing mechanisms for the implementation of the RAIP. Proposals were duly made under each RIPA and discussed extensively on how they should be captured in the revised text. Of note, delegates were concerned about possibilities of the RAIP undermining or conflicting with other regional programmes implemented, for

instance by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) or the East African Community (EAC). However, it was confirmed that such organisations are part of the stakeholders that have contributed to the development of the RAIP and continue to lend their support in every way possible. In the end, COMESA and FAO were commended for the commitment they have made and they, in turn, urged stakeholders to continue with their support as the process moves to the next stage of resource mobilisation. Stakeholders present included government representatives, regional organisations, farmers' organisations, development agencies and the private sector.

The SACAU delegation comprised representatives from Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), Swaziland National Agricultural Union (SNAU) and SACAU Secretariat.

Dairy meeting



Regional dairy meeting delegates in Meru, Kenya

Twelve delegates from four dairy associations and four national farmers' unions in Southern Africa converged in Kenya for the annual Regional Dairy meeting which was co-hosted by We Effect and SACAU. The event took place from 22-24 August and provided insights on the development of the Kenyan dairy industry. The delegation, which also comprised representatives of SACAU and We Effect Southern and East Africa offices, visited dairy co-

operatives and farmers in Machakos and Meru counties in addition to a one-day meeting where, amongst others, an overview of the Kenyan dairy industry was presented.

Delegates heard how government supported the smallholder dairy sector after independence. There was policy focused on the inclusion of indigenous Kenyans in commercial agriculture, and government, for instance, subsidised breeding until the mid-1980s. They were also informed

that artificial insemination was used effectively to accelerate the uptake of dairy by smallholder farmers. It was said that smallholders now dominate the industry at the production level at 1-million, while large-scale farmers number around 200,000.

Although great strides have been made, the smallholder sector is still confronted by some challenges. Feed is mostly sourced from outside the country thus making it very expensive, and grazing is the most common feed source. Feed cost was said to account for 70% of the production cost of a litre of milk. Milk spoilage between the farm and collection points is also an issue. The presentation highlighted that it can even take up to two hours for the milk to reach the collection centre from the farm. Rainfall has been erratic in most parts of the country, with frequent prolonged dry periods and occasional floods. In 2017, for instance, the April rains were absent but came in August. These were confirmed during the field visit.

PULSES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change: a threat to food security
Whether in the form of droughts, floods or hurricanes climate change impacts every level of food production.

Climate change puts global food security at risk and heightens the dangers of undernutrition in poor regions.

FOOD PRODUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE
Food production, food security and climate change are intrinsically linked.

The changing climate will continue to put pressure on agricultural ecosystems, particularly in regions and for populations that are particularly vulnerable.

Introducing pulses into crop production can be key to increasing resilience to climate change.

WHY PULSES?

- Pulses are climate smart as they simultaneously adapt to climate change and contribute towards mitigating its effects.
- Pulses can fix atmospheric nitrogen and provide it to the soil. This reduces the need for synthetic nitrogen fertilizers and contributes in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- 85 million ha of pulses have contributed globally to fixating 3 - 6 million tonnes of nitrogen in soils.*
- Better varieties: Pulses have a broad genetic diversity. This diversity is a particularly important attribute because more climate-resilient pulse varieties can be developed.

INCREASING RESILIENCE

- Pulse-based cropping systems:** Including pulses in crop rotations exploits symbiotic microbes to fix nitrogen, partly transferring it to subsequent crops, increasing their yields. Intercropping has a higher soil carbon sequestration potential than monocrop systems.
- Pulses and agroforestry systems:** Growing pulses such as pigeon peas simultaneously with other crops, improve farmers' food security, by helping them to diversify their nutrition and sources of income.
- Pulses in animal nutrition:** When included in livestock feed, pulse by-products contribute to improve feed conversion ratio while, reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the same time. Decreased methane emissions from ruminants.

*FAO/STAT, 2014

Women farmer leaders visit a hydroponic farm



Mwamy at her hydroponic facility

The SACAU women farmer leaders recently visited a hydroponic farm in the heart of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. This urban farm – called Mwamy Green Veggies – is managed by a dynamic woman, Ms Mwamy Mlangwa, who left her banking career to enter farming in a full-time capacity. The visit was part of the 2017 SACAU Regional Women Farmers' Forum that was co-hosted by the Agricultural Council of Tanzania back-to-back with the leadership and negotiations skills training.

The farm visit was an eye-opener for many of the women. They realised the potential and possibilities of farming in urban areas making it possible to supply fresh vegetables to urban

consumers. Ms Mlangwa is farming on a small plot and supplies lettuce to shops on a daily basis.

Mwamy encouraged women to explore the possibilities of hydroponic farming because it has several advantages that include the absence of soil-borne pathogens; a safe alternative to soil disinfection; good quality crops; precision application of nutrients; no soil tillage and preparation; high total yield; and environmental safety and sustainability. However, she cautioned that though the technology is handy for urban farming, before adopting it one should take into consideration the high initial cost of setting up greenhouses and other supporting equipment, the high requirements

of technical skills as well as a clean and adequate supply of water.

Lastly, Mwamy tipped women on some of her secrets for running a successful business. "For an entrepreneur to succeed in a business such as hydroponics, the following are some of the things women should be aware of: proactive management; documentation of all the activities and close monitoring of the plants and equipment; fertigation (the injection of fertilisers, soil amendments and other water-soluble products into an irrigation system); production planning; proper pest control mechanisms; manpower management and use of efficient machines; and strong supervision," she said.



Mission

To be the main voice of farmers on regional, continental and global matters, and to promote and ensure strong and effective farmers/producers' organisations in all countries in southern Africa.

Values

SACAU is founded on the following values and principles:
 Consultation • Transparency • Accountability • Honesty and integrity • Objectivity • Impartiality • Professionalism • Non-discriminatory • Independence • Subsidiarity and complementarity • Political neutrality

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Newsletter

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