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DECEMBER 2022

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Breaking down barriers: the women inspiring change

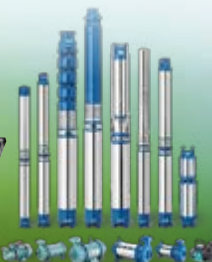
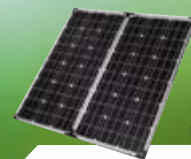
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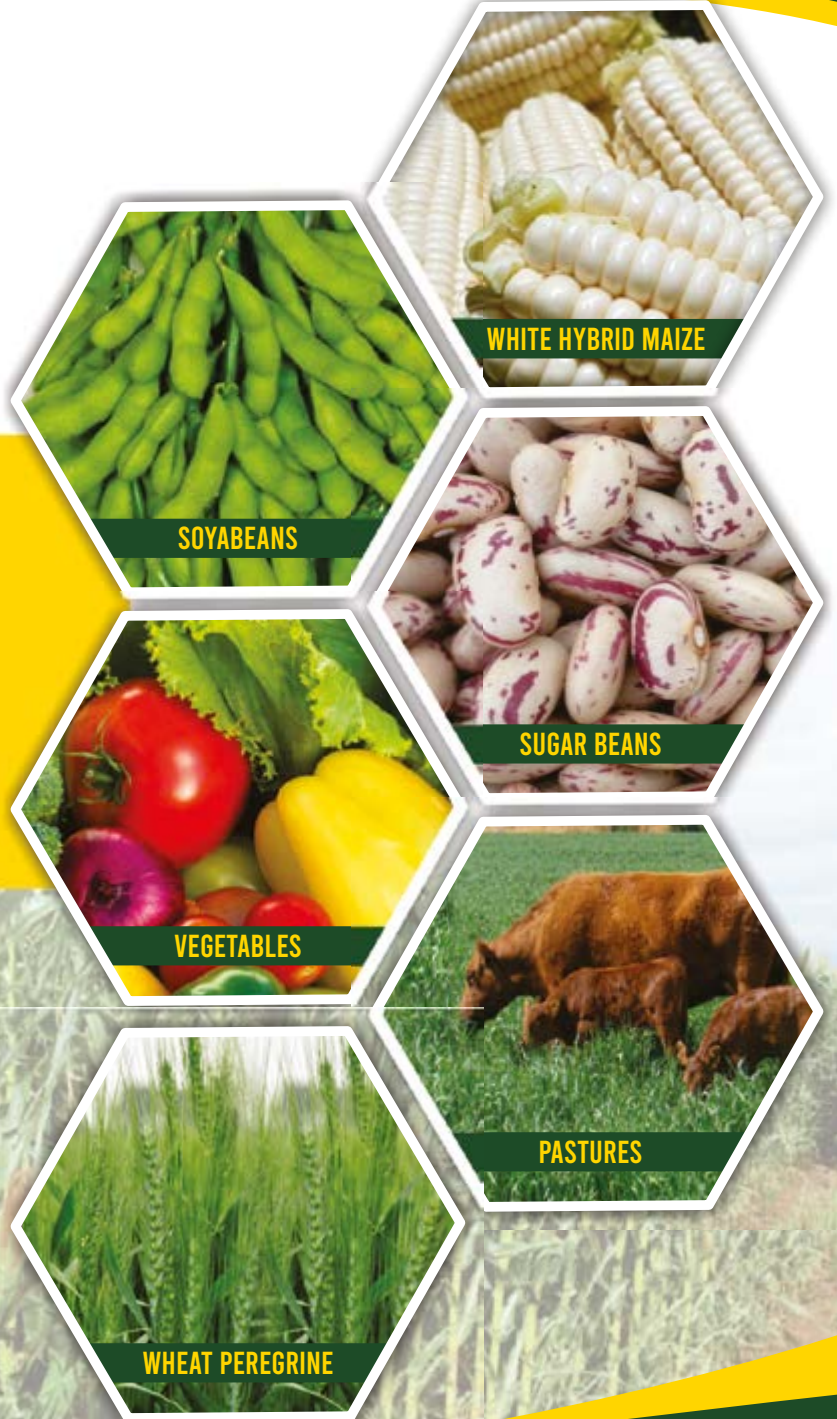
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December 2022



Zimbabwe Farmers' Union
Head Office
5 Van Praagh Ave.
Milton Park
Harare
Zimbabwe

Twitter @zfu_official
Instagram z_f_u

Facebook page Zimbabwe Farmers Union

Website www.zfu.org.zw
Website: www.zfu.org.zw

Editor:

Adeva Machiso Gwenzi
Julie Havercroft
editor@mediaserv.co.zw

Designer:

Daniel Simumba
studio@mediaserv.co.zw

Advertising:

Mediaserv Advertising and Marketing

Chris Kaitano: +263 772 295191

Tel: +263 24 2336620/68

Cell: +263 772 295191; 772 632 780

Email: marketing@mediaserv.co.zw /
mediaservad@gmail.com

Facebook: mediaserv advertising and marketing

Twitter: @mediaservad

Website: www.mediaserv.co.zw

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On April 13, 2022, the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) launched its new (2022 to 2026) Strategic Plan. The new Strategic Plan will contribute towards the achievement of the national goal of a middle-income country by 2030.



**Adeva Machiso
Gwenzi**

The vision of the Union has shifted from being inward-looking to a sector wide approach; ZFU's vision has shifted from "The leading farmer representative body in Zimbabwe" to A Resilient,

Commercialised, and Viable Agricultural Sector."

ZFU aims to contribute to the achievement of the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) objectives as well as the broader and universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by equipping members to be resilient to agricultural risks and to transition from subsistence to commercial farming while managing sustainable businesses.

Due to the shifting macroeconomic climate, which included inflation and a widening gap between the official exchange rate and the parallel foreign currency market rate, uncertainty

and high risk in farming exacerbated by climate change, the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan had to be revisited before its full tenure.

This issue will carry articles on some of the efforts the Union has made in its vision to make agriculture, "A Resilient, Commercialised, and Viable Sector". Women and Youth empowerment is at the centre of ZFU's new strategy, and we have also compiled inspiring articles of contributions by youth and women to advancement of the agricultural sector.

We always like to get feedback from our readers on what they like about the magazine as well as areas were we need to improve.

Email us on: info@zfu.org.zw



ZFU Provincial Contacts

HEAD OFFICE

5 Van Praagh Avenue
Milton Park.
P.O.Box 3755 Harare: Zimbabwe
Tel: 0242252474
Email: info@zfu.org.zw

MASHONALAND CENTRAL

850 York Avenue Bindura
Tel: 0662106090
Cleopas Mashozhera
0712093246

MASHONALAND WEST

Farm & City
No 38 B Magamba Way
Daniel Mungazi
Tel: 0712093290

MASHONALAND EAST

Farm & City
Marondera
Vusa Dliwayo
Tel: 0776013728

MANICALAND

Farm & City
5E Avenue
PO Box 1120, Mutare
Professor Edward Matarutse
Tel: 0773642368

MATABELELAND NORTH

C/O Farm & City
Cnr 10th Avenue Bulawayo
Robert Moyo
Tel: 0712093262

MATABELELAND SOUTH

Stand No. 160, Queen Street
P.O. Box 374, Gwanda
Tandekile C Moyo
Tel: 0712093254\084)2822856

MASVINGO

Bradbum Extension Road
(Across Railway Line)
P.O. Box 588, Masvingo
Simon Mwanza
Tel: 0715000188\0712093099

MIDLANDS

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Vavariro Mashamba
Tel: 0712093095\0712093249

The Zimbabwe Farmers' Union earlier this year launched its new Strategic Plan "Strategy requires thought, tactics require observation."

ZFU has carefully crafted this new strategy after consultations with relevant stakeholders within the agricultural sector. One of the major findings has been the need to enhance financial sustainability and reduce reliance on donors.

The new strategic plan seeks to realise 'a resilient, commercialised, and viable agricultural sector'. We surely need to transform the subsistence into commercial, viable farmers.

The strategic plan also seeks to ensure all 10 commodity associations are functional, that more associations are formed and capacitated, and that all staff positions of the union are filled with permanent staff.



ZFU President Retired Major Abdul Credit Nyathi

Agricultural transformation can only be realised if the policy environment is also transformed, hence the focus on investing in advocacy and stakeholder engagement as the second theme of the Strategic plan.

ZFU has also prioritised ICT as a critical enabler and accelerator of innovation in the work that the Union does in serving its members.

The importance of member services, as has always been the case, cannot be over-emphasised. These are necessary if we are to realise any transformation. The prevailing climate change and the effects thereof has also necessitated the need to include climate change into one of the themes.

Dear readers, you will certainly agree with me that these pillars are key in transforming Zimbabwe's agricultural sector and ZFU financial sustainability.



ZFU Association listing

- Livestock
- Cotton
- Grains and Oils
- Fisheries
- Tobacco
- Dairy
- Tea
- Coffee
- Horticulture
- Sugarcane



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ZFU putting women at centre of 2022-2026 strategic plan: A well-thought journey

By ZFU Capacity Building Director, Nanganidzai Makoho

Gender equality is a fundamental human right that should be respected and promoted in any society. Women are often excluded from decision-making processes due to their lower status in many societies. In Zimbabwe, this exclusion has been reinforced through the patriarchal nature of the country's agricultural system. Agriculture is dominated by men, who have historically held positions of power and authority in the sector. This has resulted in women being marginalised and underrepresented in the sector. Women have limited control over land, productive resources, and fewer are involved in the agricultural value chain. They are also less likely to receive specialised training and technical skills than their male counterparts.

The role of women in agriculture is often undervalued and underestimated. In many parts of the world, women are the backbone of the agricultural sector, yet they continue to face

discrimination and lack of resources. In Zimbabwe women play a critical role in farming and food production. They are responsible for most of the agricultural work, yet they have limited access to training, technology, and other resources. Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) recognises this and that the women in agriculture in Zimbabwe are a force to be reckoned with, this has been evidenced in the ZFU 2022 to 2026 Strategic Plan.

ZFU has changed its vision from "The leading farmers representative body in Zimbabwe" to

"A resilient, commercialised and viable agricultural sector"

This vision ensures that women farmers are empowered to be resilient to

agricultural risks, to transform from subsistence to commercial farming and running viable enterprises. In line with the Zimbabwe National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025) ZFU in its strategy ensures that women should be visible in agricultural sector, participate in decision-making structures and ensures an enabling environment in the adoption of climate-smart agriculture technology by women. To achieve this, Gender, Climate Change and wellness must be mainstreamed in all ZFU activities.

ZFU's approach aligns with the global community's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG2 (ending hunger and malnutrition by 2030).

In agriculture, nutrition, and rural development, women are major change agents and innovators. Women's active participation in agriculture increases food production and consumption.

The ZFU 2022-2026 strategic plan is gender sensitive and recognises that women farmers in Zimbabwe are making significant contributions to the agricultural sector. Improved women's participation in leadership structures, access to financial resources, e-commerce, value addition, specialised training, skills, and technology is key to women's economic empowerment in the agricultural sector.



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FARMER PROFILE

Name: *Nhlalwenhle Moyo*

Gender: *female*

Age: *36*

Farming: *horticulture*

Province: *Matabeleland South*

District: *Gwanda*

There are many discouragements for women farmers in Zimbabwe, but there are also a lot of inspiring success stories of young women farmers. It is unnecessary to feel underrated if you want to become a successful farmer. The stigma in society is that being a farmer is unprofitable and that it is a low-level and low-income job. However, this stigma is false; being a farmer is something to be proud of. Farmers, as business actors in the agricultural sector, are important. From sowing, and processing through to harvesting agricultural products in order to fulfil daily needs; without farmers, food security would not be sufficient.

This is the story of Nhlalwenhle Moyo, an up-and-coming successful young farmer aged 36 years, who is a member of the ZFU, and who started her farming journey in January 2016 on rented land. Despite still farming on rented land in the Gwanda District in Matabeleland South province, this farmer has been excelling. She is farming on a 3-hectare plot, doing horticultural production. Nhlalwenhle drilled a perennial solar powered borehole with the help of her husband, Allen Moyo, and this borehole sustains the cropping all year round.

Despite the horticulture project being her main focus, she is also doing mixed farming with livestock including cattle, sheep, goats, indigenous chickens, broiler chickens and layer chickens.

As a farmer, Nhlalwenhle is able to produce high value horticultural crops for sale including beetroot, cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, tomatoes, cabbages, onions, green and yellow peppers and herbs, just to mention a few. She sells the produce to Gwanda town and supplies the majority of the supermarkets lodges and hotels. Also, locals also buy directly from her farm. Future plans are to venture into produce export.

Nhlalwenhle has benefited from ZFU through trainings, meetings, summits and information sharing from the ZFU office and field staff.

Furthermore, she has managed to create employment for the community: Nhlalwenhle has five permanent workers and periodically hires casual labour, mostly from the local community.

Challenges

Access to land: the land is rented, small, and does not allow for expansion.

Expensive farming inputs: these reduce a profit margin and sometimes losses are experienced.



ZFU hosts the inaugural women in agribusiness forum

By Adeva Machiso Gwenzi

On May 10, 2022, the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union hosted the inaugural Women in Business Forum which

brought together women entrepreneurs from various segments of the agricultural value chain, policy makers

and business leaders, and financing institutions.

Women farmers from all over the nation were represented by Provincial women leaders.

The forum which ran under the theme "Gender equality and equity in agriculture today for a sustainable tomorrow," was aimed at promoting equitable participation and creating opportunities for women in agriculture.

"At the heart of ZFU's strategy, there is an understanding that women play a pivotal role in advancing agricultural development. In ZFU women farmers are being supported with trainings and opportunities that can help them increase their productivity," said ZFU Gender Officer, Bridget Masikati.

At the conference, the women in agribusiness were reminded that they needed to organise themselves for them to be able to influence public policy.



During panel a discussion, women had an opportunity to share their successes, share opportunities and strategies on how they can continue making it in a male-dominated environment and patriarchal society.

With the help of experts from Oxfam, seed companies, legal institutions and the Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA), women got an appreciation of various opportunities available to help them excel in their agriculture business. Information on rights that safeguard their interests was also shared.

A ZFU young farmer, Anesu Truzumba who was part of the panellist board, also highlighted how her affiliation to ZFU has helped her meet people who have assisted her to advance in agribusiness.

“I did not train in agriculture but now I can say I have gained so much knowledge with the help of ZFU which has brought me in contact with different farmers and stakeholders. ZFU has also given me exposure through travelling abroad to learn about agriculture,” she said

The Conference for Women in Agribusiness continues to explore and concretise ways in which women entrepreneurs can be supported while also building their capacity on issues around value chains, access to finance, access to markets and policies that unlock women businesses.

Addressing delegates during the conference, the CEO for Gender Commission remarked that the capacity of institutions and government needs to be strengthened in order for policy makers to apply a gender-responsive approach in all activities and programming in the agricultural sector.

It must be seen as common sense that the elimination of hunger is impossible without terminating the gender gap between men and women in agriculture. Closing this gap speaks to allowing women equal access to benefits within the value chains.

Echoing his sentiments, a representative from Oxfam underscored the challenges that women face along



the whole agricultural value chain. He said, “Women need support along the agricultural value chain.”

The conference gave market

linkages through exhibition of various agriculture produce including artwork. The exhibition got attraction and women farmers were linked to markets.

Duly's AgriQuip- New Holland, Fieldking and Rovic Leers Africa Franchise Holder

Duly's AgriQuip, a division of Duly Holdings, has a wide range of farming equipment from reputable international brands such as New Holland tractors and balers, Fieldking implements and Rovic Leers Africa.

Right: New Holland BC 5070 Square baler available at Duly's AgriQuip

Under the reputable Fieldking franchise, Duly's AgriQuip has a wide range of implements such as square bailers, hay racks, mowers, rippers, ploughs (reversible, fixed and topido), disk harrows, boom sprayers, fertilizer spreaders, tipping trailers, 4-row and 6-row planters, seed drills, coil cultivators, rigid cultivators, sub-soilers, rotary mulchers, and rotor verters among others.

Duly's AgriQuip is an agricultural and mining mechanisation partner

who also has a wide range of implements and provides after sales support for New Holland tractors and implements parts and accessories.

The key farming implements player

Company specialising in the retailing and servicing of Ford vehicles, Renault cars, Nissan cars, UD trucks, Volvo trucks, and buses, Higer buses, Eicher trucks and buses, Yutong buses and wide a range of New Holland tractors.

Established in 1902, the company is reputed for a sound and stable reputation throughout Zimbabwe for good product, excellent customer after-sales service, fair dealing in the industry



also has Sfoggia 4-row and 6-row planters imported from Italy. Duly's is the leading Zimbabwean Motor

and integrity that has held true in over 100years. Having a knack for providing an exceptional level of service in the motor industry to valued customers, Duly Motors opened a dedicated Bulk Parts Department, which subsequently launched the first depot in Harare in 1932, motorists head here for genuine parts, car batteries, car accessories or car care products to keep vehicles in great shape.

Duly's branches are located in Harare, Mutare, Gweru and Bulawayo to enable customers for vehicle sales and aftersales support. Duly's AgriQuip provides farm visits for certain special servicing requirements to ensure productivity on the farm is not compromised. Duly's AgriQuip branches are being expanded nationwide to cover all key farming areas to effectively mechanise the farming community with a wide range of New Holland, Fieldking, Rovic Leers Africa and Hastt Implements.



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ZFU launches capital venture



The Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU) launched a commercial entity in the name of Globfarm Investments (Pvt) Ltd. The entity will carry out commercial activities as an independent entity. This initiative is aimed to bolster the Union’s operational obligations in a bid to enhance and promote local farmers in the country. The commercial entity has so far rolled out three projects namely, the Tillage unit, the Haulage Unit, and the Meat Market Unit.

The objective of Globfarm is to provide services to farmers based on viable business models. The tillage unit has tractors that are domiciled in Harare, carrying out services to any farmer in Harare and its peri-urban

environment who wishes to have their land prepared. The vision to expand the service to members in the different provinces across the country so they



also benefit from the affordable prices.

The Haulage Unit is currently in operation in Chiredzi Province. The Haulage Unit provides transportation services of Sugarcane from the farms to Sugar mills. This service has also been set at affordable rates to ensure that farmers are able to access the haulage service whilst remaining

profitable after selling their produce.

The Meat Market Unit is set to transform the livestock industry by promoting farmers through providing a viable alternative market. The Meat Market Unit will be opening a butchery in Harare CBD next month but has already set up a production site which will be producing sausages, polonies and biltong for the wholesale market.

Through the Meat Market, livestock production as profitable for the farmers. The idea is to start from Harare and expand to the rest of the provinces in the future.

By Adeva Machiso Gwenzi



My ZFU journey



held in Harare at Celebration Centre and I remember meeting one inspiring ZFU young farmer, Prosper. At the Summit, I also remember hearing the story about ZFU Youth Chairperson, Ruramiso Mashumba, and the achievements she had made as a young farmer and I was truly inspired.

I got my first award in 2019 and that was for being one of the best innovators

under the Green Innovations challenge (GIHUB) through SNV, the Ministry of Youth and their partners.

I also won a grant for the biomass chick brooding device for small-scale farmers. The chick brooding device helps keep their chicks warm during the first 14 days in summer and 21 days in winter. I used the grant money to buy machinery as well as raw material to use for production.

I was later selected to be part of the WomENG African Innovation Fellowship (AIF) that was held in Uganda Kampala in June the same year. The AIF was a 4-day intense training with facilitators from all over Africa teaching on both personal and business development. I was the only innovator representing Zimbabwe, and with no engineering background, I managed to be crowned winner, with the biomass chick brooder innovation. Part of my prize was a fully funded trip to attend the Royal Academy of Engineering Global grand challenges in London. However, the organisers were interested in my achievements, and I was one of the keynote speakers at the event being

My name is Evangelista

Chekera and I am the founder and managing director of Passion Poultry. This a company that designs, manufactures, and distributes chick brooding devices that help small-scale poultry farmers in Zimbabwe reduce their chick mortality rates by 95%.

We also manufacture poultry slaughtering devices that ease the process of slaughtering birds thereby offering convenience for small-scale poultry farmers in Zimbabwe.

This company was started in 2016 after I noticed a gap within the poultry industry, being the challenge faced by small farmers to access proper equipment to carry out their poultry projects successfully.

In 2017 my mentor, Bertha Ndlovu introduced me to Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) through the Boost Fellowship. In September that year I attended my first Agripreneurship Summit organised by ZFU that was



the first Zimbabwean to speak at such a global platform.

With all these achievements, I needed to enhance my brand visibility. I remember it was a challenge for me to get my story to the media but through ZFU with the assistance of their information officer, Adeva Machiso Gwenzi, my story was published in the Daily News and that was the first time Zimbabwe got to know of my story.

That same year I got nominated for a number of awards that included:

- **Winner for the Young Farmers Agri innovator of the year by the Zimbabwe Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development (Nov 2019)**
- **Proweb Zimbabwe Young Business Leader of the year (Nov 2019)**
- **Zimbabwe Women in Agriculture 1st runner up Agri innovator (Dec 2019)**
- **Zimbabwe's Top 5 best innovators of the year Gihub (Dec 2019)**



In 2019, I was also published in the ZFU magazine, The Zimbabwean Farmer, which gave me a lot of visibility throughout the country. In 2020 when COVID lockdown came it was a challenge to move around, but ZFU assisted me with an essential services travel letter so that I could continue providing equipment to farmers.



In 2021 I was the only Zimbabwean in the finals for Generation Africa Gogettaz competition. This is an agripreneurship competition for African innovators within the agricultural sector. I also managed to speak at the 2021 UN Food Systems Side talk and this led to a lot of publications around the continent specifically on agro-innovations.

I believe this confidence was because of the experience and exposure I had got from ZFU and its staff members. Later in September 2021 I was accepted for the Techwomen Emerging leader program under the US Department of State.

Early this year I spent five weeks in Silicon Valley. Part of the program was to come up with a social impact project that we could implement at home. We came up with an aquaponics system that we would set up in orphanages in Zimbabwe with the assistance of a ZFU young farmer, Clive Nyapokoto. We pitched the idea to a couple of judges, and we won the grant. I met Clive through ZFU and we try to assist each other in several projects.

To date I have two patents in the form of Utility models from ARIPO. In July 2021 we launched the mobile chicken slaughterhouse, and we have four units circulating around Harare

helping small-scale chicken producers process their birds. Our aim is to process one million birds every year.

Some challenges that I faced were that initially I would get into partnerships without agreements and all of the time those partnerships would turn sour, and I would be hurt so much that at one point I almost gave up. To balance my life at home and work, I have several mentors who have been guiding me. I also plan what I do, having yearly goals that are broken down into monthly, weekly, and daily goals. In short, I have an awesome support system at home and at work. The best thing is that about 90 per cent of them are women and they assist me from personal experience. I also continue learning because entrepreneurship is skill.



Commemorating World Milk Day: Reduce carbon footprint through sustainable milk production

By Adeva Machiso Gwenzi



Zimbabwe's dairy value

chain players including government, processors and farmers commemorated World Milk Day #WMD on June 3, 2022 at the Harare Gardens.

The action for this year's celebrations was to reduce the carbon footprint through sustainable dairy farming practices.

Zimbabwe dairy sector is committed to the sustainable development of the dairy sector such that it generates widespread benefits for people and the planet. The Earth is what we all have in common, "Think milk, drink milk".

The Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain (TranZ DVC) project under the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP) funded by the European Union has made efforts to promote sustainable dairy farming.

TranZDVC efforts in this regard

include the use of biogas. The project has partnered with a company called Energy Yakachena where twelve farmers have currently benefitted matching grant funds at a 70:30 per cent match for biogas. This initiative will contribute towards reduction of carbon emissions. The gas is being used for cooking and lighting at household level for smallholder dairy farmers. More farmers are expected to benefit from this initiative.

The project also effected Solarisation of all Milk Collection Centres and some dairy households.

TranZ DVC also partnered with a company called Mobility for Africa to provide solar powered tricycles to dairy farmers, milk aggregators and Milk Collection Centres (MCCs).

The anticipated impact of these technologies towards agriculture intensification and environmental

management include:

Biogas: Land-use change, notably reducing deforestation caused by cutting down trees for firewood to heat water for cleaning dairy utensils (use of boilers) and also firewood for cooking. This has been accounted for a further four per cent increase of global GHG emissions (WRI: 2014). At a glance, biogas can reduce global GHG emissions by 18-20 per cent and provide renewable energy from cow dung.

Solar energy: reduces the demand for fossil fuels, limit greenhouse gas emissions, and shrink the carbon footprint.

Electric powered tricycles: Reducing pressure of fossils fuels and carbon emissions, for climate friendly milk transportation from farm to market (MCC)

Water supply handling in cattle critical in face of the dry summer period

By Professor Edward Mataruse

Water supply is critical to livestock production as it makes part of their Daily body requirements of the animals. The performance of cattle is highly influenced by water intake in a way that, the feed intake especially dry matter is directly proportional to water intake. This implies that, the less water an animal drinks the less feed it consumes and again reduces the efficacy of the feed conversion rate. If this unwelcoming situation occurs, the result usually is deterioration of the animal leading to low milk production in dairy, low weight gain, and reduced

reproductive capabilities. It is accepted that a young cow drinks approximately 40 litres of water per Day and that farmers should have reservoirs to store enough water for drinking purpose. Farmers should note that cattle drink about 70% of their Daily water requirements between 12:00 and 14:00 hence the need for cattle to be driven to the drinking points around midday. Cattle being raised both for either Beef or Dairy is obviously a business on its own worth safe guarding to avoid losses. To be Particular, the livestock condition on the extensive side is

still fair across Manicaland province considering all range of animals however, water availability is now on the depletion with some farmers in parts of Buhera, Chimanimani and Chipinge already started to harness water for their cattle with some making use of boreholes in Buhera to make water available. In some dry areas such as in some parts of Chipinge, farmers are beginning to trek long distances to perennial sources of water such as dams, boreholes and perennial rivers as most rivers and dams have silted. It is of critical importance that if farmers are to use boreholes, then servicing should be done before the peak period of their use. Where piped water is used, farmers should ensure that the supply pipes must be large enough to supply the cattle with water at the critical times and that they are buried enough to avoid damage by moving cattle.

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Farming



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Boran a popular choice for Zimbabwean cattle producers

The Boran breed continues to grow in popularity as a go-to herd improver for our beef cattle industry, and the Zimbabwe Boran Breeders Society (ZBBS) annual production sales have become highly anticipated events, with the seventh one, held at the end



of June being no exception. As the sale was conducted in both physical and livestream online formats, it combined the participation of both physical and online bidding.

The ZBBS made history in Zimbabwe in July 2020, breaking ground when they held their fifth annual production sale live online, at the start of the nationwide lockdown. This was necessitated due to the national Covid-19 restrictions prohibiting large gatherings of people. Not only were the ZBBS the first Breed Society to do so, but this sale was also the first online livestock sale event to be held here in Zimbabwe. At the time, adapting to embrace technology as a means of being able to conduct business in a safe environment made economic sense for the society. Two years on, the online sales platform is now a standard part of events held by auctioneers CC sales.

Sales statistics 2022 in brief

Thirty one registered buyers.

Two winning bids online
Twelve bulls sold. Average price USD3,121. Highest USD5,750.
Nine cow and calf units sold. Average price USD2,427. Highest USD3,100.
Nineteen heifers sold. Average price USD1402. Highest USD2,700.
Twenty in-calf heifers sold. Average price USD1,602. Highest USD3,200.
Three in-calf cows with calf (three-in-one) sold. Average price USD2,933. Highest USD3,000.

The Boran, a Zebu breed with 64 per cent bos Indicus in its genetic makeup, is hardy and has an ability to convert poor quality roughage to meat, making it a suitable choice for Zimbabwean cattle producers countrywide. The breed is gaining ground within Zimbabwe due to the tireless efforts of its breed society, ZBBS, which was established in 2011. The society's aim is to publicise the Boran and promote their suitability to Zimbabwean farming conditions. ZBBS chairman Mark Hook says over 95 per cent of all female cattle in Zimbabwe are owned by communal and emergent farmers and if the hardy, fertile and adapted Boran is made available to these farmers, it would improve their herds through the hybrid vigour brought in and would go a long way towards improving production and profitability of the national herd.

Colin Langton, Boran breeder and ZBBS committee member, adds that Boran are cheap and efficient to raise: "Use this breed in your herd; make them part of your livestock rebuilding exercise. It will give you money in your pocket," he says.

Breed characteristics

This unique genotype was established 1,300 years ago and it crosses well with other cattle breeds bringing in hybrid vigour to any herd as it is so genetically

unrelated from them. The Boran has a number of inherent traits desirable for coping with tough cattle-rearing conditions in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. Below are a few:

1. Twice the number of sweat glands and larger ones to counteract effects of heat. Folds of skin also mean a greater surface area to dissipate heat. Well pigmented skin absorbs harmful UV rays. Glossy coat reflects glare.
2. Highly motile, sensitive skin means the animal shakes vigorously and this gets rid of insects. Active tail, swatting flies. Sebum. This waxy secretion is also a deterrent to insects. Coat hair is very fine and ticks find it difficult to attach and cannot hide in the short hair. Boran skin itself is thick.
3. Ability to withstand drought and food shortages and recover quickly. Because of the arid conditions they come from, Borans bounce back quickly. They can handle lower quality roughage and maintain a high body condition. Good body condition results in higher higher conception rates and disease resistance.
4. Disease resistance - related to all of the above factors. It has been found in Kenya that the Boran are more resistant than other breeds to the tick-borne disease East Coast fever. (ECF).
5. Survival of the fittest. Boran genes have not been diluted and there is no unnatural selection for high growth rate. There has been no pampering as it has been subjected to harsh conditions over the years.
6. Age and fertility. Cows are highly fertile and remain so at an old age.
7. Walking ability. Walking great distances for water has meant there are very little remaining genetic faults with their legs and feet.
8. Longevity. They live long lives under harsh conditions, confined and limited grazing. They cope with both of those. Survival of the fittest.

Experiences from the SACCAU Young Leader Incubation Program

By Tadiwanashe Grand

In April 2022, four Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) young farmers represented the country at the Southern African Confederation of Agriculture Union (SACAU) Young Leader Incubation Program (YLIP). The program sought to support a new generation of leaders in the agricultural sector and in the farmers' organisations, who are "fit for purpose."

Twelve countries in Southern Africa participated in the program. YLIP was a platform where the young farmers were equipped with knowledge on how to become better leaders in business and how they can make better decisions.

This article compiles the experiences from the four ZFU Young Farmers who participated in YLIP.

Paida

"I had a great experience during the SACAU organised workshop. The first session focused on personal development and deep self introspection.

I learnt that personal character affects how one runs their organisation and determines success.

As the learning sessions progressed, we went on to learn about how to manage our businesses and how to tell whether you are operating at a loss or profit and what initiatives one should take to improve their business

To get to know SACAU, it was through ZFU. Zimbabwe Farmers' Union identified us and decided to put us out there to represent them and shine in the agricultural sector."

Clarence Tinashe

"I came back more aware of the importance of soft skills in leading in agribusiness. Through the program I was enlightened that the integration of leadership skills into our day to day business will increase efficiency and productivity.

I thank ZFU for facilitating this mission, as it links us with great organisations like SACAU. The fact that ZFU believes in the youth, will assist Zimbabwean agriculture to move to greater heights. I thank ZFU for their continued representation of the youth on global forums."

Brighton Chomurema

"YLIP was a good networking platform, it opened my eyes to existing opportunities. At the program, I learnt that there is a shortage of baby marrow and green beans. That creates an opportunity for me to supply and expand my export market. "

Anesu

"For me, it was personal development, and I am integrating everything I learnt. I am actually seeing positive change in my business management.

I thank ZFU for selecting me for the program, as it was a journey of personal and business growth."

YLIP has leveraged ZFU in its service delivery to young people, as it has capacitated young farmers with the necessary information they need to advance in their agribusinesses. Empowering young people in agriculture is one of ZFU's mandates in its new Strategic Plan.

"Young people need technical training in order to enhance their participation in agribusiness. Young farmers also need to be empowered to take up influential leadership positions, as well as make informed decisions",

ZFU Capacity Building Director,
Mrs N. Makoho.



Innovative Zerofly® Post-harvest Grain storage and Price Risk Zimbabwe

By Nathaniel and Eunah Makoni, ABSTCM (Pvt.) Ltd 4 Bannockburn Close, Mt Pleasant Harare.

Climate change is a reality manifesting in poor rainfall patterns and persistent periods of dry weather in Zimbabwe. Farmers' households continue to experience food shortage due to crop failure and damage from storage pests during post-harvest grain storage. Household food security is important to livelihoods and thus, an important concern to livestock farmers and numerous households in Zimbabwe today. Hopefully the concerted efforts in adoption of post-harvest grain technologies will help improve household food security.

The estimated requirement of corn for human consumption and for livestock feed is 1.7 million tons and 375,000 tons respectively. Thus, Zimbabwe's total national annual demand for maize is estimated at 1.9 to 2 million tons. The Food and Agriculture (FAO) 2020 Zimbabwe study estimated maize harvest and post-harvest losses. The results showed that 5.2 percent of grain is lost at

harvest and 3.8 percent is lost at drying. Most farmers harvest timely to minimize losses, followed by stacking and later chemicals are used to protect grain from pest infestations during storage. Although accurate estimates of the magnitude of postharvest losses are lacking, the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement confirms that post-harvest losses present a threat to national food and nutrition security. Furthermore, the farmers postharvest losses include losses in consumption, revenue and profitability. Post-harvest losses largely stem from mechanical damage, excessive exposure to high storage temperatures, relative humidity/moisture, contamination by fungi or bacteria, invasion by birds, rodents and pests. Post-harvest losses, including field, transportation, handling and processing losses are estimated at 30 to 40 percent.

Key successful on-farm storage strategy is to anticipate and prevent potential problems through good in-store management practices. This process comprises sanitation including cleaning storage places, spraying and filling up cracks, chemical treatment with grain protectants applied to the grain at recommended moisture levels and regularly inspecting stored grain and checking roofs of grain store for new pest infestations. One of the most important and menacing pests



in stored maize grain is the Larger Grain Borer (LGB). The current control methods include harvesting the crop at 13% moisture level. Furthermore, farmers should maintain good store hygiene by thoroughly cleaning the store between harvests, removing and burning infested residues, immersing grain sacks in boiling water and removing wood from stores or fumigating the store to eliminate residual infestations and treating grain with grain protectants for storage, reducing storage periods by use of older grain first, frequent stock inspection and regular treatment. In addition to tedious and repeated procedures, pesticides and fumigants are poisonous, so it is essential to adhere to the safety precautions on labels and also to consult agrochemical companies and extension staff before application.

Except for irrigated farming enterprises, the majority of crop production in Zimbabwe is unimodal or occurs once a year. However, the demand for national food and livestock feed is evenly distributed throughout the year. Therefore, Zimbabwe farmers practice postharvest grain storage as a strategy for continuous food and livestock feed supply until the next harvest. Storage can be done in metallic silo, barns and bags. During storage, grain is vulnerable to attack by rodents, birds and insects that include weevils, bores, moths and beetles. This results in significant losses due to prevailing environmental conditions





that favour exposure to rodents, birds and rapid multiplication of pests. In addition, losses are further exacerbated by storage structures which are not insect-proof. The occurrence of the larger grain borer (LGB), *Prosthepanus truncatus* increases the magnitude of grain losses and the demand for more effective storage control methods. The majority of farmers in Zimbabwe rely on synthetic pesticides to control stored-grain insect pests. Figure 1, adapted from Basera and Mabuyaye, Seedco 2018: <https://www.seedcogroup.com/zw/media/news/grain-harvestin-packaging-and-safety-storage-experts-supplement-illustrate-storage-pests-and-damage-to-the-maize-grain>.

In Zimbabwe the Larger Grain Borer and Lesser Grain Borer are controlled by treating grain with Pirimiphos-methyl/Permethrin under the trade names Chirindamura or Super Guard, Fenthroton/Deltamethrin under the trade name Shumba Super and Piriphos-methyl /Thiamethoxam under trade name Actellic Gold Dust. Some farmers use Eucalyptus (gum tree) leaves mixed with maize grain to reduce storage grain pests because the smell chokes away storage pests.

Others alternatively, mix ash with the grain (3 to 10 kg ash per 100 kg grain). A mixture of dry maize cobs, sunflower stalks and cow dung is burnt in order to produce the ash. Powdered (crushed) *Syringa* seeds also help to keep away insects (Basera and Mabuyaye 2018).

However, there are other technologies that have been developed to manage the pests, which include treated conventional and air-tight or

hermetic bags. Several studies on bio-efficacy and seed viability retention have been carried out in Sub Saharan Africa and in Zimbabwe (Mvumi 2020) and have reported good results on the performance of Zerofly® conventional and hermetic bags in reducing the documented 30 - 40 % loss of grains during storage as a result of insect damage. Pest infestation not only reduce available food and livestock feed, but they also increase the risk of grain contamination with Aflatoxins that results from growth of molds due to insect damage. The aflatoxins pose a great public health risk and also reduce livestock performance negatively impacting profitability.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) have both approved Deltamethrin as a pesticide for controlling insect pests including grain storage and treated mosquito nets. Food safety assessments have confirmed that the residue of insecticide found in stored commodities does not exceed the acceptable human daily intake.

Following the remarkable performance of treated mosquito nets,

Vestergaard company pioneered again in protection of grains under storage using the New ZeroFly® Storage bags. The ZeroFly® Storage bags technology ensures that grains are protected from insect damage during storage with the reusable storage bags that last more than three years in use. The technology uses the Deltamethrin insecticide that is incorporated into polypropylene bags yarn. The active Deltamethrin ingredient is incorporated into the individual yarn and slowly released onto the surface of the material in a controlled and sustained manner thus, continuously protecting the stored commodities against insect infestation for the lifetime of the product estimated at three (3) years. Thus, the technology reduces the need for repeat interventions such as dusting, spraying and fumigation to control grain damage by insects. Furthermore, it ensures retention of seed viability or seed germination capacity especially for small grains.

Hermetic storage technologies are gaining momentum in grain storage and are known to be effective in providing long-term, chemical-free and sustainable grain storage. Grain stored in treated non hermetic conventional bags such as ZeroFly® bags require fumigation immediately prior packing and closing. The hermetic storage bags technologies work on the principle of creating a modified environment within the storage container, and are constructed of materials with very low oxygen permeability. Once the hermetic bag is loaded with dried grain and tightly closed, the biological activity of the grain and respiration of any insect present, results in depletion of oxygen and build-up of carbon dioxide concentration inside the bag to levels high enough to cause asphyxiation or desiccation of insects (Martin, 2015 cited by Mvumi 2020). The ZeroFly® technology makes use of a bag that has an inner polyethylene lining just like ordinary hermetic bags. However, it has a synthetic pesticide incorporated into the outer polypropylene fabric. The ZeroFly® works hermetically and also

through killing insects that come into contact with the bag. The effectiveness of ZeroFly® bags in protecting stored grain across a range of agro-ecological regions of Zimbabwe was evaluated and documented (Mvumi 2020).

The guidelines for use of Zerofly® Storage bags include the following procedure: a) Dry harvested or milled grains to moisture levels safe for storage that is less than 14% for grain and less than 12% for seeds; b) Secondly ensure that the grain is both mold free and insect free by either solarization or fumigation prior to bagging and c) The grain is then transferred in the Zerofly® Storage bags immediately to ensure no insect infestation. The grain bags are sealed by sewing or tying ensuring that they are tightly closed to prevent insect entry.

The breakthrough technology of addition of the high quality

multilayered hermetic liner with the lowest oxygen transmission rate ensures grains are protected in a healthy way with no need to use insecticides for the protection for the grains in both livestock feed storage and for the rural house-holds grain storage. Through the exclusive use of the ZeroFly® conventional and Hermetic bags grain can be purchased shortly after harvest from farmers who sell due to cash flow needs. This allows both farmers agents and the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) to buy, store, and sell grains in their communities, minimize post-harvest loss (PHL) and share higher profits from seasonal price differences. It increases farmer access to inputs, enabling them to boost crop yield. This raises smallholder farmers out of extreme poverty through better access to fair markets, management of price risks and disrupting the current food value chain.

Therefore, farmers are encouraged to adopt and increase usage of the conventional and hermetic ZeroFly® grain storage bags as they are effective in the reduction of post-harvest losses for all grains.

It being a renowned maize and small grains country Zimbabwe would greatly benefit from reduced food insecurity, reduced livestock feed costs and adequate quality grain for livestock feed production should such grain storage technologies be adopted.

Finally, we look forward to Zimbabwe farmers accessing grain storage products that help in the protection of grains from pest infestation losses, ensure farmers consume good quality grains, enhance grain trading quality and pricing (as farmers can store their grain and sell when the grain prices are highest) and helping in poverty alleviation.

Illustration of ZeroFly® Conventional and Hermatic Bags



School-based ZFU Young Farmers' club benefits from First Capital Bank social work

By Adeva Machiso Gwenzi



Agricultural Unions. After seeing the work that these young farmers were First Capital Bank chipped in, capacitating the schools with farming equipment, implements and inputs. As ZFU we greatly appreciate this type of partnership,”

he said.

Proud Headmaster of Chemhondoro Primary School, Mr. C Madzikwa also expressed gratitude to ZFU and its partner First Capital Bank for considering the school in such a great initiative, He also highlighted how hardworking and passionate the young farmers' club is in the agricultural projects.

“In 2013, our school participated in the ZFU Conservation Agriculture demonstration plots competition and we landed the 3rd position. In 2014 and 2016 we came top, at number 1. Our children here work very hard, and we appreciate ZFU and First Capital Bank for recognising that,”

First Capital Consumer Banking Director, Angela Kamhiri who was also the guest of honour at the event highlighted the importance of capacitating children with life skills such as agriculture, especially from a younger age.

“I am very inspired by the work being done by the young farmers at this school, I also appreciate what the teachers are doing and what our partner ZFU is doing. As First Capital Bank we will always try to support in any way that we can,” she said.

The event was well attended, with participation from stakeholders in the agricultural sector including community leadership, parents, and guardians.

A young farmers' club

comprising of grade 3-7 aged boys and girls from Chemhondoro primary school benefited from farming equipment and inputs, donated by First Capital Bank.

On May 12, 2022, during the First Capital Bank executive visit at Chemhondoro Primary School, Mashonaland East province witnessed an impactful ceremony, which is set to improve agriculture practical studies at the school.

Since 2012, First Capital Bank has partnered with ZFU in building the capacity of school-based Young Farmers' clubs and this time around, they donated: two 1000 litre water tanks, 45 packs of Onion seed, 45 packs of tomato seed, 45 packs Cabbage seed, six rolls of diamond mesh wire, four petrol-powered water pumps, eight Knapsack sprayers and 11 bags of

Compound S fertiliser.

Speaking at the event, ZFU Secretary General, Paul Zakariya expressed gratitude towards First Capital Bank for working with the Union in to improve the learning experience of school children whilst assisting in the practical aspect of the agriculture subject.

“ The relationship between ZFU and Chemhondoro Primary School dates back to 2012 when the school participated in the Conservation Agriculture project which was supported by Norad through the Southern African Confederation of



TOBACCO RESEARCH BOARD

KUTSAGA

EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENT

Dr. Frank Magama

The Chairman and Board of Directors of the Tobacco Research Board are pleased to announce that the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, His Excellency, Dr E. D. Mnangagwa has approved the appointment of Dr Frank Magama as Chief Executive Officer of the Tobacco Research Board with effect from 26th September 2022.

Dr. Frank Magama is a seasoned tobacco scientist with 18 years of experience at the Tobacco Research Board. Before this appointment, he was the Head of the Plant Breeding Division, chiefly responsible for the development and commercialization of elite tobacco cultivars for Zimbabwe, the SADC region and beyond. He also provided consultancy and advisory services to tobacco-producing countries and companies.

Dr. Magama graduated from the University of Zimbabwe with a BSc (Hons) in Agriculture (Crop Science), an MSc in Plant Sciences and Biotechnology from the University of Leeds (England), and a PhD in Plant Molecular Genetics from the University of Dundee (Scotland). He also holds business qualifications; an MBA from NUST (Zim), an Executive Diploma in Business Leadership from the Zimbabwe Institute of Management and a Certificate of Competency in Project Management from the Project Management Institute of Zimbabwe. He is the current President of the Zimbabwe Plant Breeders Association.



Frank is married to Roberta and they are blessed with three children, Tinomudaishe, Tanaka, and Tawana.

We wish him well as he provides leadership in steering the TRB to play its role in the Agricultural and Food Systems Transformation Strategy and the Tobacco Value Chain Transformation Strategy, both critical interventions of NDS1.

"Maximizing Economic Value"

Tobacco Research Board, P. O. Box 1909, Airport Ring Road, Harare, Zimbabwe

Public Relations and Communications: +263772467050

Telephone: +2638688002604

Email: communications@kutsaga.co.zw



2021/22 production and food insecurity projections

By Nyasha Taderera

The Market Linkage

Association in partnership with Government and Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) hosted a forum on Production and Food Security on July 21, 2022.

The forum which was attended by private sector and farmer organisations, provided insights into the National Crops and Livestock Report as well as issues around food security.

FEWSNET made the first presentation highlighting that maize production in the region during the past season is lower than the 2020/21 season with the decline in Zimbabwe relatively high at 43 per cent.

In their presentation, FEWSNET also gave insight on the regional production statics, "Overall, harvest in the Southern African region for the 2021/22 production season was three per cent below average (15 per cent lower than last season). Carryover stocks into 2022/23 are 31 per cent above average offsetting the below average harvests. Supplies are above average but 11 per cent lower than last season".

"The marketing season and grain prices are likely to trade at above average levels. The prolonged disruption to global trade in cereals and fertiliser due to the Eastern Europe conflict could significantly worsen the affordability and availability of staple foods across the region,"



FEWSNET added.

Corresponding with FEWSNET, AGRITEX, in their presentation on agriculture sector performance during the past season said, "There was a decline in production of all crops with maize and sorghum lower by 43 and 41 per cent, respectively".

AGRITEX also highlighted that, maize production was highest in Mashonaland West at 619,997 tons, with an average yield of 1.81 ton/ha. The national average maize yield was 0.82 ton/ha.

It was also noted that some 34 per cent of the maize was produced by A2 farmers, with 32 per cent coming from the communal farming sector.

Total food crop production (ie., the combined volume of cereals, groundnut, roundnut, sugar bean, cowpeas and sweet potato) was 2,117,294 tons compared to national requirements of 2,574,933 tons, resulting in a deficit of 457,639 tons.

Concluding their production report, AGRITEX also highlighted that at peak, about 38 per cent of the rural households are projected to be cereal insecure which will be an increase from 27 per cent reported in 2021. Matabeleland North (58 per cent) is projected to have the highest prevalence of cereal insecurity during the peak hunger period.



Veronica Tomi

The UNICEF-funded

(in collaboration with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) and implemented by ZFU, Kushinga Phikelela National Farmer Training Centre, Cotton Training Centre and Foundations For Farming) Fit For Life Project is aimed at providing a second chance education opportunity to children who did not manage to complete their education. The project targeted to improve the livelihoods of at least 30,000 rural children by providing literacy/numeracy module followed by an agriculture-based technical education.

Back in 2013, Fit for Life programme officers identified Veronica Tomi as someone who would benefit from the programme and offered her the opportunity to attend Kushinga Phikelela National Farmer Training Centre in Marondera for a one-year vocational training course. She completed several courses over the years since then and has worked hard, making the most of the chance to educate herself and improve her lot in life through agricultural endeavours.

Following up on her progress nearly ten years on, Veronica Tomi has kept records of her marketing gardening venture and shares her current farming diary with us. Not only is it interesting reading for fellow market garden farmers, but also shows how the Fit for Life programme has changed her life for the better by its vocational approach to making a living from agriculture.

Fit For Life giving a sound start to farming as a commercial venture

Tomi's record keeping, personal observations as well as an agronomic knowledge, are shared, below.

PROJECT DETAILS

Farmer name: Veronica Tomi
Crop and variety: F3 trinity tomatoes & k2 king onion (inter cropping)
Scale of production: 0.06 hectares (600 m²)
Planting date: 01/06/22 (tomatoes) & 30/06/22 (king onion)
Expected harvest date: 01/10/22
Self-sponsored project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am highly indebted to the following person for his unwavering valuable support in making my project fruitful: I express my warm thanks to my husband, Liberty Marwodzi for his unconditional support. Without him, this project would not be successful.

INTRODUCTION

This is my project diary. Its a written record of all important activities and events which have occurred to date during the project. I am doing this project on my backyard in Stone ridge Park, Waterfalls, Harare. I am undertaking all the activities with the help of my husband. The target market is the surrounding community which will contribute to 90 per cent of the demand.

OTHER RECORDS

- Irrigation was done after two days during the cold season
- The plants were covered by black plastic paper bag each during the very cold nights and uncovered in the morning. This was a way of preventing frost.
- On August 5, I made a change of use for the plastic papers. I used them as mulch around the plants in order to capture moisture since it was now become hot and drier.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

All labour was provided by myself and my husband.

PROBLEMS FACED

- The main problem was limited resources which emanated from lack of financing. Land was also limited.
- The methods used were all labour intensive, eg. the use of bucket system for irrigation.
- I could not afford to rotate fungicides and pesticides e.g against whiteflies because of limited resources.
- I used f3 seeds which is not advisable because of limited resources.
- I under-fertilised the crop because of lack of financing.
- Covering the plants at night and uncovering them in the morning was very labour-intensive and very tiring. Sometimes we would go to rest at 12 midnight.

SOLUTIONS

Although I tried to use cheap, alternative ways, I knew that the yields will be affected to some extent.

Due to high cost of pesticides and lack of funding, I intercropped the tomatoes with onions. Onions are known to be an effective biological way of controlling pests. This proved to be very effective especially against tuta absoluta.

Tomatoes are affected by frost, but the use of plastic paper bags was very effective. The plants were not affected by frost, in fact the bags created a good and very warm environment for the plants which encouraged growth.

Instead of buying fertilisers, I used poultry manure. This played a very big role in mitigating the nutrient deficits.

DATE	ACTIVITIES	QTY	COMMENT
01-05-22	Compost application & seed sowing	50kg compost & 1000 seeds	
07-05-22	Lamda application	4mls	Cutworm & preventative fungicides
14-05-22	Copper oxychloride	50g	Fungicides prevention
23-05-22 to 31-05-22	Hardening		To produce strong seedlings
27-05-22	Land prep (digging)		Deep Plough
28-05-22	Soil leveling		To promote drainage
30-05-22	Ridging		To promote easy root development and aeration
31-05-22	Irrigation	13mm	
01-06-22	Planting	1000seedlings	
05-06-22	Lamda application	12mls	To prevent cutworm
07-06-22	Quick start	250g	To boost stem & root growth
14-06-22	Liquid manure application (poultry)	500kg	To promote stem & root dev
15-06-22	Copper oxychloride	375g	To prevent fungul infection
21-06-22	Win grow	250g	To promote vegetative growth
22-06-22	Prunning		To prevent fungul diseases & for plant growth
22-06-22	Copper oxychloride	375g	Prevent fungul diseases
29-06-22	Earthing up with manure.	500kg manure	To facilate the growth of many roots & to strengthen the stem
30-06-22	Win grow application	250g	To promote growth
30-06-22	King onion planting	6000 seedlings	Planted six plants in-between the tomato plants (mixed-cropping). To maximize land usage & as a biological control against pest infestation on tomato plants
6-07-22	Liquid manure (poultry)	500kg	In liquid form to avoid burning the young onion plants, at the same time feeding the tomato plants
12-07-22	Spot weeding		To control pests & avoid resources competition
15-07-22	win bloom application (drenching)	250g	To promote flower and fruit formation
20-07-22	Calcium nitrate	2kg	To prevent blossom end-rot & and mis shape on fruits
30-07-22	Potassium nitrate	1kg	To promote flower formation
03-08-22	Prunning		To prevent fungul infection and promote fruit Dev
03-08-22	Copper oxychloride application	375g	To avoid fungul diseases
05-08-22	Mulching with plastic papers	1000 bags	To conserve moisture around the plants
07-08-22	Imidacloprid	150mls	To destroy whiteflies on tomatoes & thrips on onions

FINANCIAL RECORD GROSS MARGIN BUDGET

ITEM	QTY	COST (USD)	(USD)
Onion seedlings	6000		40.00
FERTILIZERS			
Compost	50kg	1.00	
Quick Start	2kg	6.00	
Win-grow	2kg	6.00	
Win-bloom	2kg	8.00	
Manure	2000kg	40.00	61.00
FUNGICIDES & PESTICIDES			
Copper Oxychloride	3kg	18.00	
Imidacloprid	1ltr	10.00	
Imamectin Benzoate	250ml	10.00	38.00
OTHER COSTS			
Plastic bags	1000 bags	40.00	
Trellising poles	140 poles	140.00	
Wires	100m	30.00	210.00
EXPENSES			
Labour		400.00	
Security		100.00	500.00
TOTAL VARIABLE COST			849.00
Expected minimum yeild (onion)	5000kg	\$5000.00	
Expected yeild (onion)	1200kg	\$ 600.00	
Total income		\$5600.00	
less Total variable costs		\$ 849.00	
Gross Profit for both king onion & tomatoes		\$4751.00	
Price per kg (tomatoes)			\$1.00
Price per kg (king onion)			\$0.50
Return per dollar invested (king onion & tomatoes)			\$5.60

CONCLUSION

So far the project is still work in progress. The tomatoes and onions are now three and two months old respectively. However, I am happy because we are past the cold season which was the hardest. Success comes from hard work. The technical aspect is very crucial in every project, be it backyard or commercial. I am speculating a huge demand for the tomatoes because not so many farmers, plant tomatoes during the winter.

Cashing it big from buying and selling cattle business

By General Beven Mundida (Livestock consultant) \ Contact call/ WhatsApp +263 776 420 161 \ Email: gbmundida@gmail.com



Buying and selling cattle is one of the considerably lucrative businesses out there. A cattle buyer looks only for the healthiest cattle, while a seller wants to make sure that he gets the best prices for the cattle he's selling. To make money through buying and selling of cattle, you must not only focus on the buying and selling process but also on how to treat the cattle. If you try sell unhealthy or poor quality cattle, you may not profit from your buying and selling endeavours. There are a number of things one should consider if he wants to cash it big from buying and selling cattle business.

Choosing profitable cattle breeds

Choosing profitable breeds is essential to making money in any cattle enterprise. Certain breeds, such as Brahman, Boran, Beefmaster etc. tend to fetch a higher price due to their robust physiology and tendency to produce high quality meat. However, even though a particular cow or bull may be of a good breed, that doesn't mean that the individual animal is of high quality.

To check whether the cow you are buying is of high quality, you must consider its annual milk production if it's a dairy cow. Cow sellers usually keep a record of the milk a cow produces, as well as its weight. You may find cows that produce as much as 500 or 1 000 gallons a year, while

others produce 200 to 300 gallons. Cows that produce more milk are of higher quality.

Determining operating costs

You have several operating costs to consider before you buy your first cow, such as the expense of buying or renting a place to keep the cattle while you are looking for profitable buyer; costs required to keep the cattle healthy; costs of hiring employees with the necessary knowledge to take care of the cattle; and costs of providing food and other items to make it an ideal home for the cattle.

For example, if you want to provide your cows with sufficient levels of nutrients, you have to consider the costs of buying supplements such as vitamin E, selenium, zinc and copper. These nutrients boost an animal's resistance to diseases like mastitis, grass tetany and bloat. Consider the costs required to hire enough people to control how these supplements are administered.

Care and maintenance

Keep your pasture area fertile so it produces a variety of grasses and grains. Fertile soils and abundant pastures keep animals healthy, which produces higher profits for you. Monitor your livestock regularly. Contact a proficient veterinarian who takes care of immunisation needs in accordance with national guidelines.

Seasonal workers for busy times

A farmer should expect to hire a few extra hands around summer. This is the season in which animals typically give birth, so you need more employees to take care of your cattle. During this time, you may also be able to reap large profits from selling calves.

Marketing and auctioning

With fall comes the sale season, when buyers observe the market, study trade publications, view sales videos and generally try to get the most for their money when buying heifers and bred females. Public sales constitute small-scale selling, while bulk selling consists of trading hundreds of cattle all at once. To be successful, you must check the current price in the market so that you can get a grasp on what your buying offers should be and what you can expect to get when you sell your cattle.

At the beginning of the auction, prices are always different from the market price, but this is the way through which buyers and sellers bargain down to a mutually agreeable price. Become knowledgeable about how to play with prices when bargaining. It also pays to invest in milking equipment so you can sell cow's milk on the market, even while you are waiting to sell the animals.

An important tip to the farmers

A farmer should save on veterinary fees by purchasing basic equipment for vaccines, sprays and simple procedures such as castration and dehorning. Learn about the functions of cattle breeding equipment to reduce overhead. Certain breeding supplies include pregnancy detection/diagnosis.

An important warning to the farmers

Cattle theft, or cattle rustling, is one of the major problems that cattle businesspeople may encounter. Prevention efforts include security precautions such as securing the perimeter of the ranch, counting the herd frequently, branding and participation in neighbourhood crime-watch activities.



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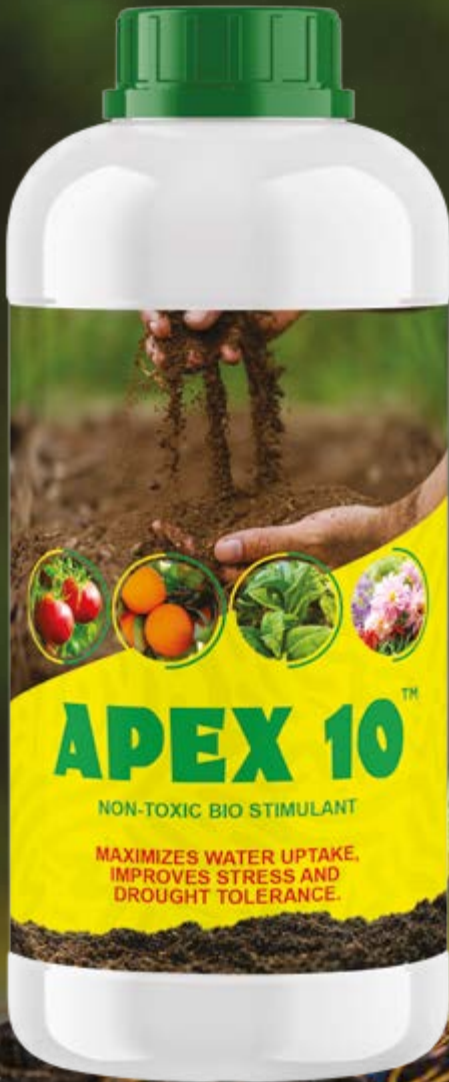
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