

SACAU News

SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL UNIONS

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Agriterra concludes SACAU's organisation assessment in Malawi and Namibia

The Agriterra assessment mission team that comprised of Mr Niek Thijssen, Business Advisor, and M. Klaas Johan Osinga the Senior Policy Advisor for Dutch Farmers' Organization (LTO) visited four SACAU members namely; Farmers' Union of Malawi (FUM) and National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) in Malawi and Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU) and Namibia National Farmers' Union (NNFU) in Namibia. The team was accompanied by Mr Benito Eliasi of SACAU. The mission was part of the overall assessment of SACAU's readiness to implement the Annual General Meeting (AGM) resolution of separating SACAU's core functions of lobby and advocacy from its other functions such as development work. A similar exercise was recently



The assessment team from left to right Mr Klaas J Osinga Mr Niek Thijssen Mr Benito Eliasi and Mr Ventuadja Kazapuwa of NNFU.

conducted in Zimbabwe.

All four organisations visited were positive about the separation and identified a number of values their organisations will attain through the re-organised SACAU. However, it was clear that the four organisations had different demands and levels of expertise to supply towards the agri-agency. This mainly depended on the level of maturity and specialisation of the organisations. Consequently, the SACAU business plan for the agri-agency must accommodate those differences in order to make the agri-agency work for all SACAU member organisations. There will also be a need for a communication strategy to

ensure that members understand the principles of the agri-agency and that they are sufficiently informed of their roles in making the agency success.

The team also recommended that decision makers of SACAU members (Presidents, CEOs) should be regularly updated of the progress through special meetings and/or training dedicated to the operations of agri-agency. One of the important recommendations of the team is that the new agency must generate enough "traffic" to become a central hub for farmers organisations, their donors and other possible clients in southern Africa.

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This requires stakeholder mapping, market research, lobby, communication & training and high quality of experts. In addition, the Agriderra model of agri-agency should only serve as an example and the SACAU agri-agency will not be an exact copy because the context is different. One of the CEOs that was contacted alluded to the fact that "the agri-agency must get off on an excellent start, SACAU cannot afford to "mess up" at the commencement of this noble task". These sentiments were encored by the assessment team members who stated that the business plan must include elements about market demand, marketing (use a name that clearly separates the agency from SACAU Advocacy), communications, and positioning. The team recommended a 'step-by-step approach' to assure a gradual transfer of SACAU development activities into the agri agency.



The team also met with Dairy Farmers in Malawi.

CEO's Letter



by Ishmael Sunga

At this time of the year, one would expect things to slow down as the festive season and end of the year beckon. Yet, the secretariat was kept so busy this month such that it felt far from approaching the festive season!

It was indeed business as usual, with routine work and various assignments. Noteworthy, and in more ways than one, was our migration from the old IT server which had become rather unreliable to a brand new one. Although the migration was successfully accomplished, we had a major scare when our data seemed momentarily to have all disappeared into the cloud. But thanks to ICT, the clouds are not that far, and everything was

successfully restored and we are up and running again. This further underscored that data security and data recovery is a key risk management area. As one SACAU Board member put it, it is never too expensive to be safe.

Further steps towards the establishment of SACAU' agri agency unit were made. The Agriderra' s team, accompanied by a member of the secretariat, had successful meetings with both our members in Malawi and Namibia, with very positive outcomes. The plan is now to complete the consultations and the development of the business plan within the first quarter of 2017.

The month also saw SACAU hosting the regional livestock platform, a workshop on the development of the access to seed index for southern

Africa, as well as the Support to Farmers' Organisation (SFOAP) knowledge management and planning meeting. In addition, we successfully co-hosted a side meeting on the side-line of the Cop 22 in Morocco. Apart from Cop 22, we were also represented at various meetings, including Agricord's AGM and the African development banks' regional consultation meeting with civil society.

Forth coming events in December include SACAU's last Board meeting of the year which is scheduled for the first week of December, as well as an internal organisational self-assessment exercise for the Board and all secretariat staff.

The festive season is around the corner- we can't wait for the holiday shutdown!