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27 November 2020 | In today's newsletter –

- Workshop focuses on Namibia's Elephant Management Plan
- Wage Survey Report 2020
- Onder-Nossob celebrated its 60th year of existence
- FA and other news

Workshop focuses on Namibia's Elephant Management Plan

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, regional consultations regarding the Elephant Management Plan (2019) were not possible. A two-day workshop organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) was held from 19-20 November 2020. This workshop brought various stakeholders together including consultants, MEFT staff, farmers, NGOs and the wildlife utilisation sector.

The three agricultural unions (NAU, NNFU and NECFU) presented a joint draft position paper to the MEFT that included principles and national and regional actions to be taken. The meeting was well facilitated and enabled all stakeholders to air their views on a topic that easily becomes highly emotional.

The main highlights from the presenters from the MEFT, including the Minister Shifeta as well as the Executive Director of MEFT, Teo Nghitila clearly spelled out Namibia's commitment to sustainable utilisation and that the real value of elephants was unable to be achieved due to restrictive international trade agreements. These restrictions remain a major impediment to the growth of elephant numbers and spatial distribution of elephants in Namibia.

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS



The last elephant management plan to be formally endorsed was almost 25 years ago. Despite these elephant numbers have trebled since Independence and their range has expanded over vast areas of the communal and title deed land. This is undoubtedly an international conservation success that few countries have achieved.

This has however come with increased frequency and intensity of human elephant conflicts and the movement of elephants into areas that threaten the VCF and livestock markets as well as areas that are totally unprepared for their presence. Elephants have also started entering highly settled cropping areas where they have no long-term place.

Farmers' Union representatives clearly stated that for wildlife to play a meaningful role in Namibia the benefits from wildlife, especially elephants have to be FULLY realised and management rights and equitable benefits devolved to the local level. In addition, the negative impacts of living with elephants must be mitigated effectively through outside funding. Farmers are committed to wildlife and elephant conservation but this must be planned and the full sustainable economic value of wildlife and especially elephants must be realised.

With these principles in mind, farmers' representatives gave inputs during the workshop into national and regional elephant plans. The three farmers' unions will now develop a formal final submission to the MEFT by 4 December 2020. These plans are yet to be finalised and may include issues such as:

- 1) Stop breaches of the VCF immediately, especially where FMD is a high risk.
- 2) Identify farmer groups in the title deed areas that want elephants and ensure that elephants are secured within these areas and damage done by elephants outside of these areas will be fully compensated. Zero tolerance will be exercised in places where elephants are not wanted or are incompatible with agriculture at this point in time.
- 3) Farmers also recognised the potential future value of elephants if this is done in a planned manner. This is especially important for farmers in the west where climate change impacts are expected to be very severe. Here, buffer zones may be established around the enclosed elephant areas and the Protected Areas and this will allow the planned expansion of elephant populations where requested, enabled and funded.
- 4) The issue of elephants contributing meaningfully to the recovery of communal and commercial livelihoods from the drought will also be raised through restocking and the inclusion of regenerative grazing practices in all management plans to ensure the resource base improves over time and the ventures are sustainable (Revised National Rangeland Strategy, 2019).

Elephants are an international asset but for them to stay they will need to become a local and national asset as well.

Wage Survey Report 2020

The final report of the Agricultural Employers' Association's bi-annual wage survey for 2019/2020 was completed and released to the media. Our members' participation was a lot better than with previous surveys. There were enough participants out of all the regions to ensure good workable data for the survey.

The data of 603 participants, that included 5 340 farm workers, were processed. Different aspects of the remuneration structure and labour management of farm workers were investigated and analysed at national and regional level.

The average value of the basic salary of farm workers (cash and rations) is N\$ 2 367 per month. This represents an increase of 10.7% compared to the 2018 survey. Of this amount the monthly cash salary is on average N\$1 754 and the value of the rations N\$ 613. This is 69% higher than the minimum wage for farm workers that is currently N\$ 1 400.

We must remember that the minimum wage is only an entry-level wage for young farm workers without any experience. The average total remuneration package per farm worker, if the value of the free benefits is added, is N\$ 3 660 per month or N\$ 18.77 per hour. This proves that the remuneration of farm workers on the commercial farms belonging to our members is very good and competitive. The salary benefits include free housing, free transport for school children to school, free transport for workers and their dependents to clinics and hospitals as well as free keeping of livestock, donkeys and horses.

The average number of farm worker houses per employer on farms is 6.12 with an average size of 43 m². The average value of this free benefit for farm workers amounts to N\$ 973 per month. A total of 61% of these households on farms have electricity in their houses whilst another 25% of these households have solar power.

90% of the participants confirmed that they pay annual bonuses to their workers, additional to the above mentioned remuneration. 80% of the participants also indicated that workers received salary increases during the year, in spite of the country-wide drought during the reporting period.

Items like free electricity, water, fire wood, as well as employers' contributions to Social Security and pension funds were not included in the above mentioned statistics even though these are benefits for the workers and have a further cost implication for the employers.

In general, the labour sector in the commercial agricultural sector looks healthy and we would like to thank the agricultural employers for this. There are a lot of other interesting and insightful statistics in the report that is available on the AEA (LWV) website.

[Click here](#) to download the report.

Bush feed workshop

The GiZ, together with Mrs Dagmar Honsbein of Ideal-X, are implementing a project to make the future use of bush feed sustainable. On Friday, 20 November a final workshop was held to provide feedback to all stakeholders on the progress of the project.

Future research needs were identified and will focus on machines, bush feed rations and training needs. The workshop identified the most urgent priority to be the cost effectiveness of bush feed. The possibility was discussed of outsourcing the bush feed project in the future to agricultural unions to ensure its sustainability. More information will be given at a later stage.

Onder-Nossob celebrated its 60th year of existence

On 21 November the Onder-Nossob Farmers' Association in the Aranos district celebrated their 60th year of existence. NAU leaders at regional and national level had the privilege of attending. The chairman, Johan Brand, and his team went out of their way to welcome members and guests. Of note were the exhibition of farm antiques and the stunningly decorated hall, with an old telephone pole in the middle, around which they danced to the beat of band music. Every guest went home with special souvenirs - a small tin cup for the welcome drinks and a wine glass with the FA's emblem and the celebration date.

In his commemorative speech Johan Brand referred to the first pioneers that tamed this world in the early 1950s. Predators, lions amongst them, were still plentiful like in the neighbouring Kalahari Gemsbok Park (now the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park). This red dune world shares borders with Botswana and South Africa. Part of the decorations in the foyer and on the tables were framed photographs of these first pioneers. Descendants of the second and third generation, who are still farming in the vicinity, were hosts at the tables while the fourth generation had their own party and played outside.

The NAU president, Pieter Gouws, highlighted the special achievements of the FA, with its approximately 40 active members. Of these members four served on the Executive Board of the NAU as representatives of the Mariental Regional Agricultural Union as well as an Agra Board member. "I have recently attended a meeting of your farmers' association and your bond and unity impressed me immensely," said Pieter as he also gave tribute to the supporting role of women in agriculture.

From the NAU's office the LPO chairman, Thinus Pretorius, and the executive manager, Roelie Venter, attended this event at the Onder-Nossob FA Hall that was at full capacity with 90 people. On regional level the NAU representatives Chris Smith, current chairman of the Mariental Regional Agricultural Union and Jako van Wyk, executive board member (member of Onder-Nossob) were present.

FA and other news

Helmeringhausen FA

They will host an informal year-end function on 28 November at 18:00 at the FA Centre. For more information contact Lizelle Murray at 063 283 309 or Whatsapp 081 7195689.

Karibib FA

Karibib FA will have a meeting on 28 November at 16:30 at the Etusis Lodge. Speakers are Riaan Oberholzer, Tobie le Roux, Adriaan Louw and Dr Herbert Schneider. For more information contact Doris Gladis at 061 237400 or doris@hemconamibia.com.

Witvlei FA

Witvlei BV will have the members' meeting and year-end function on 5 December at 17:00 in the FA Hall. For more information contact Renda Grobbelaar at 081 3041299 or kalkbult@iway.na.

Biomass Fair 2021

The Standard Bank Biomass Fair 2021 will take place from 3 to 5 June 2021 at Otjiwa Lodge, Otjiwarongo. On 3 June will be the research symposium, on the 4th the conference and on 5 June the Expo. Details available from Roelien Coffee, 081 1240081, roelien@biomassfair.com.na.

Agra ProVision courses

DATE	SUBJECT	PLACE	COST
1-2 December	Hydroponics & Aquaponics	Windhoek	N\$2 750
7-8 December	Pasture Management	Windhoek	N\$2 750
8-9 December	Horticulture	Windhoek	N\$2 750

For more information contact Agra ProVision at 061 290 9208 or apvtraining@agra.com.na

Channel 7

Three highlights from the Afrikaans programme *Landbou Joernaal* at 06:00 on Saturday:

- Dr Anja Boshoff will give us the Meat Board's perspective on the foot and mouth disease outbreak and more information on the recovery from it.

- Knowledge is power! This is also true for bush fires. Who better than Michael Degè to tell us more about this?
- Does a lamb harvest of 173% sound too good to be true? Come and listen to what Chris Burgess of *Landbouweekblad* has to say about precision feeding.

A re-broadcast of Saturday's *Landbou Joernaal* takes place on Wednesday evenings from 20:00. Channel 7 can also be heard on their website at www.k7.com.na or on their cell phone app or on DStv Audio Channel 825. Enquiries and requests can be sent via SMS to 1023 with the code **landbou**. Like, share & follow the FB-page, Landbou op K7, for interesting agri-info.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: THE MAIN INGREDIENT OF STARDOM IS THE REST OF THE TEAM – John Wooden

Exchange Rate NAD (19 – 25 Nov 2020)

	Nov	EURO	USD	POUND	PULA
<i>Thursday</i>	19	18.317	15.458	20.454	1.390
<i>Friday</i>	20	18.139	15.297	20.338	1.378
<i>Saturday</i>	21	18.283	15.418	20.487	1.389
<i>Sunday</i>	22	18.272	15.411	20.465	1.388
<i>Monday</i>	23	18.250	15.432	20.521	1.395
<i>Tuesday</i>	24	18.208	15.331	20.495	1.385
<i>Wednesday</i>	25	18.173	15.263	20.377	1.378