

NNFU Newsletter

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From the Governance Pen The Information Week (21-23 August 2006)



One of the resolutions adopted at the National Council 2005, as part of the revisioning process, was to organize an information week to enlighten and share with our partners our future undertakings informed by the past experiences. From 21- 23 August, we organized our first Information Week. This week had three main objectives; first to share NNFU experiences in supporting farmers' initiatives, second to bring farmers, policy makers, development workers, donors and other support structures together and third to draw lessons, stress good practices for possible future interventions.

Every day a different topic was tackled to enable partners to select topics of their interest; Monday the NNFU projects on Supporting Livestock Marketing, Tuesday the issues about Grain Marketing and Institutional Strengthening, followed by the Cross Cutting issues on Wednesday. During these three days, presentations were given in the morning, followed by discussion. In the afternoon there was time for interaction with the general public. Discussion and concern points which came up were e.g.:

- Information dissemination at local level
- Institutional capacity of Farmers' organisations i.e.; to support Livestock Marketing Advisors, handing over of auction kraals, organizing agricultural shows and business planning of the Farmers' organization
- Declaration of Mahangu as a controlled crop
- Promotion of the consumption of Mahangu
- Impact of resettlement program
- Lack of post resettlement support services
- Education campaign on Minimum Wage Agreement (MWA)
- Implementation of MWA without differentiating the level of farmers

After the information week, on Thursday, a Donor Round Table Discussion was organized to discuss the issues of future interest of NNFU and its partners and mapping the road ahead.

The Information Week was attended by about 50 people every day, including Exco-members and farmers. Unfortunately there were no representatives of the ministries. In general the event was very much appreciated by the attendants.

As a conclusion, the Information Week was a successful event. The ideas and discussions raised during this week will certainly help us to improve our work in future.

Policy Education and Advocacy

NNFU first visit to Tsumkwe farmers – San Farmers 11- 14 September 2006

It was basically an outreach excursion considering the absence of San communities from the NNFU family. It was a formal invitation by the organizing committee of the N//AOQ!AE Farmers Association from the Tsumkwe area. Farmers and local extension officers have realized the need for an organized farmer structure to facilitate issues affecting farmers in particular. It is against this background that farmers with the assistance of the local agricultural extension officers took the initiative of establishing a local farmers association. The initial establishment, through a taskforce, was made in 2003 whereby now, 2006, they have actually elected 7 members of the executive committee. The meeting was basically an AGM whereby major stakeholders in agriculture, i.e. Meatco, NNFU, MAWF, Agribank as well as other partners like conservancies (NNC) were invited. The intention was to have all institutions delivering services to farmers, to Tsumkwe community in general, at the said meeting. The meeting was attended by close to 40 farmers and stakeholders. The spirit was very positive as there was realization to bring the San communities into the mainstream of the farming community and development in general for the achievement of Vision 2030.

Although most speakers had similar messages, NNFU message was about the importance of organized agriculture and the role of farmers' organizations specifically. The messages were really appreciated, but it was clear that a lot still needs to be done to bring the San farmers into the mainstream, looking at their historical and social background. It is commonly known that farming is not the traditional and cultural process of San people, therefore it would be a slow and difficult process to bring them into path with the other rural communities of Namibia. Our message was that it is good for people to know what others are doing in order to follow, if found appropriate. We are convinced that the cultural and traditional way of living by the San community will change as new dynamics of the modern world is unfolding.

NNFU has, after the re-visioning exercise, adopted the policy of inclusiveness, therefore attempts to incorporate San is part of that objective. Therefore we will render the necessary support in pursuance of organize agriculture in Namibia. We wish the new leadership of the N//AOQ!AE Farmers Association all the best during their term of office and once again guarantee NNFU support in their farming endeavours.

Business Advice

Support of Mahangu Marketing by Farmers Organisation's

NNFU believes that to improve their livelihoods, communal farmers need to organise themselves to develop marketing activities. NNFU is however conscious that the market presents both opportunities and threats. Communal farmers therefore need to be properly informed and they need to build their capacity so they are able to make the right marketing decisions in their best interest.

NNFU has been supporting mahangu marketing activities in the North Central Regions, including Kavango and Caprivi regions, since 2002. Despite average harvest, the 2005 mahangu marketing campaign has improved; quantity marketed, participation of hundreds communal producers has encouraged the NNFU to continue and even expand its activities in this sector.

NNFU has facilitated several workshops and forums on mahangu and grain marketing, the field – testing of post harvest equipment, developed extension materials (leaflets, posters, radio programs), provided technical support to farmer organisations engaged in marketing activities, facilitated contacts between stakeholders and encouraged partnership and many other activities.



The Regional Councillor encouraging farmers to get involved in Mahangu marketing during a field day at the Oshitowa centre in the Oshana region

In 2005 cabinet passed a resolution to declare Mahangu as a controlled product, so that mahangu producers are able to enjoy the same benefit as the maize and wheat producers.

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Mahangu Marketing From p 2

Mahangu marketing is not only a concern of farmers. It is also the concern of other stakeholder such as: Government, Namibian Agronomic Board, service delivery institutions, which have contributed to the commercialisation of mahangu, and it is the primary concern of NNFU.

Since 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 marketing of mahangu through farmers' organizations (FOs) has developed: the number of FOs involved and number of farmers marketing and quantities marketed has increased, managerial capacities of FOs have improved and stakeholders' mobilization has improved.

The MSTT has closely monitored progresses and equally supported these initiatives. In 2004 a Grain Marketing Mentor scheme supported by the MSTT and implemented by the NNFU has been tested with the Omusati Regional Farmers Co-operative. Followed by Grain Marketing

Promoters scheme in 2005. All results show that:

- There is definitely high potential for future development of mahangu marketing by FO's
- It is definitely worth supporting marketing initiatives by Farmers Organisations
- A good collaboration between FOs and Millers has developed, which is giving farmers better negotiating power
- Farmers' mobilization increases in some places.
- Improvement on quality delivered to millers
- More capacity building/empowerment of co-operatives with the grain marketing promoters scheme compared to last year GMM scheme

"2006 should be declared a Year of Action and we should multiply by 2 or 3 the results from the mahangu marketing campaign." Continued on p 4

Mahangu Marketing Campaigns by Regional Farmers' Organisations Progress since 2002

Indicators	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of RFO involved in the marketing (campaign)	Omusati RFC	Omusati RFC Mandume RFC (Ongushu RFC) (Uukumwe RFC)	Uukumwe RFC Likwama RFU Omusati RFC Ongushu RFC	Uukumwe RFC Likwama RFU Omusati RFC Ongushu RFC Mandume RFC
Number of Local Centres/Associations	9	Mandume RFC: 2 Omusati RFC : 5	Omusati RFC: 11 Ongushu RFC: 4 Uukumwe RFC: 2 Likwama RFU	Omusati RFC: 3 Ongushu RFC: 7 Uukumwe RFC: 6 Likwama RFU: 3
Quantity marketed by RFO's	+/- 30t	+/- 10t	434.2t NCRs: 128.5t Caprivi: 305.7t	135.7t NCRs : 91t Caprivi : 44.7t
Mahangu buyer	Namib mills (30t)	Namib Mills (2t) Okavu Mills (2.3t) Local trader (5.6t)	Namib Mills (396t) Okavu Mills (35.5t) Local trade (>2.3)	Namib Mills (135t) ABC (0.95t)
Number of farmers who marketed grain	+/- 100	>58 Omusati RFC: 52 Mandume RFC: 6	717 NCRs: 517	316 NCRs: 177 Caprivi: 139
Estimated total turnover (sales)	+/- N\$40 000.00	> N\$10 000	N\$215 000 NCR: 215 000	N\$228 000 NCR: 153 000 Caprivi: 75 000
Average income/ farmer	N\$ 400	N\$ 112	TA & PC backstopping Training Training manual Info leaflets & posters Evaluation w/shop	+/- N\$ 700
NNFU support	TA & PC	TA & PC support - Training w/shop 1 week (Jul/Aug03) - Training manual - Info leaflets & poster - Evaluation w/shop	GMM scheme Omusati RFC Precleaners	PC backstopping Training w/shop Training manual Info leaflet & poster Refresher training (bookkeeping) Evaluation w/shop
MSTT/NAASP				Grain Marketing Promoters scheme (NCRs & Caprivi) Precleaners 1 Local centre building Omuthiya Info & posters
Other direct institutional support	Limited	Limited	Ongwediva Stakeholders Forum	MMIU/NAB Some AET NCRs Some Regional Councillors (NCRs)

During the evaluation campaign workshop on 13 and 14 February 2006 RDC, Ongwediva farmers expressed that through collective marketing there are benefits:

- Early marketing to capture the market and get a better price
- Marketing together is easier than individually
- Saving on individual transport costs by sharing transport of bags
- Better price to farmers

- No need to go to the buyer yourself
- Strengthening regional co-operative/farmers' organisation
- Marketing surplus grain avoids unnecessary spoilage in traditional storage at the farm

Support to mahangu marketing activities would then both contribute to the developing of mahangu marketing activities but will also strengthen farmers' organization roles in the marketing chain (building around sound economic activities benefiting their members).

Participation of farmers association and cooperatives in the show activities for 2006

This article will highlight on the participation of farmers association and cooperatives in the show activities for 2006 and high light challenges experienced.

The show calendar for 2006 is drawing to a close. All the local shows in the regions have been completed. The regional show of Omaheke was hosted in the Aminuis constituency, although it was not sponsored by the MAWF and the Consortium. The reason for receiving funds from the donors is complex at the moment and will not be highlighted. It is very pleasing to note that the local shows were organised in 9 regions with the exception of Kavango and Ohangwena regions. Kavango region has been lacking behind with show activities, while the request from Ohangwena was received, but could not be entertained due to lack of the report from the previous year. The farmers association from Kunene-South and parts of the Erongo region were lacking behind, but have this year participated very well. It is our hope that the activities will grow from strength to strength in these regions.

Some challenges were experienced during the course of the year with regard to shows and would be tackled in the annual evaluation workshop to be organised in December 2006. The annual show evaluation workshop started in 2005 with the objective of evaluating the show activities and making recommendations for improvement, both at regional and national level. It is of great importance that the regions, through the regional show committees, will participate. NNFU would appreciate it if the regions would prepare in advance to enrich the discussion and to come-up with recommendations. The main issue of concern for the NNFU and the Donors is the quality of show reports

and applications submitted for financial support. Despite the efforts made by NNFU to develop formats for the show reports and application, little improvement is realized. There has been communication to farmers associations and cooperatives with regard to formats of both the application and reports for the show activities.

The sponsors are becoming very stringent with their requirements and are criticizing the low standards of show reports and applications. The report of the previous event is the basis for the approval of the new application or request and the following information is critical:

- The total number of animals and breeds presented
- The crop products presented
- The prices paid per class of animal
- The list of names of winners with their signatures as per MAWF format
- The income statement

The conditions outlined by the donors should be adhered to at all times as the request/ application is penalized on your previous spending. For example if a Farmers association received N\$ 10 000 from the MAWF with their conditions of 100% utilization of funds to farmers prizes and the association only use N\$ 6000 for animal prizes and the rest is spent on something else, their next request would be penalized. We should remember that the show activity is supported by both public and private funds with set of conditions to be adhered and maintained. It is expected from the show committees at local and regional to be accountable to the funds they request on behalf of the farmers.

In conclusion I would like to thank each and every one who was part of the show activities for a job well done.

The **Meat Board of Namibia** has sourced and tested arboricides for the combating of bush encroachment and is going to make available trial samples at cost to livestock producers who are registered with the Meat Board. Applications are awaited from livestock producers indicating the requirement for the arboricide for 2006 and 2007. The trial batch, which will be available during the first half of December 2006, is only a limited quantity and will have to be restricted to a 50 liter quantity per livestock producer on a "first come first serve" basis meaning that those producers who have paid first will receive of the product. The price will be available upon the arrival of the arboricides in Windhoek.

Applications are awaited at: Meat Board of Namibia
Ms van Schoor
Tel: 061 275830
Fax: 061 228310
E-mail: magda@nammic.com.na