Government of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe AGRICULTURAL GROWTH Programme

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ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

ISSUE 8: **DECEMBER 2019**

Welcome to all readers of ZAGP News, the monthly newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP).

This month, the newsletter focuses on providing project updates as ZAGP is collectively implementing approaches and innovations to address the bottlenecks affecting Zimbabwe's livestock sector. We feature the voices of some of the project beneficiaries who have kick-started various initiatives. Under the Beef Enterprise Strengthening and Transformation (BEST) project, we feature articles on how farmers have been capacitated to adopt good animal husbandry practices to preserve the condition of their cattle during the lean season.

We also share progress that has been made by Zimbabwe Knowledge and Innovation Services (ZAKIS) in the establishment of Agriculture Centres of Excellence (ACEs) and District Agriculture Centres of Excellence (DACEs).

Under the Value Chain Upgrading and Empowerment (VALUE) project, we feature an anchor farmer working on the pork value chain component of the project, who talks about his anticipation to upscale production and productivity. The Transforming Zimbabwe's Animal Health and Food Safety Systems (SAFE) project embarked on a baseline assessment in November 2019, and in this issue we highlight the approaches and methodologies to be used during the exercise. Featured, are also a brief updates from the Inclusive Poultry Value Chain (IPVC) and Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future (TranZDVC) projects on various key activities undertaken during November 2019.

The European Union Delegation team (Alice Peslin and Joachim Knoth) conducted a field monitoring mission to the six projects under ZAGP. We also give highlights of the projects visited as they interacted with various stakeholders across the country.

We thank you for your continued readership, and as always, we value your feedback on this and other issues of ZAGP News.

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PROJECT UPDATES

Urea Treated Stover Improves Beef Cattle Body Condition Score: Case study of Smart Hlungwani.

Smart Hlungwani is a registered Beef Enterprise Strengthening and Transformation (BEST) project beneficiary and cattle farmer residing in Ward 11, Chiredzi district, Masvingo province. The area is located in Natural Region IV and V, characterised by high temperatures and low rainfall resulting in inadequate feed to sustain cattle between May and December. The period is associated with decreasing cattle condition and drought related cattle deaths. Cattle are a major source of livelihoods for small holder farmers including Smart, and with the dire conditions prevailing, the family's livelihood source is seriously under threat every year.

The farmer previously fed his animals with untreated crop stover and indigenous zombwe tubers during the dry season. Every season he stocked up large quantities of crop stover to feed directly to his cattle. The condition of the animals remained poor despite consuming the crop residue due to its low feed value. The introduction of project provided timely solutions to farmers in Chiredzi on how to preserve the condition of their cattle during the lean season.

Following the project's training to farmers on urea treatment of stover, Smart immediately adopted the practice. Urea treatment increases the crude protein content of dry stover from 2% up to 12% by increasing the nitrogen.

The BEST project in collaboration with Agritex, started training farmers on urea treatment of stover in July 2019. Beginning September, Smart started feeding his cattle with urea treated stover. As a result, Smart's cattle are in much better condition than they usually would be at this time of the year. Even the lactating cows have been able to maintain a relatively good condition with the calves getting enough milk. Comparing the animals with those which rely on the depleted rangeland and untreated stover, the farmer testifies on the importance of adding value to crop residue.

"The urea treated stover is quite palatable and voluntary intake by cattle is very high", he said. When feeding untreated crop residue, his animals would eat the leaves and leave the hard stalks. Cutting the stalks into pieces and treating them improved palatability and added nutritive value. Urea treatment of stover therefore enables more effective utilization of the crop residue. Even the stalks with high lignin have been converted into palatable feed.

Smart's vision is to commercialise his beef production enterprise. In addition to urea treatment of fodder, the farmer has already prepared two silage pits for use during the current season.

Members of the community participating during the urea treatment of stover at Smart Hlungwani's homestead.

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BEEF SCHOOL TRANSFORMS MAKONI SMALLHOLDER BEEF PRODUCER.

Jeremiah Mukuwamombe with part of his herd.

Jeremiah Mukuwamombe is a father of four and lives in village 65 in Nyamazira ward 2 in Makoni district, Manicaland province. With support from the BEST project, he participated in the 2019 Zimbabwe Herd book annual Beef School which was held in Bulawayo during the last week of October 2019. The lessons learned at the beef school and the exposure it provided, inspired Jeremiah to transform the way he was keeping his animals as he realized that he could improve his cattle productivity if he adopts good animal husbandry practices.

Jeremiah owns a herd of thirty-three animals, predominantly Brahman crosses.

"Soon after attending the Beef School in Bulawayo, I embarked on a journey to improve my cattle production system. I have managed to fence approximately two hectares around my homestead and the cattle pens with barbed wire to protect the animals from theft overnight as well using the fenced area as a calf paddock during the day", said Jeremiah.

He is currently demolishing the old overnight pen to be replaced with three standard cattle pens complete with a handling race. As further adoption of good animal husbandry practices the farmer has planted a 0.4-hectare demonstration plot with velvet beans and sun hemp.

Having been inspired by the quality of bulls he saw at Pilossof annual Bull Sale which ran after the Beef School, he is planning to sell at least four excess heifers to buy a pedigree bull from the Pilossofs.

Jeremiah is also planning to purchase a three tonne truck to help in transporting his animals to the abattoirs and to lease out his truck to fellow farmers for various services.

He has seventeen years' experience in livestock marketing having begun as a middleman buying and selling to the local Surrey Meats Abattoir then graduating into an agent for the same abattoir.

However, as an upcoming small-scale commercial farmer, he highlighted a number of challenges in the beef value chain.

"We face a number of challenges which hamper production and these include the cost of dosing and dipping chemicals, especially in the current economic situation, water for our animals, depressed livestock producer prices and high transport costs to the different offtake markets".

He acknowledges that working with the BEST project will offer timely solutions to these challenges.

Read more about Zimbabwe National Beef School 2019 edition that was hosted by Zimbabwe Herd Book.

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Thomas Muchenje, a pig farmer from Chidhakwa village in Murehwa of Mashonaland East province, has been selected to be an anchor farmer.

At a time when small and medium scale pig producers are faced with grinding challenges related to high cost of feed and veterinary drugs, lack of access to viable markets and disease outbreaks among other issues, there is hope for the value chain through the interventions of the VALUE project.

Farmers registered so far under the VALUE project are raring to go in expectation of life changing interventions to address the bottlenecks they are facing. The anticipation of the small and medium scale farmers to upscale their production and productivity is aptly expressed by Thomas Muchenje, a pig farmer from Chidhakwa village in Murehwa, Mashonaland East province. Thomas was selected to be an anchor farmer under the project to select and work with nine other small and medium scale farmers in his area to move towards commercialisation. He is a man driven by passion for pig production and has set his sights on commercialising his enterprise.

"I have a strong passion for pig production which led me to start this project in 2016 with three sows that I purchased locally. Over the past three years I have grown the number of sows to 11 as I seek to generate more income from the project".

However, incessant droughts, policy and regulatory constraints and the prevailing inflationary environment have cast doubts on the projected growth of farmers like Thomas.

He contemplatively talks about the challenges he is facing in pig production.

"Some of the viability challenges we are facing include the high cost of feed, veterinary drugs coupled with the lack of access to abattoirs with cold chain facilities and lack of viable markets for the pork products. We end up selling the products either locally or at low prices as a result," said Thomas.

The big cheer for Thomas and his fellow small and medium scale farmers is that the project is organising the farmers into Pig Producer Business Syndicates which will aggregate their efforts to take advantage of economies of scale, offer trainings of farming as a business, good farm management practices. This will also lead to the establishment of new markets and set up an abattoir with cold chain facilities to ensure that off takers easily get access to the pork meat products.

Thomas has high hopes on the project to address the viability challenges in the pig industry especially for small and medium scale producers.

"The VALUE project has come in at the right time when most pig farmers were contemplating destocking their animals due to the binding constraints currently being experienced," added Thomas.

Follow the VALUE project on Twitter

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ZAKIS Makes Progress on Establishment of Agriculture Centres of Excellence (ACEs) and District Agriculture Centres of Excellence (DACEs).

To demonstrate best practices, for both livestock and crop production, the Zimbabwe Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Service (ZAKIS) project in partnership with the private sector, government and other ZAGP partners (VALUE and IPVC) has made progress on the set up of Agriculture Centres of Excellence (ACEs) and District Agriculture Centres of Excellence (DACEs). The primary role of these centres is to demonstrate best practices and use of innovative technologies informed by farmer needs. The centres will also be implementing innovative applied research solutions to challenges related to livestock production, animal health, crop production and agricultural markets.

The table below shows a summary of some key activities towards the establishment of centres:

Site	Activities in progress
Matopos Research Institute and Chibero College of Agriculture (ACEs)	• Drip irrigation demonstration plots have been set up • Demo plot sites have been fenced. • Installation of solar powered water pumping systems
Matopos Research Institute (MACE)	• Refurbishment of pen fattening infrastructure • Refurbishment of laboratory • Collaboration with the VALUE project
Chibero College of Agriculture (CHACE)	• Two aquaculture fish ponds constructed
Mhondoro-Ngezi; Chegutu; Matobo and Insiza (DACEs)	• Fencing of identified sites in the districts is underway. • Local seed houses have already donated maize seed for trials

Further to the above, the consortium is in the process of finalizing MoUs for utilization of the sites for demonstrations, with a local vegetable seed supplier. The activities discussed above are not without their challenges which include but are not limited to, availability of fuel for tillage services and delivery of fencing materials; availability of fertilizer for trials and demos is proving to be a challenge for the seed houses, nonetheless discussions are underway with regards to a solution.

One of the fish ponds at constructed at the Chibero College of Agriculture Agricultural Centre of Excellence (CHACE).

School children from the surrounding area learning more about drip Irrigation at CHACE

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Fooder under production on drip Irrigation system installed at the Matopos Research Institute Agricultural Centre of Excellence (MACE).

A rrenewable energy source installed at CHACE

Inclusive Poultry Value Chain (IPVC).

- The Value Chain Analysis (VCA) validation workshops and Decent Rural Employment (DRE) workshops were conducted in all IPVC clusters by the relative consultants. The VCA validation workshops then led to the finalization of the Value Chain Analysis report.
- Inputs for feed formulation were distributed to lead farmers in the Harare and Mutare clusters. The project selected lead farmers who have irrigation access, and distributed soya and maize seed for production which will be used for feed formulations. They also distributed fertilizers and pesticides
- The photography mission visited one farmer group and one individual female SMPs in Mutare. These farmers are to be evaluated throughout the life of the project to test the effect of the treatment of the project versus the non-treatment prior-project time (with and without treatment study).
- The animal nutrition mission will be making field visits and meeting IPVC partners until 20 December 2019. The mission is to assess the opportunities for own feed formulation for poultry farmers in a bid to reduce the cost of feed.
- The University of Genova, Italy is undertaking a green technology assessment mission to evaluate and meet with the private sector and other actors within the poultry value chain. Field visits will be conducted until 14 December 2019. The goal is to assess the opportunities for use of sustainable and renewable energy sources within the poultry value chain.

Members of a poultry farmers group called Shungu receiving training on basic poultry management and recommendations for modifications of their low cost poultry housing in Gweru.

Follow the IPVC project on Twitter

SAFE Project Undertakes the Baseline Assessment.

To benchmark the starting point for the project, the Transforming Zimbabwe's Animal Health and Food Safety Systems for the Future (SAFE) project has engaged a team of consultants to undertake the baseline assessment. The team is made up of a food safety specialist and an animal health specialist. The broad objective of the assessment is to measure the status of all indicators as defined in the project log frame before project implementation, to serve as a point of reference and to enable project indicators at output and specific/overall objective level to be measured and tracked. In addition, a critique of the project's intervention logic is also going to be done to improve on the delivery of the intended results.

The baseline is guided by the following project objectives:

Overall objective	To transform Zimbabwe's animal health and, sanitary and phytosanitary/food safety systems
Specific objective 1	1. Improved animal health systems for improved productivity.
Specific objective 2	2. Improved sanitary and phytosanitary/food safety systems for consumer safety, improved competitiveness and market access
Output 1	Policies and regulatory framework to support animal health (AH) and SPS/food safety services for improved productivity and food safety strengthened.
Output 2	Livestock information management system to support animal and public health, diseases surveillance and control, food safety and quality, livestock productivity and market access improved.
Output 3	Public and private sector capacity for implementing animal health and SPS/food safety systems that comply with international standards strengthened.
Output 4	Functional multi stakeholder platforms for coordination, collaboration, advocacy and support for efficient revenue generation and utilization by regulatory bodies established.

Assessment Approach

The assessment is going to use a mixed method approach for data gathering and processing. First a desk review of all relevant materials which includes project documents, call for proposal and government documents is going to be done. This is going to be followed by fieldwork that will include the administration of structured tools to relevant stakeholders at both national and subnational level through either key informant interviews or focus group discussions. Direct observations are also going to be made. Key stakeholders to be interviewed include the following sample; veterinary officials at both national and subnational level, environmental health officers, laboratory technicians, port health officials, Vet Extension workers, Meat Inspectors, Environmental Health Technicians, Farmers Unions, veterinary medicines/drugs suppliers, NGOs in livestock Animal health and Food safety systems, ZAGP grantees, agricultural colleges and municipalities.

Upon completion of collection and analysis of all relevant information, a baseline report is going to be produced and validated by stakeholders upon which a final report is going to be available. The assessment commenced on the 25th of November and is expected to end on the 30th of December 2019. The final report will be shared widely among stakeholders.

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TranZDVC Baseline and Milk Mapping Survey Validation Workshop.

The Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme's Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future (TranZDVC) project held a half-day baseline and milk mapping survey validation workshop which provided a set of recommendations which were critical in making some adjustments to ongoing activities and determining the future and development of action focus for the remaining phases.

Titled *"Transforming the Zimbabwe Dairy Value Chain for the Future – Milk Mapping Validation Workshop"* the event took place on 22 November 2019, in Harare and had mobilised and pooled critical dairy stakeholders – both private and public, including partners, and senior government officials.

The main purpose of the workshop was to give an opportunity to all stakeholders to validate the information collected in the baseline and milk mapping survey conducted in May and June 2019. The study, conducted in 60 districts of Zimbabwe, examined information base on milk densities, dairy infrastructure (functional and none functional), viability, knowledge, practices, breeders, feed entrepreneurs, and markets. Researchers also set out to understand the level of support services against which to monitor and assess the action's progress and effectiveness during implementation and after conclusion of European Union funding. The information gathered will be used as a base to measure improvement during the course and at the end of the action against the interventions made by the action.

Honourable Vangelis Haritatos, Deputy Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement, the keynote speaker, said: "This survey was organised at the right time when Government needs well informed statistics to pursue a number of growth initiatives in the dairy sector to improve milk quantity and quality in Zimbabwe."

The deputy minister also said, "Government recognises and appreciates the initiatives and efforts by stakeholders in the local dairy sector that have seen a steady growth in milk production from a low of 36 million in 2009 to 75 million litres in 2018 and is targeted for further growth. However, the current production is still far short of the national demand of approximately 130 million litres per annum."

Deputy Minister Vangelis Haritatos presenting the key note address at the baseline and milk mapping validation workshop.

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EVENTS

Highlights of European Union Delegation Field Monitoring Mission.

The European Union Delegation represented by Alice Peslin and Joachim Knoth conducted a Field Monitoring Mission from 25 to 29 November 2019 covering the six projects under ZAGP. Below are the highlights of the visit:

Matopos Research Institute Agricultural Centre of Excellence (MACE)

The delegation's first visit was at the Matopos Research Institute where ZAKIS led by Welthungerhilfe is establishing the Matopos Research Institute Agricultural Centre of Excellence (MACE). The MACE will leverage the best practice knowledge base to drive agricultural education that is relevant and responsive to the needs of farmers and value chain actors for profitable, market driven agricultural production. The MACE team provided an update of project activities to date, covering areas such as the refurbishment and upgrading of the laboratory, installation of a drip irrigation system for fodder production, and establishment of demonstration plots.

The EU team getting an update on the refurbishment and upgrading of the laboratory (left) and an update on the installation of a drip irrigation system on fodder demonstration plot (right).

Balu Pecan Cattle Business Centre (CBC)

Also visited was the Balu Cattle Business Centre in Umguza district in Matabeleland North province, where the BEST project has cleared a large piece of land and installed centre pivot irrigation to grow fodder. BEST is setting up the CBC set to grow commercial fodder irrigated by a centre pivot. Farmers in Umguza will have access to improved pasture grasses from the Balu CBC to feed their cattle. They will benefit from seed material and training on fodder production through a pluralistic extension model involving private and public sector agents. The CBC will draw water from the nearby 15 million cubic metre Pampoenpoort Dam.

To date, the centre pivot has been installed and 50-hectares of virgin land have been cleared. Some work will also be done on the Pampoenpoort Dam to increase the dam wall to ensure increased water supply. The CBC anticipates to start fodder production before the end of the year.

The Balu CBC run by Balu Pecan and Livestock Company, the private sector partner, will have a holding capacity of 8 to 10 livestock units per hectare. Fodder production will help increase farm carrying capacity, insure beef farmers against drought, is a cheapest available cattle feed resource and it is high quality to fatten cattle for slaughter without using bought-in concentrates. Farmers from five wards clustered around the CBC will have access to improved pasture grasses and also benefit from seed material and training on fodder production through a pluralistic extension model involving private and public sector agents.

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Highlights of European Union Delegation Field Monitoring Mission

At the Balu Pecan CBC, 50 hectares of virgin land have been cleared and a centre pivot has been installed.

Materera Poultry Hub

The Materera Poultry Hub in Mahusekwa is a World Vision project established in 2013. Irvines Zimbabwe and ProFeeds co-sponsored the establishment of the centre as part of their Corporate Social Responsivity initiatives. A total of 14 farmers are currently involved in poultry production at the hub which has a chicken house which holds 2,500 birds in each 6-week cycle, and a poultry processing unit (abattoir). Various challenges have forced the farmers to downsize their production to 1,000 birds per six-week cycle. These include; high cost of feed, limited access to feed, energy access (difficulty in maintaining cold chain) and limited markets.

Working with the Materera Poultry hub, IPVC intends to form a Poultry Business Association to enable the farmers to access bulk buying options, improve market linkages, access finance and improved access to value chain business services. The centre will also become a Lead Farmer focusing on building the capacities of poultry farmers in the area. IPVC will also pilot green energy solutions for heating and cold chain management.

Josephine Rwambiwa, the Chairperson of the Materera Poultry Hub tending to the birds in the chicken house (left) and also showing some of the equipment in the abbattoir (right).

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Highlights of European Union Delegation Field Monitoring Mission.

Wonderklip Milk Aggregator

The third day of the visit focused on Wonderklip Farm in Featherstone operated by Francois and Michelle Viviers. Operating under the Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future (TranZDVC) project, the farm has been selected to become a milk integrator and establish a milk hub.

Wonderklip farm's dairy enterprise is operation with 80 cows with 20 currently milking and the milk is supplied to Dairiboard Zimbabwe. The Viviers have identified 11 neighbouring small-scale dairy farmers to train in dairy production, assist in heifer acquisition and collect their milk as an integrator. The farmers' stock is predominantly indigenous breeds with low milk output. As an integrator, Wonderklip Farm will improve the breeds through heifer acquisition and artificial insemination, aiming to increase production to at least 10 litres per day per cow for the farmers.

Under Window 1 of the project's matching grants facility, the Viviers have applied for a grant to acquire a planter, bailer and forage chopper to use within their farm and also the other 11 farmers who will be part of the dairy hub.

Working with 11 resettled farmers in Featherstone, Wonderklip Farm aims to become dairy hub, providing training in dairy production and offering technical advice.

Eskbank Farm and Government Analyst Laboratory

For the SAFE project, a private pork abattoir slaughtering 40 pigs per week and the Government Analyst Laboratory (GAL) were visited, to understand more on the animal health and food safety issues. At the GAL, the team got an appreciation of the lab's facilities and challenges.

Frank Zhuga, a Meat Inspector under the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS), inspecting slaughtered pigs at the Eskbank Farm Abattoir in Mazowe district.

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Highlights of European Union Delegation Field Monitoring Mission.

Goat Value Chain Anchor Farmer

The last leg of the delegation's mission, covered Mudzi district in Mashonaland East province, visiting Oliver Chimwendo, an Anchor Farmer under the VALUE project. Chimwendo has a 200 doe unit, five bucks and a total of 258 goats.

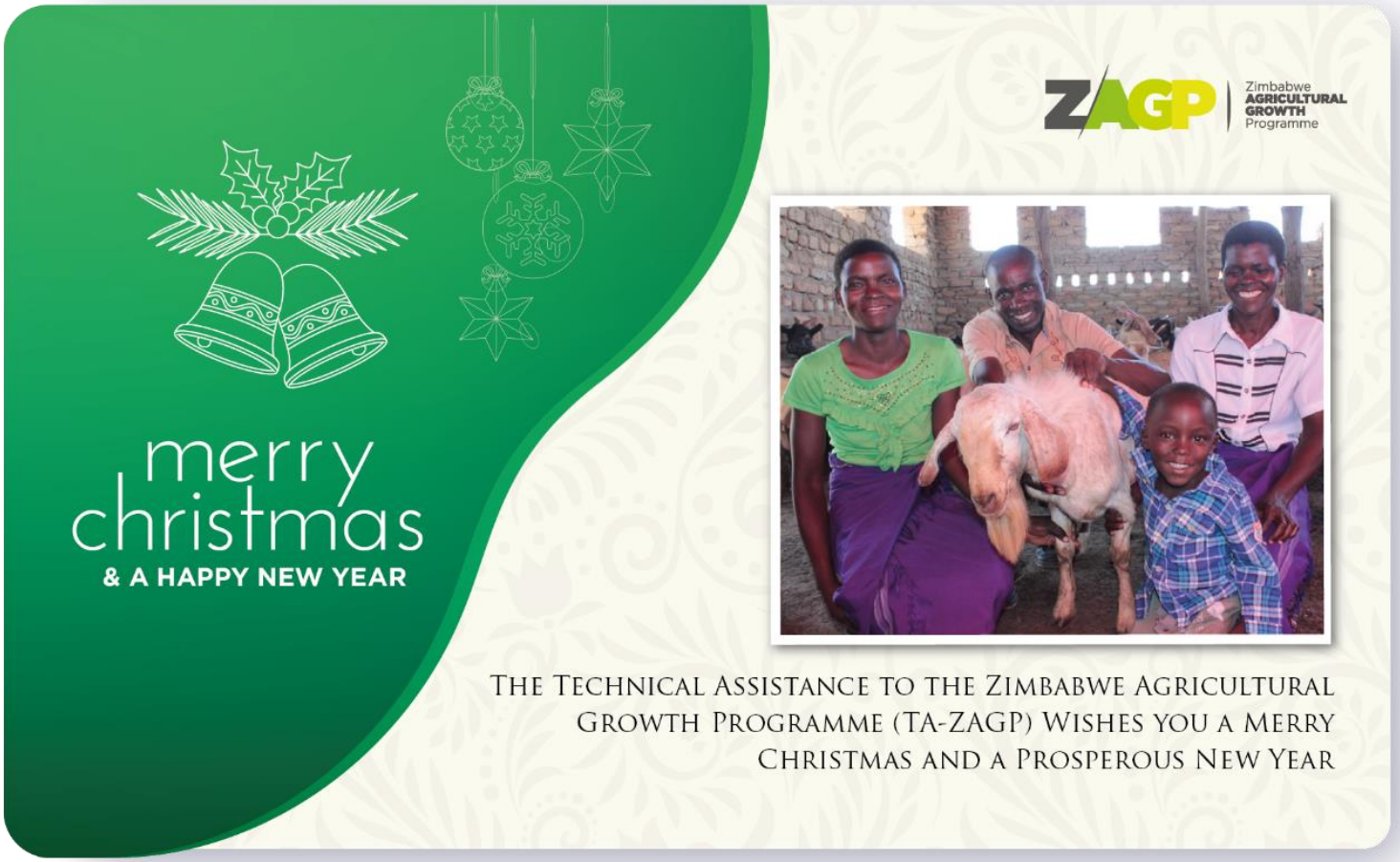
Goat farmers in the district will be organised to form Goat Producers Business Associations structured to coordinate and drive the commercial interest of goat farmers to access value-adding business support services and previously unaffordable technologies through collective action strategies. As an Anchor Farmer, Chimwendo will provide the nucleus of support to nine small to medium goat farmers in his area.

Part of Chimwendo's goat herd.

ONLINE RESOURCES

ZAGP Website Goes Live.

The ZAGP website is now live – www.zagp.org.zw The website will be one of the channels to be used in sharing of programme information and updates of activities across the different provinces of Zimbabwe. Visit the site to get more details about the programme and the projects under implementation and access a wealth of resources uploaded.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