

p. 6

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS AND A RAY OF HOPE: EMDLAWUZWENI IRRIGATION SCHEME

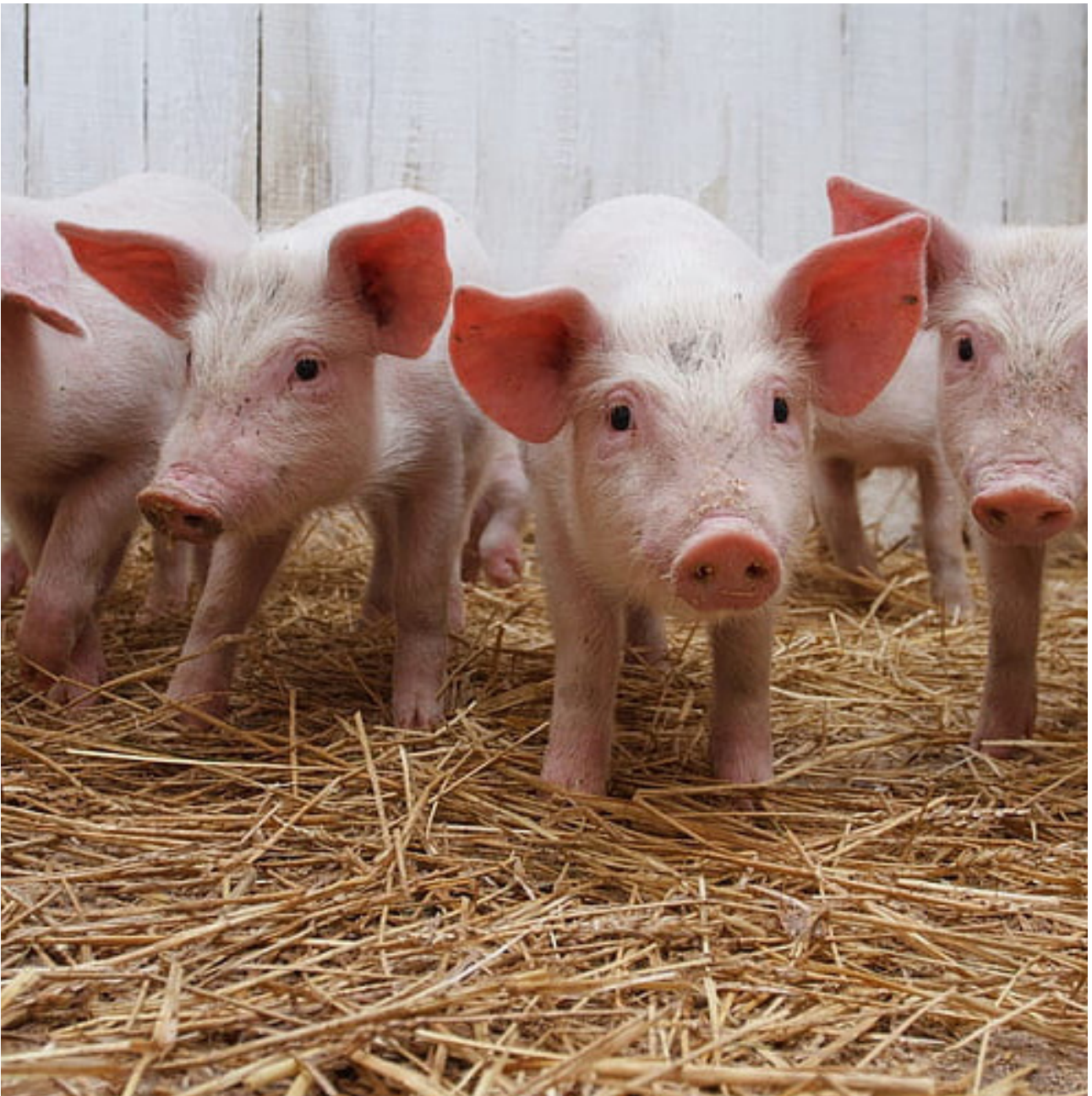


YOUNG FARMER SPOTLIGHT
TURNING PIGGERY INTO A PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY

p. 3

ZFU NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2025



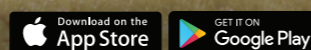
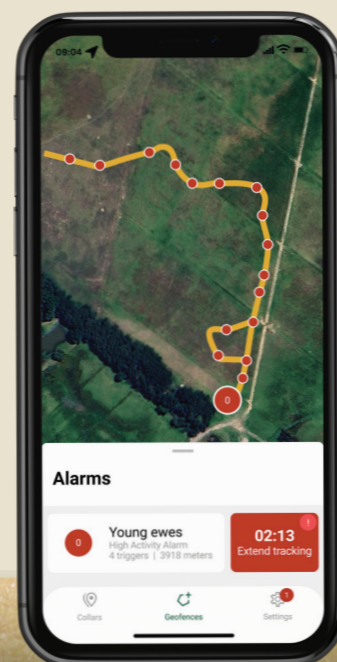
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EDITORIAL COMMENT

In this edition of the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union Newsletter, we celebrate the spirit of resilience, innovation, and community that continues to define our agricultural sector. Farming in Zimbabwe is not merely about producing food, it is about building livelihoods, creating opportunities, and shaping a more inclusive future.

From the national partnership between ZFU and the Rural Women Assembly (RWA), we see how empowering women with leadership and climate smart farming skills is laying the foundation for a more sustainable and equitable agricultural economy. On the ground, young farmers like Persistence Gutukunhwa show us the power of determination and vision. Starting with just three pigs, her journey into a thriving enterprise is proof that youth, women, and innovation are redefining the face of farming.

Equally inspiring is the Emdlawuzweni Irrigation Scheme in Tsholotsho. What began as a dream shared by two members has blossomed into a cooperative that feeds communities, provides jobs, and uplifts households. It reminds us that when farmers unite behind a clear vision, the impact goes far beyond the fields and it transforms entire communities.

Though unique in detail, these stories share a common thread: the power of farmers working with vision, unity, and resilience. As ZFU, we remain committed to championing such efforts, ensuring that every farmer whether in livestock, horticulture, or crop production has the tools, training, and support needed to thrive.

The future of agriculture in Zimbabwe is bright. And it is being written today by women leaders, determined youths, and visionary cooperatives who are forging new paths of prosperity

by Tadiwanashe Grand



PERSISTENCE GUTUKUNHUWA

YOUNG FARMER SPOTLIGHT TURNING PIGGERY INTO A PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY

Persistence Gutukunhwa, a 24 year old pig farmer from Triangle, Zimbabwe, has transformed her small piggery into a thriving enterprise through sheer determination and vision. Her journey began in 2022 with just three breeding sows and a single boar. Like many new ventures, she initially faced challenges, particularly with marketing her product. However, through persistence and strategic reinvestment, her farm has seen remarkable growth, demonstrating how small beginnings can blossom into a successful business.



THE JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND RESILIENCE

"In the beginning, it was tough," Persistence recalls. "I would walk around with samples of pork, trying to convince people to buy from me. Many didn't trust a young woman with pigs, but I kept pushing."

By late 2023, her determination paid off. Local demand began to rise steadily, allowing her to reinvest in her enterprise. She expanded her breeding stock to 15 sows, each producing an average of 12 piglets. "That was a turning point," she says with pride. "I realized that every dollar I put back into the project multiplied my opportunities."

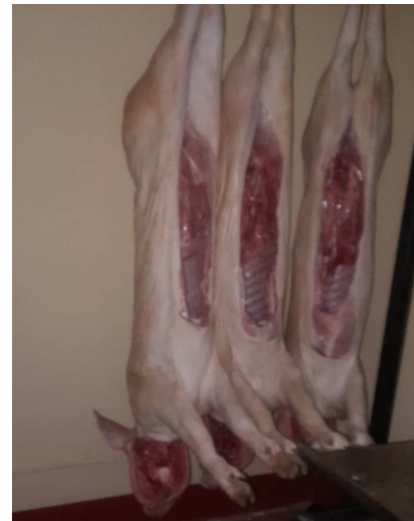
OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

SCALING UP WASN'T WITHOUT HURDLES. FEED PRICES SKYROCKETED, PROMPTING HER TO EXPERIMENT WITH CHEAPER ALTERNATIVES SUCH AS SORGHUM. "IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT FIRST, BUT THE PIGS DIDN'T GROW WELL. I LOST TIME AND MONEY," SHE ADMITS. "THAT TAUGHT ME A HARD LESSON, QUALITY FEED IS NON NEGOTIABLE."

Her resilience was tested and one of Zimbabwe's leading pork suppliers. That dream keeps me going.

"Seeing the structures I had worked so hard to build being blown away was heartbreaking. For a moment, I felt like giving up. But then I remembered my dream to become a millionaire

"...I want to build a brand that households and butcheries across Zimbabwe can trust for quality"



ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE VISION

Persistence's enterprise has already reached notable milestones. After overcoming her early marketing struggles, she hit a monthly sales record of \$2,500. "It wasn't just about the money it was proof that my vision was valid."

Looking ahead, she plans to grow her herd to 25 breeding sows and achieve consistent monthly revenues of \$5,000. Her ultimate goal is value addition through butcheries. "I don't just want to sell pigs; I want to build a brand that households and butcheries across Zimbabwe can trust for quality."



LESSONS FOR ASPIRING PIG FARMERS

When asked what advice she has for other young farmers, she emphasizes:

"Start small but think big."

"Feed is everything. Don't compromise on quality if you want fast, healthy growth."

"Your housing matters. Protect your pigs, and they will reward you."

"Market early. Talk to buyers before your pigs are ready."

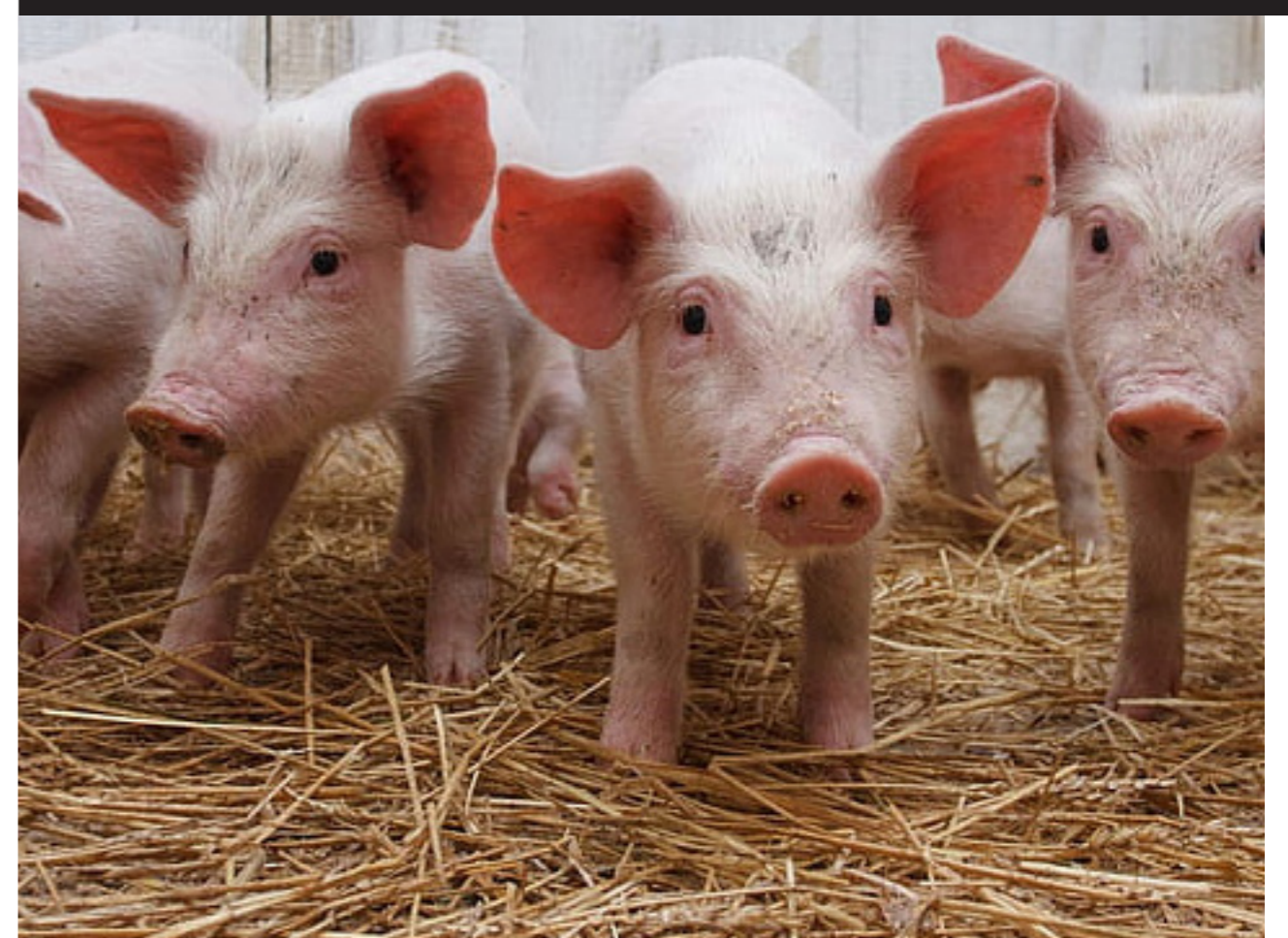
"Plan breeding cycles consistency is what customers want."

"And above all, stay resilient. Farming will test you, but you must outlast the storms."

Persistence Gutukunhuhwa's story is more than one of pigs and profits; it's about grit, vision, and possibility. Starting with just a handful of animals, she has built a growing enterprise that supports her dreams, strengthens local food security, and inspires other young women.

"People often ask me why I chose pigs," she says with a laugh. "I tell them, pigs chose me. They taught me patience, responsibility, and that no dream is too big if you refuse to quit."

Her story is a powerful reminder that agriculture is not just survival it is a pathway to wealth creation. And as Persistence herself proves, true to her name, determination always pays.





HUMBLE BEGINNINGS AND A RAY OF HOPE: EMDLAWUZWENI IRRIGATION SCHEME

At the very center of Tsholotsho is taking shape a singular tale of agricultural revolution at the Emdlawuzweni Irrigation Scheme. Starting from March 2023 with only two founding members, the ZFU vice chairperson Mr. L. Moyo and young and energetic Mr. K. Ncube, it has now grown at breakneck speed into a thriving cooperative with great potential to change local food production and economic development. Strategically located only 1km east of the busy Tsholotsho business hub, this establishment is a perfect example of what is possible when properly laid

strategies are implemented and where communities come together and are united by a common vision. Emdlawuzweni Irrigation Scheme is more than a farm, it is a diversified business enterprise designed for resilience and growth. Its members, with a balanced mix of business and leadership experience, have focused on a high value horticultural business. Its gardens are a display of agricultural diversity, and the scheme yields a very wide range of crops like tomatoes, cabbages, sugar beans, onions, cucumbers, butternuts, and green mealies



TOP PICTURE MR L. MOYO
BOTTOM RIGHT PICTURE MR K NCUBE

Emdlawuzweni Irrigation Scheme is more than a farm, it is a diversified business enterprise designed for resilience and growth. Its members, with a balanced mix of business and leadership experience, have focused on a high value horticultural business. Its gardens are a display of agricultural diversity, and the scheme yields a very wide range of crops like tomatoes, cabbages, sugar beans, onions, cucumbers, butternuts, and green mealies.



that the Emdlawuzweni Irrigation Scheme now supplies 10 families with free domestic water each day and has the capacity to supply up to 25 homes in the foreseeable future. This act of selflessness highlights the project's sense of social responsibility and upliftment of the standard of life of the communities it coexists with. The Emdlawuzweni Irrigation Scheme is the perfect example of farmer led innovation and resilience. It shows what can be achieved when a few dedicated individuals have a clear vision and are committed to their community. Not This gradual diversification ensures a steady income stream throughout the year while reducing the risks associated with monoculture farming. What truly sets Emdlawuzweni apart, however, is its strong marketing capacity. The project has successfully established reliable market linkages, supplying not only the local Tsholotsho community but also surrounding areas, nearby schools, and clinics. By reaching both community and institutional clients, Emdlawuzweni guarantees that its produce is consistently sold at a profit, making marketing its strongest area of performance.



Apart from actual crop production, the scheme also provides vital tillage services to the immediate community. This not only generates additional income but enhances local agricultural productivity as well, making the project a mainstay of the community. The project is actively involved in encouraging increased youth and female engagement within the agriculture sector, with hands on training and access to economic empowerment. During its expansion, the scheme can generate a cumulative of 10 jobs within five years at the local level. Through increased agricultural productivity, the project is equally essential at improving regional food security. It is testament to community spirit at its finest that the Emdlawuzweni Irrigation Scheme now supplies 10 families with free domestic water each day and has the capacity to supply up to 25 homes in the foreseeable future. This act of selflessness highlights the project's sense of social responsibility and upliftment of the standard of life of the communities it coexists with. The Emdlawuzweni Irrigation Scheme is the perfect example of farmer led innovation and resilience. It shows what can be achieved when a few dedicated individuals have a clear vision and are committed to their community. Not only can they establish a successful business, but they can become a beacon of employment, food security, and hope for a whole district. This is the new face of farming in Zimbabwe, the diverse, dynamic agricultural sector that is highly embedded within the community it serves.



EMPOWERING WOMEN FARMERS: A STORY OF RESILIENCE AND DIVERSIFICATION IN CHIPINGE by *Precious Chimedza*

In Chipinge district, an inspiring revolution is unfolding, one led by determined women farmers who are reshaping their futures through resilience, innovation, and diversification. At the center of this story is Silindiwe Moyana, a 52 year old widow from Ward 30 in Chisumbanje, whose journey with the Women's Economic Empowerment in the Cotton Value Chain (WEECVC) project reflects the power of empowering women to lead change in agriculture.

For decades, cotton was the backbone of Chipinge's rural economy. Many households relied almost entirely on it for income. But as global markets shifted, climate shocks worsened, and payment delays became common, cotton's promise faded. Families that once depended on it were left vulnerable and uncertain about their future.

For Silindiwe, this reality hit even harder after the loss of her husband. With children to raise and no reliable source of income, she faced the daunting task of navigating an increasingly unstable farming environment.

SILINDIWE MOYANA

Yet it was during this period of hardship that opportunity knocked in the form of training from the WEECVC project.

Through the project, Silindiwe was introduced to new ways of thinking about farming not just as subsistence, but as a business. She gained practical skills in financial literacy, record keeping, market gardening, and agroforestry. She also learned about the importance of diversifying her farming ventures, spreading risk across multiple enterprises instead of depending on a single crop.

Armed with this new perspective, Silindiwe began experimenting with poultry and goat rearing, while also venturing into fruit production and horticulture. Her confidence grew as she mastered these enterprises, and her farm slowly transformed into a vibrant mix of activities that supported both her household's food security and her income needs. Today, Silindiwe's farm is a testament to what resilience and innovation can achieve. Alongside her livestock projects, she has invested heavily in crop production. This season, she planted two hectares of Michigan peas and half a hectare of sugar beans. The results are promising, she is expecting a huge profit from these crops alone.



At the same time, she has ensured that part of the harvest will feed her family, reducing reliance on external food sources.

Her hard work was recently recognized at the Open Learning Day in Chisumbanje, where she was named the Best Sugar Beans Grower and awarded first prize. This public recognition not only validated her efforts but also inspired other women in her community to follow her example.

The WEECVC project has gone beyond teaching farming skills; it has built Silindiwe's confidence to actively participate in decision-making processes. As a member of a study circle, she exchanges knowledge with peers, negotiates for better prices, and asserts her role in a space long dominated by men.

Her bold declaration "What men can do, women can do better" captures her transformation.

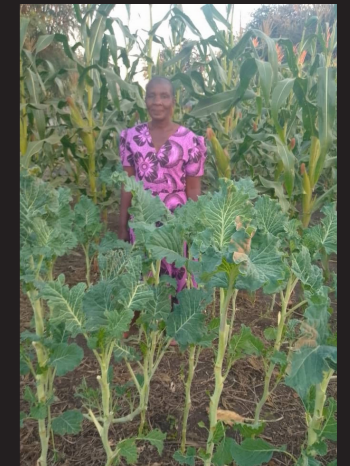
'when women rise, whole communities prosper!'

No longer confined by societal expectations, she now sees herself not just as a farmer but as a businesswoman and a leader.

Silindiwe's story is one of many across Chipinge where women are proving that with the right tools, training, and support, they can thrive despite adversity. Projects like WEECVC are more than just agricultural initiatives, they are pathways to financial independence, social empowerment, and stronger rural economies.

By diversifying income sources, improving financial literacy, and building confidence, women like Silindiwe are reducing their vulnerability to climate shocks and unstable markets. They are investing in their children's education, improving household nutrition, and becoming role models for their communities.

Silindiwe Moyana stands as a beacon of possibility.



Her success shows that when women farmers are empowered with resources, knowledge, and networks, they can achieve far more than survival. She has proven that diversification is not just a strategy, but a lifeline for building resilience in the face of climate and economic challenges.

Her journey is a powerful reminder that empowering women farmers is not simply about improving livelihoods, it is about transforming communities, challenging stereotypes, and cultivating a future where women stand as equal partners in agriculture. As Silindiwe's story continues to inspire others, one message rings clear 'when women rise, whole communities prosper!'.



ZFU AND RWA'S JOINT MISSION TO CHAMPION WOMEN FARMERS

Across Zimbabwe's agricultural heartlands, a quiet but profound transformation is underway. It is a change driven not just by new seeds or technologies, but by the empowerment of women farmers who are rising to become leaders, innovators, and key decision makers in their communities. Central to this movement is the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU), which, in alignment with the advocacy goals of partners like the Rural Women Assembly (RWA), under the FACE Project is championing a future where women are at the forefront of a sustainable

and resilient agricultural sector. The collaboration between the ZFU's structured programs and the RWA's grassroots mobilization is creating a fertile ground for change. This synergy is most evident in targeted capacity building initiatives designed to equip women with the skills and confidence to overcome systemic barriers and unlock their full potential. A cornerstone of this effort is intensive leadership training. Recognizing that empowerment extends beyond the farm gate, the ZFU has invested in programs that prepare women to take on influential roles within farming cooperatives, local agricultural boards, and their own communities.



For women farmers, mastering Bokashi is a game changer. In a time of rising fertilizer costs and climate induced soil degradation...

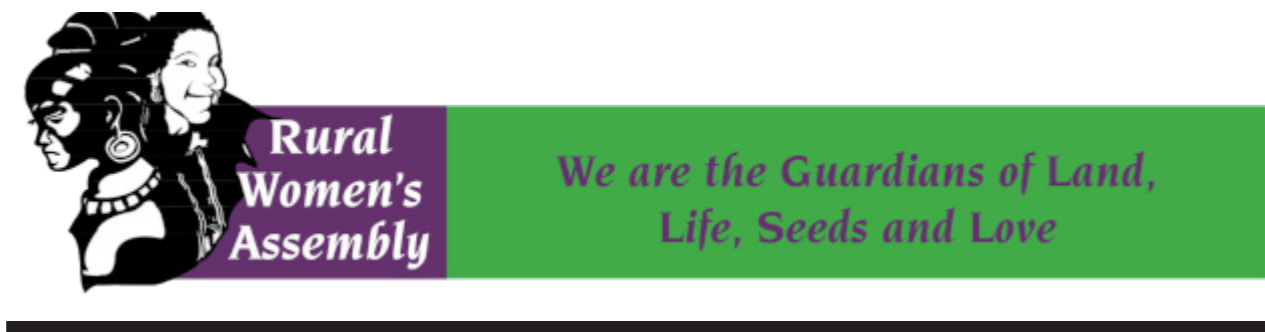


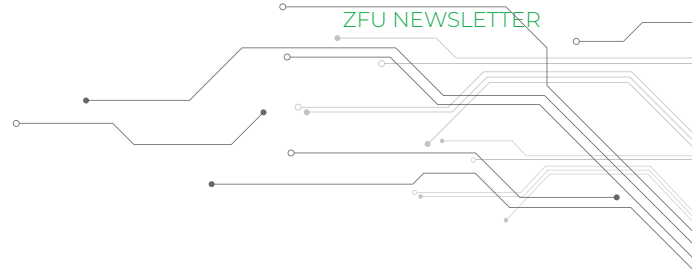
A key example is the promotion of Bokashi compost training. This innovative Japanese method of composting uses fermentation to rapidly break down organic waste, turning it into a nutrient-rich soil enhancer. For women farmers, mastering Bokashi is a game changer. In a time of rising fertilizer costs and climate induced soil degradation, this training provides a low cost, organic alternative that revitalizes soil health, improves water retention, and boosts crop yields. It is a tangible skill that directly translates into increased food security and higher household incomes. Furthermore, by teaching women to create a valuable product from on-farm resources, it opens up new entrepreneurial avenues, allowing them to sell surplus compost and build sustainable businesses from the ground up.



While the ZFU provides the technical expertise and training infrastructure, the spirit of movements like the RWA ensures that these opportunities reach the most marginalized women and are framed within a broader fight for their rights to land and resources. The story of this partnership is one of strategic empowerment. It is a story told not just in harvest numbers, but in the growing confidence of a woman leading a co-op meeting, in the rich, dark soil of a farm revitalized by Bokashi, and in the collective strength of women who are no longer just participants in agriculture, but are leading the charge towards a more equitable and sustainable future for all of Zimbabwe.

This training goes beyond basic governance; it builds negotiation skills, financial literacy, and strategic planning abilities, enabling women to advocate effectively for their needs, influence policy, and manage their farming enterprises with greater authority and success. By fostering these skills, the ZFU is ensuring that women's voices are not just present, but are powerful and integral to shaping the future of agriculture. In parallel with developing leaders, the ZFU is also equipping women with practical, climate-smart agricultural techniques that enhance both their productivity and their environmental stewardship.

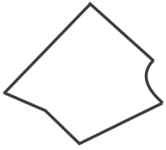




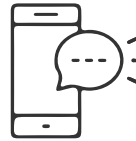
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