

## From the Governance Pen..

### NNFU National Council 2005

The National Council Meeting of the NNFU took place from the 13 - 16 October 2005 at Gross Barmen and was described by many of the delegates as a resounding success. This National Council meeting coincided with the re-visioning process of the NNFU based on a resolution of the NNFU Congress 2004.



The re-visioning 'road' to National Council

September 2004: NNFU Congress resolved to embark on a re-visioning process in order to strategically reposition the organisation in its present and future socio-economic and political landscape.

October 2004: Exco members agreed on a systematic process detailing a number of steps to ensure transparency and bottom-up consultations with the membership.

February 2005: A planning session was organised at Waterberg to elaborate and design the re-visioning tools.

April-May 2005: The first round of consultation meetings in the regions took place, whereby the views of members were collected.

May 2005: A national re-visioning workshop was convened at Otjiwarango where the views of members were discussed in building the first elements of a vision



## Editorial

**T**he constant pursuance and resilience of the NNFU members in building a sound movement of farmers in Namibia as embraced by our motto that says "in deligency we grow" is the outcome that is visible today. The journey through the infant stages of institution building has been a long, painfull and challenging process. Since its establishment in June 1992 the NNFU's profile has never been better than now.

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including the decision to undertake a second round of regional debriefings/consultations.

August 2005: The second round of regional meetings took place simultaneously with an aim to debrief membership on the elements of vision in preparation for National Council. The Executive Committee and Secretariat prepared a simplified proposal for review and approval by the National Council. This proposal identified different options and their implications in order to inform the membership when selecting the most appropriate ones.

September 2005: NNFU National Council re-cently concluded reviewed the outcome of the re-visioning and adopted a number of resolutions that now must be transformed into action plans.



It is envisaged that a strategic planning session will be organised at Executive Committee and Secretariat levels in order to plan and visualize the operational modalities of the NC resolutions pertaining to the re-visioning.

### Resolution on levy to finance organised agriculture

NC also reviewed and adopted a resolution on the principle of industry levies to finance organised agriculture as an important institution in the development of agriculture in Namibia. It is expected that this resolution will now enable Cabinet to express itself on this critical decision. The re-visioning process was funded by FOS Belgium and the French Embassy in Namibia to whom the NNFU is greatly indebted.



# Policy Education & Advocacy Desk

BY OLLOF

## Land Reform - Communal Land Reform Act No. 5 of 2002

Land and other natural resources provide livelihood to communal land farmers for their daily survival.

The Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, as the custodian of land reform in Namibia has enacted the Communal Land Reform Act No. 5 of 2002 to institute mechanisms for land allocation and administration in communal areas. NNFU has through the existing excellent working relationship with the government, equally participated and contributed to information sharing and education of the ACT as well as empowering Communal Lands Boards by calling regional and local information workshops. NNFU is of the opinion that if communal farmers understand the ACT, they will contribute to the successful implementation of the said Act.

Through its regional and local information workshops, the NNFU has trained community-based resource persons, who in turn train local communities and farmers' organisations.

The secretariat organised and facilitated information sharing meetings and workshops in all the 13 political regions during the course of 2004/5, and during which farmers' representatives and land board members highlighted positive and negative aspects of the Act.

On the positive side:

- \* Members appreciate the fact that farmers can now have tenure security registered for 99 years in their names.
- \* Women and widows appreciate the fact they can inherit land after spouses pass away.
- \* Traditional Authorities are empowered to allocate and administer customary grants.
- \* People also appreciate the establishment of Land Boards, which approve land allocation as well as to administer and to coordinate land matters.

On the negative side:

Firstly, farmers who are the daily resource users are not part of land management. In cases like the use and safeguarding of water for instance, local communities are involved in the daily management of water and water facilities through Water Point Committees.

This, then begs the question why farmers, who use the land on a daily basis are not involved in grazing management? Also taking into consideration that conservancies are now involved in land, water and wildlife management, one would want to know why the Ministry of Lands is not following the same approach. The NNFU has proposed at various platforms to government the establishment of Land Users Associations (LUAs) as community based institutions to facilitate this very notion of communities becoming managers of land. The proposed LUAs is not a

new concept as South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique have similar structures.

Members also complain that the livestock numbers allowed by the ACT do not support the sustainable use of natural resources such as water and grazing, saying the livestock numbers allowed by law are simply too large. The law allows farmers to keep 1 800 small stock and 300 large stock, which farmers claim does not correlate with the livestock figures AgriBank uses as a prerequisite to access loans.

Therefore, members are of the view that the figures allowed by the Communal Land Reform Act will not encourage well-off communal farmers to move from communal land and buy farms to allow other small farmers to grow.

Another strong element raised during NNFU consultations is the issue of non-recognised traditional authorities who have followers but are neither allowed to register communal farmers nor allowed to handle applications for land allocation and registration for customary or leasehold land.

We in the NNFU would like to encourage all farmers to apply and register their customary land before the expiry date of March 2006 in order to have secure tenure of land for 99 years.



### Implementation of the Minimum Wage Agreement in Communal Areas

The legal provision for employers in the agricultural sector to pay their workers according to the minimum wage agreement has brought about mixed feelings amongst communal land farmers.

The agreement was signed on November 5, 2002 by members of the Namibia Agricultural Labour Forum (NALF). The NNFU, as a social partner in the agricultural sector signed on behalf of communal agricultural employers.

The introduction of minimum wages in the sector was a recommendation by the Kameeta Commission, ordered by former President Dr Sam Nujoma to investigate the living/working conditions of workers on farms in order to recommend measures to remedy their social and economic conditions.

As recommended, NNFU with other partners opted for the establishment of NALF to negotiate and determine the minimum wage and other support packages for farm workers.

After negotiations, the collective agreement states the following main issues:

1. All farmers who formally employ a farm worker must pay him/her N\$ 2.20 per hour
2. A farm worker staying on the farm during his/her period of employment should be provided with reasonable housing.

The employer must then provide one of the following 3 choices in agreement with the worker:

1. Allow the farm worker to keep livestock on the farm to provide for his other needs OR
2. Give food rations to the value of N\$ 210.00 OR
3. Provide a monthly cash amount of N\$ 210.00.

NNFU conducted 10 information workshops on this issue in 10 regions namely, Kavango, Caprivi, Oshana, Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto, Kunene South and Kunene North since January 2005. The workshops were very successful and were attended on average by 30 farmers per meeting.

NNFU is encouraging its members to comply with the legal provisions of the collective minimum wage agreement especially those employers who can afford it in doing so, we would be demonstrating our social responsibility irrespective of our farming conditions and income.

NNFU is aware of the many challenges its members face and is currently working on measures to make things better. Farmers must realise that agricultural labour as an input, it is part of the farming package and risks therefore must be considered and calculated. Farmers must join our local and regional structures to benefit from schemes, programmes and services, the NNFU offers.

#### Local farmers' organisations - What do we know about them?

The history and activities of local farmers organisations dated back to the beginning of this century when farmers used to sell their produce such as milk, fruit and vegetables in local towns like Windhoek, Otavi, Otjiwarongo and Keetmanshoop among others. Farmers who produced these basic food items did not have a structure that would collect, price, transport and sell in an organised manner. They traded as individuals.

The very same farmers realised that they could actually form producers' organisations that would do the business for them. It is against this background that many neighbouring farmers got together, discussed the problems and activities and decided that being in the same area, doing the same business, facing the same problems and sharing the same market warranted the formation of an institution for them to work together for their common good. These were the principles on which farmers' organisations were formed. This concept of farmers' organisations has developed, expanded and changed for good and has adapted to current economic, social, political, environmental and agricultural conditions and circumstances. Below are the current expected roles and functions of local farmers' associations in our respective communal farming areas:

#### Characteristics of farmers' associations

- \* They are member-owned and member-driven organisations.
- \* They are normally composed of farmers in the same farming vicinity, village or area sharing the same market and resources.
- \* They involve farmers in similar farming activities with similar problems and successes and similar economic and social status.
- \* In Namibia cultural practices and languages make it easier for farmers to associate and form a stronger bond of belonging together.



#### Role of local farmers' organisations

1. Bring and hold member farmers together.
2. Represent the interest of members.
3. Serve as advocate and mouthpiece for members on issues that affect farmers.
4. Initiate programmes, activities and services
5. Facilitate surveys and research in order to serve as source of information and agricultural data.
6. Organise and facilitate farmers' meetings.
7. Facilitate training on relevant farming related issues and give business advice (farmers' organisations serve as a link and will, therefore, have all the resource instruments, but will facilitate to appoint an outside resource experts from outside for advice and training).
8. Serve as link and communication channel to its members (NNFU, NAU, Government etc).
9. Monitor government services, schemes and programmes in order to make input and to encourage members to participate for their own benefit.
10. Organise and facilitate farmers' information days and agricultural shows.
11. Call Annual General Meetings and Congresses to elect leadership to take responsibility for annual activities and financial matters.
12. Facilitate market information and product prices for members to decide where they want to market their products.
13. Keep data of members and collect membership fees on time.

# Business Advice & Trade Links Desk



BY EDDIE

## Support to communal shows

The hosting of shows in communal areas started few years' back and now has become an annual event in most, if not all regions. The underlying objective of the shows is to showcase farmers' products be it, livestock, crops or any other farm produce. The shows receive a lot of attention from the media and the public at large and therefore need to be organized in a way that they carry the message through. According to organisers, the following are some of the points that are very important when organising a show.



The decision to hold a show should be taken at the Executive Committee level of the farmers association or Cooperative. A show organising committee can then be established to spearhead the show activities. It is advisable that roles and responsibilities of every member be spelt out clearly and preferably be written out.

As is common knowledge, these activities are solely dependent on external funding. Therefore, fundraising would be the main activity within the show committee, which must receive the necessary attention.

Currently, there are two main funds that support communal shows namely: the Agricultural Show Fund from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Consortium for Communal Shows. NNFU has compiled an information package with regard to these funds and is available at our offices. Copies have also been sent to regions for distribution.

The information package contains information of application and reporting formats.

It is very important for the show committee to adhere to the requirements as stipulated or risk their applications being turned down or delayed. The deadline for the submission of applications is March 31, 2006. The application should be accompanied by a comprehensive report of the previous show.

Although regional shows are organised, they are still in the infant stages as we only had two regional shows in the Omaheke and Otjozondjupa regions. Hardap region also hosted its first ever-regional show this year (2005).

The organisation of the regional shows is almost the same as the Mini-shows except that it involves farmers' associations or cooperatives of the region. The regional shows attract

media and as such should be organised to reflect what organised agriculture can achieve in the communal areas.

In conclusion, this is just one of the many articles to come that will highlight show activities within in the NNFU family.

Enjoy it and do not hesitate to contact us if you have suggestions if there is need for us to improve the articles.

