



ZAGP News

The Newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP)

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EDITORIAL

We welcome you to the 20th issue of ZAGP News, the newsletter for the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP).

The year 2020 presented unprecedented challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and locally, and also brought challenges to all sectors of the economy including agricultural production systems. ZAGP soldiered on despite these challenges, adjusting the way we work to score some remarkable results during the difficult year.

As we close the year, this last issue for 2020 covers services that are now on offer across the ZAGP projects. Beneficiaries are now accessing a host of services on offer within the Agricultural Centres of Excellence (ACEs), Cattle Business Centres (CBCs), Goat Improvement Centres (GICs) and Poultry Business Units (PBUs).

Speaking after a recent tour of various ZAGP projects to have an appreciation of the operations of various project entities and services, Dr Josphat Nyika, the Department of Veterinary

Services Chief Director stated that these are in line with Government priorities.

“What I have witnessed on the projects we have visited is that these services being offered speak to the Government’s imperative of the Livestock Growth Plan and the recently launched National Development Strategy. I am pleased with the progress so far and the benefits being derived within the livestock sector in Zimbabwe”.

We also feature an inspirational story from a young farming couple in Marondera district, whose pig farming enterprise has been transformed and are reaching high levels of production.

As always, we value your feedback on all the issues of ZAGP News. From all of us at ZAGP, we wish our readers a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

(Cover Photo: Goats soon after dipping at the Lupane Goat Improvement Centre.

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Cattle Business Centres (CBCs) to Boost Beef Cattle Production



The Beef Enterprise Strengthening and Transformation (BEST) project is establishing 60 Cattle Business Centres (10 main and 50 satellites CBCs). Each of the main CBCs will be supported by at least five satellite CBCs within a 40 km radius which will provide similar services provided from the main CBC. Whilst most of the CBCs are still under construction, a number of services are currently accessible to farmers.

At the Lapache Cattle Business Centre in Mwenezi district, Masvingo province, 17.5 hectares of Rhodes Reclaimer fodder grass was planted in July 2020. Reclaimer Rhodes Grass is a fine stemmed Rhodes grass with a very high leaf to stem ratio when compared to other grasses. with the first cut in September yielding more than 4,000 hay bales.



In September 2020, at least 2,993 bales totaling 38.9 tonnes were harvested. Approximately 39 tonnes have been sold to farmers in Masvingo province to date. The hay bales are being sold at USD 1.00 each to project beneficiaries and USD 2.00 to non-beneficiaries. A total of 944 farmers have so far purchased hay bales. The second harvest is expected to yield at least 600 more bales which should be sufficient to take the beneficiary animals out of the lean season danger.

Cattle Business Centres (CBCs) to Boost Beef Cattle Production



“2019 was a really bad year for us as we helplessly watched our cattle die one by one. They were just dropping dead and within a few weeks, we had lost 12 cows. It was such a painful experience.

We could not afford to buy the supplementary feed for the animals, particularly with the surging prices, she added.

This year, I don't foresee any deaths as we are now buying hay bales at the Lapache CBC. I currently have 28 cattle which I am feeding. This is going to be a different year for farmers in Mwenezi”.

Olivia Majoni, Farmer, Mwenezi district ”

A total of 194 animals were inducted into feedlots for pen fattening, targeting the lucrative festive season marketing window.

- Mutiusinazita CBC, Buhera - 15
- Atikoreni satellite CBC – 40
- Ndyarima CBC – 15

Feed is being provided by Windmill whilst First Mutual Microfinance has been partnered for bridging finance and MC Meats is providing the final market.

- Muhlanguleni CBC (Chiredzi) - 42
- Chanienga satellite CBC (Chiredzi) - 37.
- Lapache CBC (Mwenezi) -30

In Mwenezi, the cattle were inducted under a feeder finance scheme with Sabie Meats.



Poultry Business Units Delivering Vital Services to Poultry Producers

The Inclusive Poultry Value Chain (IPVC) project has established Poultry Business Units (PBUs) across the five clusters in Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare, Masvingo, Mutare. Each cluster acts as an administration and coordination unit for the collective action of Small to Medium Scale Producers (SMPs).

The PBUs are enabling poultry farmer groups to gain economies of scale and scope to access extension, inputs, financial and market services in a more convenient and profitable manner.

Bulk purchases of day-old chicks and feed for the SMPs have been successfully negotiated. This is reducing the cost of production, and increasing revenue. PBUs are also offering training and poultry information services.

Services on offer include; bulk input procurement, mobile



- PBUG membership (5 clusters) – 1.419
-
 - Feed average retail price (50kg) – USD23.00.
 - PBU discounted price – USD20.00
 - PBU benefit retention = \$3.00 - \$2.50 = \$0.50c /bag and ultimately farmer benefit retention = \$2.50c/bag
-
 - Feed received (50kg bags) – 10,226
 - Feed sold (50kg bags) – 9.062
- Day old chicks sold - 38994

Feed formulation trainings have been underway across all the PBUs including satellite PBUs in Umzingwane, Shangani and Norton.

The trainings, which are targeted for SMPs and Agritex officers have reached over 600 beneficiaries. The goal is to reach and train over 1,500 beneficiaries, in the coming year.

Currently, crop inputs towards feed formulation for the 2020/2021 season are being distributed to lead farmers in Harare PBU.



Goat Improvement Centres to Providing Business Support Services to Goat Farmers



The Value Chain Alliance for Livestock Upgrading and Empowerment (VALUE) project is establishing Goat Improvement Centres set up as hubs to provide primary business support services. The Lupane GIC started offering services in November 2020 and is targeting at least 850 farmers in the district. Services on offer include; dipping facility, animal nutrition services (fodder crops and seeds), veterinary supplies and breed improvement. Other services include aggregation of bulk slaughter stock and provision of training and extension.

“We are working with small to medium scale goat producers and our thrust is for them to commercialise their production. However, for them to commercialise they need access to a host of business support services which this centre is offering. With the support of these business services, our farmers are well on their way to becoming commercial”,
said Sudden Muchadenyika, the Agritex Extension Officer in Lupane district.

During the first dipping session in November, at least 1,643 goats were dipped. Farmers are also accessing fodder and seeds such as Lablab, Velvet bean and Sunn Hemp from the half hectare solar powered drip irrigation plot at the centre. The fodder is sold at the equivalent of USD1.00 per kilogramme and the and fodder seed is pegged at USD1.00 per 500grammes. GICs will be established in 12 districts of Nkayi, Lupane, Binga, Matobo, Gwanda, Beitbridge, Buhera, Chipinge, Mbire, Chikomba, Rushinga and Mudzi.



The GIC was a hive of activity as scores of farmers brought their goats for dipping.



[Watch the video outlining the Lupane Goat Improvement Centre services](#)

Agriculture of Excellence Delivering Services to Enhance Farmer Profitability

The Zimbabwe Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Services (ZAKIS) project has invested in ensuring that farmers enhance their on-farm activities by providing a plurality of services. Both the Matopos Research Institute and the Chibero College of Agriculture Agricultural Centres of Excellence (ACEs) provide profit enhancing services such as on-farm formulated feed testing, crop and livestock Germplasm sales, exposure technical visits, trainings and one on one consultancy services.

Through the laboratory refurbished by the project, the Matopos ACE has been offering feed testing services to farmers for a cost recovery fee. Feed formulations done by farmers on their farms need to be assessed for protein, energy and other essential nutrients. This will enable the farmers to optimize their feeds and enhance viability. Other services include the sale of Germplasm material such as small grain varieties that are adopted to the farmers localized context. The Chibero ACE has revamped its aquaculture infrastructure to ensure that services are delivered to farmers.

The ACEs are also offering training and advisory services for government extension workers. Through the in-services capacity development approach, over 300 frontline staff have received training from the ACEs.



The refurbished laboratory at the Matopos Research Institute Agricultural Centre of Excellence

SAFE Facilitates ISO Accreditation



Through support from Transforming Zimbabwe's Animal Health and Food Safety Systems (SAFE) project, the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL) under the Department of Veterinary Services successfully attained its ISO 17025:2017 accreditation status. with Southern African Development Community Accreditation Services (SADCAS), a regional accreditation body. The following tests performed by the CVL are now ISO accredited:

- Bacteriology to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 – Meat and Meat Products, Crocodile Meat, Fish, Milk and Milk Products, Swabs, Egg, Feed Fluff and Cloacal Swabs
- Parasitology to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 – Faecal Material, Bovine, Caprine, Equine, Ovine and Avian
- Protozoology to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 – Organs and smears
- Virology/Serology to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 – Caprine, Ovine Sera, Bovine, Bulk Milk and Individual Milk, Equine Sera, Bovine Sera, Chicken Sera.

Delivering Crucial Services to Transform Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain



In-calf Heifers Imported and Distributed

The Transforming Zimbabwe's Dairy Value Chain for the Future (TranzDVC) project imported and distributed 200 in-calf heifers to five processors (Dendairy, Dairibord Zimbabwe Limited, Kefalos, ProDairy and Nestle Zimbabwe.). Zimbabwe requires 50, 000 heifers to meet the annual demand of 130 million litres while the national dairy herd is at 39000 producing at least 80 million litres of milk annually.

With TranZDVC's initiative of injecting more heifers into the national herd, approximately 5.4 million litres of milk will be added to the national milk supply, 300 more heifers will be imported from South Africa and distributed during the first quarter of 2021.



Claudius Burira, a dairy farmer in Chitomborwizi Farm in Makonde district feeding his dairy cows.

Artificial Insemination to Improve Dairy Breeds

The project procured 2000 sexed semen and 2000 conventional semen. To support the Artificial Insemination initiative, training and refresher courses were conducted for at least 100 officers from Agritex and the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS).

Matching Grants Facility

TranZDVC's Matching Grants Facility seeks to promote the establishment of multilateral partnerships that leverage investments in dairy productive assets and infrastructure and to address some of the bottlenecks and or underlying challenges within the dairy value chain in Zimbabwe. To date, the project has successfully implemented Windows 1, 2 and 3 of the facility. Window 1 is targeting large-scale processors, and farmers who receive a Euro 40,000 grant. They then match with another Euro 40 000 to buy productive assets which are expected to benefit small-scale farmers. To date, nine disbursements have been made.

Under Window 2, the project is giving Euro 10.000 on a 70:30 ratio, where the project's contribution is 70 percent while the beneficiaries will cede 30 percent to buy any asset for small-scale milk processors and collection centres. A total of 23 entities have benefitted under Window 2.

A total of 127 beneficiaries received grants under Window 3, which is benefitting small-scale farmers. Each farmer receives a Euro 2,000 grant to invest in dairy farming. This window is expected to support around 500 farmers. The grants awarded cover areas such as hay/ fodder provision, silage cutting, solar powered water supply, milk bulking and milk processing.

PROJECT NEWS

“WONDER SOW” FARROWS 31 PIGLETS IN MARONDERA



One of the VALUE project's Champion farmers based in Marondera district Ward 23, Mr and Mrs Nyatanga broke records when one of their sows farrowed 31 piglets in a single farrowing.

The ‘Wonder Sow’ was purchased from the Pig Industry Board as breeding stock and serviced through natural mating by a boar also purchased from the board.

“We have always been very careful with the genetics we select for our farm thus the decision early on to work with the PIB in procuring quality breeding stock”, says Mrs Kimberly Nyatanga.



[Read more about Mr and Mrs Nyatanga's story.](#)

Department of Veterinary Services Chief Director Tours ZAGP Projects

Dr Josphat Nyika, the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) Chief Director visited ZAGP projects in Bulawayo, Gweru and Lupane. Accompanied by the Neil Orchardson, the Team Leader for Technical Assistance to ZAGP, the visit covered the Poultry Business Units (PBUs) in Bulawayo and Gweru. The PBUs enable poultry farmers to access extension, inputs, financial and market services. In Lupane, the team visited a Goat Improvement Centre established by VALUE. Communities are now accessing services such as goat dipping, animal nutrition (fodder crops and seeds), veterinary supplies, breed improvement and aggregation of bulk slaughter stock.



Dr Nyika (middle left) and Neil in conversation with project staff and farmers at the Gweru PBU.



Meeting stakeholders at the Lupane Goat Improvement Centre

ONLINE RESOURCES

Project Newsletters



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ZAKIS Featured On ZimPapers TV Network



ZAKIS was featured on a live streamed programme on ZimPapers TV Network (ZTN). The discussion focused on Agriculture, Innovation and Knowledge Sharing. Follow the link to watch the recorded programme: <http://bit.ly/3qXU9ge>