

JULY 2023

Farmers Guide

The Best of Zimbabwean Farming

**US\$50 000,
Brahman
Bull**

**Tobacco farmers
hail new
genetics**



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caution to keep
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Editor's Note

Once again, welcome to another exciting edition of Farmers Guide, the magazine dedicated to providing you with the latest news, trends, and insights on all things farming. This guide is designed to help you with all aspects of agriculture, from planting and harvesting to marketing.

Profound gratitude goes to everyone who contributed to the development of this publication, our subscribers, and our audience at large for the constructive feedback that we have been receiving from our previous edition. To our advertisers, we would like to express our appreciation for the continued support as we take your brands to another level.

Agriculture is getting more and more diverse, it has been the main source of income for many Zimbabweans and Africa at large.

Many farmers are hungry and thirst for knowledge on how to be successful and this is what the Farmers Guide is geared to do, disseminating information to stakeholders.

Technology is transforming agriculture, from precision farming to automation, and it is helping farmers to work smarter and more efficiently. In this latest edition we featured experts in digital farming to explain how farming is transforming. Find out more in this magazine on how world of farming is being digitalized.

Many poultry farmers are losing their investment as they lack enough knowledge on how to raise disease free chicken. In this magazine we delve into the procedures starting from disease prevention, preparation, and litter management. So relax, take a breathe and learn.

Following a request from fellow farmers we have also tabled a guide on how to grow watermelon.

As always, Farmers Guide magazine is committed to providing you with practical

advice and tips that you can use in your own farming operations. Whether you're a small-scale farmer or a large agribusiness, we hope that this edition will inspire you to continue pushing the boundaries of what's possible.

Thank you for your continued support, and happy reading!



Crucial Kuwanga

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US\$50 000, Brahman bull

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The Brahman bull which was voted best at the 2023 Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) is reported to be now valued at US\$50 000.

In a statement the Brahman cattle breeder Morgan Sibanda is reported to have rejected the bidding price of US\$16 000 at the Zimbabwe National Bull Sale 2023 and a private offer of US\$30 000.

The coveted bull, with American origins, was voted the best, in yet another show of pedigree and genetic superiority at highest levels.

Sibanda, a businessman and architect by profession, started his Brahman project in 2015 and imported most of his cattle from South Africa. He then bought Noble se-men from the US and produced his own champion.

To a layman, such figures are



gobsmacking. How can one bull be worth US\$50 000 when farmers around the country regularly struggle to fetch even a fraction of that for their beasts?

The answer to that question is that the Brahman is not just another

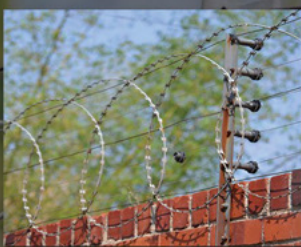
ordinary breed of cattle. This is an animal that needs careful and painstaking breeding if it is to attain its full potential.

The Brahman is an American breed of zebuine-taurine hybrid beef cattle, with Indi-an origins.

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Tobacco farmers hail new genetics

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Growers of tobacco in Zimbabwe have welcomed the introduction of new climate-smart tobacco genetics which are set to benefit farmers outside the traditional tobacco-growing regions, a development which will see the output growing in leaps and bounds.

The new tobacco genetics are T78, T79, T80, and T81 which are on trial.

Spearheaded by Kutsaga Research Station growers outside traditional tobacco growing regions are expected to benefit from new hybrids introduced for the 2023-24 tobacco growing season.

Traditionally, tobacco production in Zimbabwe was concentrated in the north, central and eastern parts of the country, with varieties developed specifically to cater for these regions.

In a statement, Kutsaga Research Station Chief Executive Officer Dr Frank Magama highlighted the need for research in transforming the agriculture sector, while Zimbabwe Tobacco Growers Association president Mr George Seremwe applauded the government interventions in the sector.

“The Research itself is the bedrock of the country’s economy, 83 percent of our revenue comes from research and we are focusing more on research so that we

offer Zimbabwe growers the advantages of profitability and sustainability which will empower the farmer. We are also diversifying our farming so that we fit into National Development Strategy One,” said Dr Magama.

“We want to thank the government for interventions in cushioning farmers so that they realise a profit. The government is also protecting farmers from unscrupulous individuals,” said Mr Seremwe.

The Deputy Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Honourable Davis Marapira revealed that the country targets to export more than 300 million



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4 inches



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volumes of tobacco ever recorded in Zimbabwe this is in comparison to 198 million kgs of tobacco recorded during the same period last year and was valued at US\$605 million, deliveries at the floors are now low and stakeholder consultations are underway on the official closure of the floors.”

The trajectory is partly attributed to government interventions. Tobacco is a strategic element for socio-economic development, and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe ranks the golden leaf among the top five foreign currency-earning commodities for the country. The sector's growth is expected to continue, as the country seeks to develop and strengthen its agricultural industry.

Zimbabwe has a long history of tobacco farming, and the crop has been one of the major foreign currency earners for the southern African country for many years.

However, production and earnings have been low in the past two decades due to challenges such as fluctuations in global tobacco prices, the impact of climate change, and limited access to credit.

→ kilogrammes of the golden leaf this marketing season. “Our mandate is to provide elite varieties, science-based practical information, services and products to enable the attainment of the set target of 300 million kg as outlined in the Tobacco Value Chain Transformation Plan,” he said.

However, data from the Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB) shows that Zimbabwe has seen a 45%

increase in tobacco earnings this selling season to over US\$890 million. TIMB spokesperson Chelesani Moyo Tsarwe commented that the focus is now on increasing output and consolidating current gains. “The 2022/ 2023 tobacco selling season has been progressing very well as of day 90 TIMB had recorded a total of 290 million kgs of tobacco valued at US\$880 million, this is the highest ever



Livestock farmers lament lack of full insurance cover



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Many livestock farmers in Zimbabwe are losing their investments to uncertainties and risk associated with their livelihood as the livestock farming sector has been plagued by inadequate insurance coverage for long.

In a research gathered by Farmers' Guide many livestock farmers are only covered by insurance during transportation of the livestock from one point to another.

Despite insurance for agriculture being a very important component for production, livestock full cover insurance has traditionally been ignored.

"What we've seen from a livestock perspective is that insurers want to insure trivial issues like maybe you're transporting your livestock from point A to X. They don't want to insure real issues that are a serious threat to farmers.

"For example, we have theileriosis which

is a serious tick-borne disease decimating and almost wiping off people's herds and that is where insurance should come in to say, 'as a farmer, we are insuring your animals on terms and conditions that will do ABCD,'" said Peter Maduva a Nyanga based livestock specialist.

He further added that farmers are ready to carry the burden as long as their investment is covered.

"Even if the premiums are going to be a bit higher because of the risk involved, at least as a farmer you know that you are covered in the event that the disease finds itself in your area of operation. But right now, livestock farmers are not covered," he added.

However, a new agricultural index-based insurance is set to revolutionise the industry and bring much-needed security to the farming community.

Spearheaded by Insurance and Pensions Commission (IPEC), the new agricultural index aims to provide comprehensive coverage for farmers based on predetermined indices such as weather

patterns and crop yields.

This innovative approach to insurance will help mitigate against climate-related risks such as drought, excess rains and cyclones.

The payout is based on a pre-determined index and not on actual loss suffered. The good examples are area yield and weather index insurance.

Shadreck Makombe, president of the Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers' Union expressed his support for the initiative, emphasising the need for insurance in the agricultural sector.

"This is long overdue and like in the past, we, as the Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union, support the IPEC in their endeavours. Insurance companies themselves should be forward-looking and aggressive in marketing their products because agriculture in Zimbabwe lacks insurance," he said.

"So, given the situation, this is the best news and we support it. We also would applaud all those who have made inroads in making sure agriculture is secured and the risks are mitigated."

Zimbabwe Farmers' Union president Abdul Nyathi echoed Makombe's sentiments, underscoring the importance of insurance for farmers.

"We do really need insurance as farmers but we would like to urge insurers to explain it to the farmers. They should explain how it will benefit the farmer, including the risks associated with it," he said.

"A reckless farmer can bring the disease into your farming area and suddenly your lifetime investment is wiped out. Yet, if there was insurance, farmers can have some fall back and some can have some means of bouncing back.

"So, yes insurance is a very vital and important component in terms of any form of production and that includes crop and livestock production but the insurance companies should consider insuring very pertinent and important components of livestock production rather than having trivial coverages which really don't amount to anything of importance in the final analysis."

HDC seeks to advance in blueberry production



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Horticultural Development Council (HDC) is seeking to further the production of blueberries in the country as market demand increases

In a proposal submitted to the Zimbabwe Investment Development Agency (ZIDA), HDC also seeks to advance in the production of coffee and flowers, a development that will cost about US\$140 million.

"The HDC is advancing the production of blueberries, citrus, coffee and flowers. To this end HDC submitted its plans to Zida, which gave details on the proposal to secure an additional 4 000 hectares for blueberry production estimated to cost US\$140 million to develop," the report read in part. "For coffee production, HDC plans to establish and manage 1 000ha of coffee in the Eastern Highlands (Manicaland) and support 1 300 small- and medium-scale coffee producers to produce 2 220 tonnes per year with a gross value of over US\$11 million annually and

creating more than 2 000 jobs.

"Rose production is expected to increase with a further 800ha driven by increased demand from South African, Russia and the Far East markets estimated to be worth around US\$277 million in export proceeds."

In respond to the proposal, ZIDA said it will help in providing facilitation and assistance with land identification and

acquisition, creation of special export horticulture economic zones.

In addition, ZIDA will also create a specialised export horticultural parks for value addition and beneficiation so that the council is able to achieve its set target of a US\$1 billion horticulture industry by 2030.

According to HDC, the country's horticultural exports increased from US\$6 million in 1988 to US\$103 million in 1997. It says exports grew by an average rate of 25% from 1998 to 2004, before peaking above US\$250 million.

The council also revealed that it was working on the China Protocol for Citrus with the aim to follow closely for blueberries and avocados as well as other products last.

"Market diversification will be key in order to maintain competitiveness in the sector," HDC said.

Blueberry is a small dark blue berry indigenous to North America, but now spread as a cultivated crop around the world. It is a perennial plant related to the cranberry and the huckleberry. World production is over 850 000 tonnes a year.



From cash crops to food production, TIMB diversifies

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The Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB) has announced its accreditation from Global Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) which will see them diversifying into food and fibre production.

In a statement, TIMB spokesperson Chelesani Moyo said the development is not a substitute for tobacco but rather a complement to sustain and improve farmers' livelihoods.

"The intention of diversification, therefore, is not to outrightly substitute the tobacco enterprise, but to complement it while sustaining and improving farmers' livelihoods and promoting sustainability.

"Including alternative and alternate crops to tobacco farmers' portfolio enhances farmers' income as well as household food and nutrition security," she said.

With vast certified trainers and farm

assurers, TIMB will be engaging smart farming solutions during the 2023/24 production season to guide willing farmers to produce food and fibre crops that meet global export standards.

"Tobacco growers are used to growing a high-value export crop. Therefore, we will employ innovation to enable successful agricultural diversification by producing alternative high-value export crops that meet the international market's quality standards," TIMB spokesperson

To spearhead meaningful diversification, in line with the industry's blueprint, the tobacco value chain transformation strategy, TIMB acquired Global GAP's flagship standard, the integrated farm assurance plant scope V6.

It takes a holistic approach to responsible farming and producers are trained to improve farm management, and operational efficiencies as well as protect the environment, and access to international markets through compliance to a globally

recognised standard.

TIMB is also pursuing other standards and in-depth supply chain studies while offering consultancy services on setting up agricultural export businesses, customs clearance and linking farmers to developed markets.

The diversification came at a time when the Zimbabwe's tobacco off-takers have expressed the need for sustainability in the industry, while the World Health Organisation's (WHO) framework convention for tobacco control outlines economic and legal measures to reduce the demand for tobacco.

This has resulted in a marked decline in global tobacco consumption, even in markets that are key to Zimbabwe such as China, which has exposed many small-scale farmers who were already bearing the brunt of seasonal and volatile incomes which were increasingly being affected by climate change, market demand and other factors.



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END OF THE 2023 AUCTION TOBACCO MARKETING SEASON

After consultations with all stakeholders, the Board wishes to advise that the official date of closure for the 2023 auction floors is **31 JULY**.

However, growers will still be able to sell their auction tobacco through a mop-up sale. The final auction clean up sales will be held on **Wednesday 30 AUGUST 2023**.

Contract sales will continue to operate until such a time when individual contractors have fully received all their tobacco.

The closure was approved by the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Hon Dr Anxious Jongwe Masuka.

For any additional information please contact TIMB on telephone numbers 0772145166-9 or 0279-22082/21982 or 025-3439 or 067-24268/29246 or 0277-2700 or 064-7280 or 0271-6772 or E-mail: info@timb.co.zw

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AMA eyes DRC market for livestock

Lloyd Matare

matareloydt@gmail.com

The Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) is seeking to engage the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) market with the authority urging livestock sector players to take advantage of vast opportunities in the export of their products to one of Africa's most populous nations.

Speaking after a joint business trip which included officials from ZimTrade, AMA chief executive officer, Clever Isaya said the DRC had limitless opportunities for livestock sector players.

"We had a team which was in Kinshasa early July to understand the market needs, create export synergies and engage the DRC market and understand its needs. What we realised is that there are massive opportunities in the country that our businesspeople can take advantage of," he said.

"DRC is a net importer of goods and services. There are few manufacturing companies in DRC and the country relies heavily on imports. Most of the beef and poultry products are imported from South Africa, Zambia, India, New Zealand and Belgium. This means there is a huge opportunity for Zimbabwean products in light of the AfCFTA (African Continental Free Trade Area) which seeks to promote intra-African trade," he added.

The AMA chief said several companies in Kinshasa had expressed interest in engaging local companies to export products to the DRC, provided they meet the required quality and can match or offer better prices compared to other countries.

Beef from India is currently landing in Kinshasa at: T-bone (US\$15), beef steak (US\$14), rear beef quarter (US\$7,50)

and beef quarter topside (US\$7).

The trip was a follow up to engagements that have been made since 2021 when ZimTrade led a business delegation of beef and poultry farmers and AMA to Kinshasa to gather market intelligence to facilitate business-to-business engagements.

Speaking during the official opening of a trade mission in May, Zimbabwean

ambassador to the DRC, Johannes Tomana said trade relations between the two countries provided the basis for more productive engagements.

"Zimbabwe and DRC enjoy strong political relations, which provides a good foundation for building stronger economic relations. Both countries are members of SADC (Southern African Development Community) regional body



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which provides a platform for companies to trade duty-free and quota-free on a reciprocal basis on qualifying products," Tomana said.

An official from the Zimbabwean embassy in the DRC, who requested anonymity, said the only way to appease the spirits of Zimbabweans who perished taking part in the 1998 DRC civil war was to invest in that country. DRC, whose population is five times bigger than Zimbabwe's at nearly 90 million, is one of the biggest landmasses in Africa. The capital Kinshasa has a population of 15 million, almost equal to that of Zimbabwe, highlighting the country's huge consumer base which Zimbabwean farmers and companies can take advantage of.

The country is endowed with vast mineral resources, but heavily relies on imports.



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Financial literacy promotes regenerative agriculture

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Farming is a complex business which requires accurate records and careful financial management. Without good monitoring of income and expenses it is impossible to track the performance of farm activities and make informed decisions. Smallholder sesame farmers in Zimbabwe are managing their farm without structurally recording and analysing costs. The insufficient insight into income and expenditures results in taking uninformed decisions and facing

unnecessary risks. Moreover, the lack of data and reliable financial records makes it difficult for farmers to access finance from financial institutions. This makes them depended on informal money lenders (IMLs) that charge extremely high interest rates.

Limited financial knowledge by most rural farmers has become a barricade to their ability to earn more.

Agriculture is their primary source of income, farmers must acquire financial literacy skills to successfully set financial goals, plan and manage their wealth.

This came out during a financial literacy seminar held by the Adam Molai Foundation and GetBucks Microfinance Bank Limited for the Dorowera community in Mutoko, Mashonaland East province.

Mrs Nomagugu Nyaundi, the foundation's executive director, said the seminar's goal was to enhance and promote regenerative agriculture.

"Agriculture is the primary source of income for many rural residents, but their limited financial knowledge hinders their ability to earn more.

"By providing this training, people are better informed about managing their finances.

"This initiative holds immense potential to uplift this agricultural community, promote entrepreneurship and spur development in Dorowera," she said.

This then call for more for financial literacy training to educate farmers so they can modernise their practices and see them as a full time business.

This was however furthered by GetBucks regional manager Mr Tirivanhu Blessing Gombiro who said the training will create and expand capital investment

He also said the initiative will uplift the agricultural community, promote entrepreneurship and drive development.

"Our aim is that this training will help create opportunities for capital investment, enabling farmers to expand and modernise their agricultural practices or individuals to start running their enterprises as businesses.

"Through our partnership with the Adam Molai Foundation, the community will have access to microfinance products and services tailored to their specific needs," Mr Gombiro said.

The seminar saw 44 farmers receive knowledge on a wide range of topics that are vital for the community's financial well-being.



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Tapping into the world of digital farming

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Technological advancement has proven to be impacting all sectors including agriculture one of the most important business sectors across the world. The need to advance agriculture to the next level has pushed farmers and inventors to think outside the



box thus coming up with digital farming.

The advancement in every year is proving to be advancing more and more. However, not all the countries across the world have managed to tap into the world of digital farming the reasons being: the need to keep the culture of farming using human labor and the other being the need to get rid of the idea of unemployment as some of these

Advances will steal jobs from passionate farmers...With the need to hear more on digital farming below is an interview with one of the young farmers from the University of Zimbabwe who expresses how he feels about digital farming

informing and educating other fellow farmers.

Born on 09 January 1998, Patrick Ndowa is a 25 year old young Zimbabwean farmer and Agriprenuer. He is a young leader author and speaker who believes that faith God give true meaning to humans lives and that service to humanity is the best work of life.

A student of Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering by the University of Zimbabwe, an active citizen and Global Shaper.

Qsn. Introduction to digital farming: What is Digital farming?

Ans. Digital Farming is the efficient use of technology and digital transformation in the space of agriculture to allow effective growth and development of crops and animals. It is the integration of financial and field-level records for complete farm activity management

Qsn. Where is the adoption of digital farming growing?

Ans. The adoption of Digital Farming have been growing in some parts of Africa as it has already been established in most developed countries. The research from countries with same or similar Zimbabwean agricultural conditions were then selected in this review. Notably, there are disparities in complexity and level of digitalization between the developing and developed countries. Unlike in the developing countries, digitalised agriculture is more advanced and highly applied in developed countries. In Zimbabwe specifically, application of digitalized agriculture is key towards the commercial farmers than the smallholder communal farmers.

The application of digital agriculture (e -agriculture) has gained momentum world over in recent years but still low in Zimbabwe where it is more common to the highly literate and resource endowed farming communities than poorly resourced farmers.

Qsn. Why do you think the adoption





→ of digital farming is gaining popularity?

Ans. The adoption of Digital Farming is gaining popularity because of a couple of reasons which I might like to term as developments. The digital farming is a useful modern technology applied in agricultural production systems in enhancing precision application of resources e.g water, fertilizers, pesticides etc increasing the technical efficiency that translates into high farm outputs (both quantity and quality).

Machine Learning (ML) which is a subset of AI, developed to handle various challenges faced during the formation of knowledge-based farming systems. Therefore, digitalization of agriculture ranges from the use of simple offline programmed production systems installed into information and communications technology (ICTs) gadgets to complex algorithms run by computers.

In advanced digitalisation, algorithms are applied in different agronomic practices of crops as well as in animal husbandry. It also provides a relatively new dimension in enhancing farm efficiency among the smallholder communal farmers in Zimbabwe through the use of ICT therefore makes it more attractive and user friendly for good quality and quantity of produce.

Qsn. How has it impacted Zimbabwe so far as a developing country?

Ans. Zimbabwe as a developing country has been to a lesser extent so far been

impacted by digital farming. There have been a lot of drawbacks but significant progress is being made to adapt to the new changes in farming specifically, application of digitalized agriculture is skewed towards the commercial farmers than the smallholder communal farmers of which the biggest population of farmers in Zimbabwe is smallholder farmers. The application of digital agriculture (e-agriculture) has gained momentum world over in recent years but

Still low in Zimbabwe where it is more common to the highly literate and resource endowed farming communities than poorly resourced farmers which is the majority.

Qsn. Have you ever implemented new techniques or processes of farming?

Ans. Of course I've implemented these new techniques, me being a student of Electronics and Telecommunications Engineering and a Farmer at the same



time has taught me lessons on how I can merge these 2 fields together through research and theoretical knowledge into practical use. There are some basics that every farmer should just make use and yet there are some expensive and complex that can be adopted with time and concerted effort.

Qsn. What is one of the biggest changes you have observed in the agriculture sector of Zimbabwe?

Ans. One of the biggest changes I have observed in the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe besides the use of Digital Technology is the increase in the number of young farmers who are getting into the space of farming. There have been a wave of young people being interested in agriculture, production and manufacturing, bringing about ground breaking and innovative ideas to bring about sustainable development in the sector. The only challenge is land ownership but to those who are in it they're trying their level best.

Qsn. What do you think is the most impactful innovation in agriculture from the past 3 years for both small and large scale farmers?

Ans. Digital Technologies. Definitely I cannot say how much impact this innovation have made in both commercial and small scale farmers. It has changed the way even business is down from production to selling and even the whole value chain.

Qsn. Which tools do you think are essential to have a successful farm?

Ans. Well it's very much subjective and very broad a question to answer. It mainly depends on your area of focus and your ideological perspective. But there are universal and basic "tools" like proper water and sanitation, shelter, warmth, security, protection from harsh weather conditions, adequate food among many others.



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Qsn. **As a young farmer, what do you think will make Zimbabwe continue progressing well in farming?**

Ans. I would rather say my basic 3 is Land Ownership for progressive and productive farmers which can be a matter of monitoring and evaluation through the responsible authorities, then

Supporting and Financing Farmers by the government, this goes a long way to foster productivity and economic growth, then lastly Investment in Digital Infrastructure and young farmers. With these 3 I believe we will reach the mountain top of farming in Zimbabwe and will make us retain our bread basket status again

Qsn. **What are the crops that are not being given attention but are likely to boost the agricultural sector?**

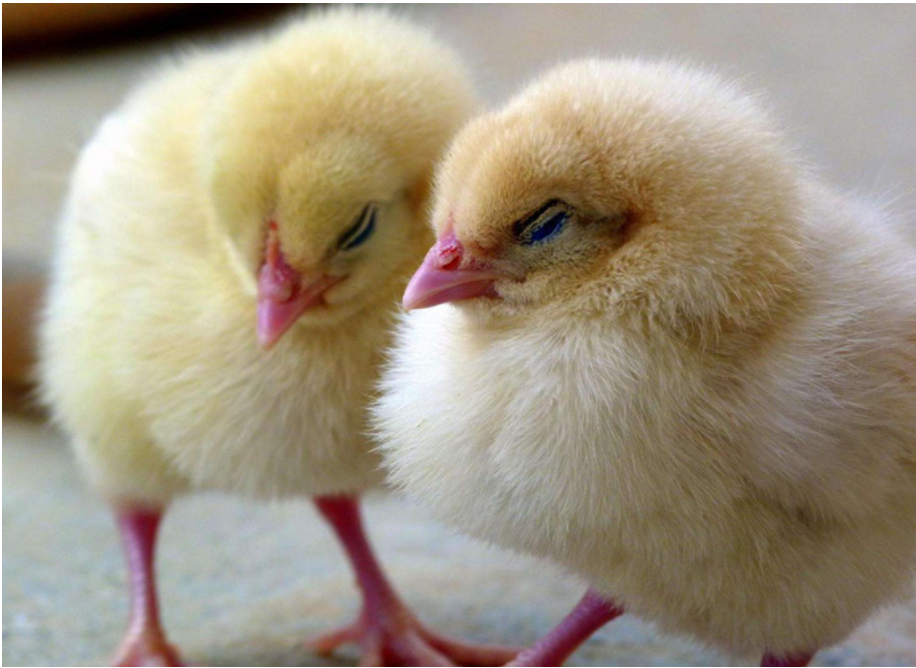
Ans. I believe the basic crops that are the bread and butter for everyday lives. The ones that are a part of every meal, not neglecting the cash crops tobacco and cotton. We haven't been giving these much attention as they require commercial farming rather than small scale production.

Qsn. **What would you like to advice other farmers out there?**

Ans. My 2 cents is that, farming is a profession of HOPE, and once you develop an attitude of faith and trust in what you're doing you're on the right path. Congratulations for STARTING because that's the most difficult part and by that you're halfway done. All the best in your endeavors and keep updating and upgrading yours skills, knowledge and expertise with the global trends.



Care and caution to keep poultry disease-free



"Coccidiosis is a bacterium that's already present in the chicken's guts, but it can become a problem if it increases rapidly. Any stress placed on the chickens will cause the bacteria to multiply. This includes low temperatures, lack of water for too long, or too much handling."

According to Bronkhorst, chickens can develop a cold due to poor air quality or low temperatures, and telltale signs are sneezing or coughing.

Diarrhoea can also be a problem, but is not usually serious. It can be caused by a high intake of water.

Bronkhorst pays close attention to the colour of the birds' faeces, as this can provide clues about their general health.

"A maroon colour indicates blood in the faeces, which is most likely caused by coccidiosis. If the faeces is white, it could be a sign of a cold, as the [mucus] would cause the whiteness."

In sum, a combination of the correct living conditions and good biosecurity will help keep diseases at bay, external parasites off the farm, and the flock in good condition.

Preparation

Preparing the chicken houses for the arrival of new chicks is crucial to maintaining their good health. For Bronkhorst, this means that everything

As every chicken producer can attest, keeping the birds in optimal health is a finicky task, and failure can lead to serious losses. This means that a meticulous biosecurity plan is a top priority. Lindi Botha spoke to broiler producer Ben-Chris Bronkhorst about putting the right systems in place and ensuring that they run efficiently.

Ben-Chris Bronkhorst says that chickens should be observed closely for any signs of illness, such as coughing or sneezing.

Poultry farmer Ben-Chris Bronkhorst of Hazyview, Mpumalanga, is quick to point out that he is paranoid about the health of his chickens.

"I keep an eye on them and always look out for a problem. If I don't consciously do so, I can miss something and easily lose 100 chickens overnight to an illness.

"I instruct my staff to do the same. Are the birds sneezing, lying down too much, shaking their heads, or just generally too inactive? These are the first signs that something is amiss and I need to remedy the situation."

While Bronkhorst has been farming

for only three years, the energy and passion with which he has taken over the family poultry business, Eliza Chicks, has ensured a well-run operation with minimal incidence of disease outbreaks in the flock.

Eliza Chicks produces 4 000 broilers a week. Day-old chicks are sourced in Ermelo, Mpumalanga, and Pretoria, Gauteng, and sold at six weeks, mostly to the informal market.

Diseases

Bronkhorst notes that while avian influenza is the most economically devastating disease for a poultry farm, it is rare, and he managed to keep it at bay during the big outbreak in 2017.

"But you have to have all the protocols in place to ensure that if an outbreak does occur, it doesn't reach your farm. And having the correct procedures in place helps to ensure that other diseases don't develop on the farm either."

He highlights coccidiosis and the common cold as the most prevalent issues to watch out for.





from the drinkers and feed bowls to the walls and floors have to be cleaned properly and sanitised.

He uses a combination of Virokill (a formalin-based product) and chlorine to ensure thorough cleaning.

"Virokill is made for use in chicken houses, so it's safe. Formalin is very strong, and you need to wear protective clothing while applying it. The chlorine kills bacteria and also eliminates bad smells. The combination works very well."

Before a new cycle of chickens is placed in the houses, the entire area, including the canvas sides, is cleaned thoroughly. Old litter and wood shavings are removed, and the area is hosed down with a Virokill-chlorine mixture applied with a pressure washer.

"This also gets rid of any preen oil from the chickens that lands up on the surfaces," explains Bronkhorst.

"I then go over the area again with formalin, and leave the area untouched for three weeks. This is long enough to kill off any trace of bacteria, because there's nothing left for them to live off."

"Everything that's removable, such as the drinkers and feeders, is dried in the sun so that the heat can further sterilise the equipment. Then it's also left to rest for three weeks."

Litter management

It's crucial to remove every trace of manure and used litter from the chicken houses as well as the farm, explains Bronkhorst, as they attract flies and wild birds.

"If the wild birds get too close to the houses they can end up inside them, which means there's a risk that any diseases they carry could be transferred to the flock. This is of particular concern because Eliza Chicks isn't the only chicken farm in the area. The wild birds can transfer diseases from one farm to another."

He adds that the strong ammonia smell of the manure in the litter can also cause respiratory problems in the chickens, leading to colds.

JM STOCK FEEDS

PRICE List

ROAD RUNNER FEED	
10KG STARTER	- \$5
25KG STARTER	- \$12
50KG STARTER	- \$22
10KG GROWERS	- \$5
25KG GROWERS	- \$12
50KG GROWERS	- \$20
50KG BREEDERS	- \$20
25KG BREEDERS	- \$12
10KG BREEDERS	- \$5
CONCENTRATE	- \$28

BROILER FEED	
50KG STARTER	- \$27
50KG GROWERS	- \$26
50KG FINISHER	- \$25
CONCENTRATE	- \$30

LAYERS MASH	
5KG LAYERS	- \$3
25KG LAYERS	- \$15
50KG LAYERS	- \$24

PIG FEED	
50KG PIG CREEP	- \$26
50KG PIG GROWER	- \$24
50KG LACTATING	- \$25
50KG DRY SOW MEAL	- \$24
50KG CONCENTRATE	- \$30
50KG PIG BOAR & SOW	- \$24

PREMIXES

PIG GROWER	- \$20
PIG BREEDERS	- \$20

FEED ADDITIVES
Lysine, Threonine Methionine
Mcp, Chlorine Chloride

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A number of crop farmers in the area collect litter and manure from Eliza Chicks for use as fertiliser. And as Bronkhorst is keen to have it removed as quickly as possible, he gives it to these farmers for free.

He also ensures that the litter stays dry, as wet litter is cold and the chickens can get sick as a result.

"Some farmers rake up the wood shavings and spread them out again so that they dry out and become aerated, but I prefer to replace them completely. If I walk into the houses and there's a bad smell, I replace the litter. In the rainy season this is done every second week.

"Wet shavings create ideal conditions for

bacteria to flourish in. This is the perfect environment for diseases to develop and spread. Also, if it's wet, the chickens get cold and start piling up on top of each other to stay warm.

"It does cost me more to replace the shavings so frequently, but chickens that live in a clean and healthy environment simply grow better."

Bronkhorst prefers wood shavings over sawdust, as the latter is very fine; if kicked up or disturbed, it creates dust, which is detrimental to the birds' health. The shavings come from a nearby sawmill and are sterilised before use.

The biosecurity of feed storage facilities should also be well thought out, he





explains, as they, too, can be a source of disease.

"The feed attracts rats and wild birds, so it should be properly sealed or in an area where they can't access the feed. It's best to have a rat-control system, and I put bird seed in a designated area to draw the wild birds away from the chickens."

A new flock

Bronkhorst uses his own trucks to collect the day-old chicks, which gives him more control over biosecurity; he cleans and disinfects the vehicles and cages with the same products used on the poultry houses.

"The chick suppliers fumigate the trucks when they arrive to collect the chicks to ensure there are no pathogens or bacteria present. They also have very strict biosecurity protocols in place, so I know I'm getting healthy chicks from the start. The onus is then on me to ensure they stay that way throughout their life cycle."

The chicks receive a stress-relieving formula in their drinking water when they arrive at Eliza Chicks to calm them down after being moved from one farm to the other.

Bronkhorst emphasises the importance of adequate spacing in maintaining flock health.

"You can have the healthiest chicks, but if they're cramped in their houses,



they're prone to stress, which makes them susceptible to infection. I work on eight to 10 chickens/m² [in summer], but I can increase this to 12 chickens/m² in winter."

As the chicks grow, Bronkhorst and his team gradually raise the drinkers and feeders off the ground to a height that can be accessed by the smallest chicken in the flock. This prevents the birds from stepping into the containers and soiling the feed and water, which would also contribute to disease that would infect the entire flock.

The staff walk on footpaths at the entrances of all the houses to ensure that bacteria don't

spread from one area to the next. Customers who come to collect chickens have their vehicles disinfected, and also have to use the footpaths.

Bronkhorst says that achieving total coverage with disinfectants is his biggest challenge in terms of biosecurity.

"Absolutely everything has to be cleaned properly. This means ensuring that the products are mixed correctly, and managing the staff who apply the products. There's always a concern that it hasn't been done adequately and that harmful bacteria will slip in."

Bronkhorst's degree in labour relations has come in handy, as he spends much of his time training his staff on biosecurity measures and his management of the health of the chickens.

"My staff play an enormous role in successful biosecurity. They not only carry out the applications, but remain amongst the chickens all day to keep an eye open for any problems."

Email Ben-Chris Bronkhorst at benchris752@gmail.com.





Watermelon Farming Guide



Production season	Best grown in summer between August and March		
Area to plant	1ha/10 000m2 (100mx100m)	1000m2 (20mx50m)	100m2 (10mx10m)
Seed required	3 kg-5 kg	300g-500g	30g-50g
Plant population	5000-10 000	500-1 000	50-100
Plant spacing in row	90cm-150cm		
Spacing between rows	180cm to 200cm		
Compound D Fertilizer kg/ha	450-600	45-60	4.5-6
No Top dressing Required	N/A	N/A	N/A
Manure kg/ha	10 000-15 000	1 000-1 500	100-250
Days to Harvest	80 to 90 days depending on the variety		
Harvest duration	20-30 days		
See Squashes common pests and diseases and their control for chemical options.			
Irrigation	Overhead, Pivot is the most suitable method. Ensure the soil is moist at all times.		
Post-harvest handling	Fruits are cut and harvested individually		
Normal packaging	Fruits	Fruits	Fruits
Estimated Yield (kg/ha)	8 000 -12 000	800-1 200	80-120



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL SHOW

SOCIETIES 2023 PROVISIONAL CALENDAR

SOCIETY	DATES	CONTACT PERSON	PHONE & EMAIL
Bulawayo/ZITF	25-29 April	Natalie Adlam	0712 401 424 byoagricsoc@netconnect.co.zw
Midlands	17-20 August	V. Chikukwa	0773 466 554 chikukwav@yahoo.com
Bindura		J. Mukwena	0714 115 430 mazoweshow@gmail.com
Masvingo	28 September - 1 October	Mrs Marevesa	0772 621 052 masvingoshowociety@gmail.com
Kadoma	28-30 September	Mrs Kapangura	0772 734645
Chipinge	7- 10 September	V. Banda	0713 804 174 viebanda68@gmail.com
Chinhoyi/ Mash West	13- 16 September	I. Bodzo	0776073169/0717205444 chinhoyishowsociety@gmail.com
Gwanda/Mat South		Fallone	0772 801603 matsouthagricsociety@gmail.com
Marondera/ Mash East	27- 30 September	Tendai	0773 917 920 mepassmarondera@gmail.com
Mutare/ Manicaland	21 - 24 September	Rusero	0772356356 manicashowcase@gmail.com
Lowveld/Chiredzi	3-5 August	G. Murindagomo	0773 017 100 show@chiredzi.co.zw
Harare/ZAS		M. Miriyoni	0773045990 ppal@zas.co.zw
Hwange/Mat north	28 September - 01 October	P. Moyo	0776483659 matnorthagricshow@gmail.com



WEEKLY COMMODITY MARKET BULLETIN

Bulletin Number 29 of 2023

Date of Issue: 28 July 2023

GRAINS AND OILSEEDS

Table 1: Grains Producer Prices

Product	Buyer	Purchase Price (ZWL\$/t)	Contact Details	Payment
Maize	GMB	US\$335.00	0242-701885-99	Transfer
Sorghum	GMB (White)	US\$335.00	024 2-701885-99	Transfer
	Delta (Red)	US\$250.00	0712639336	Cash/Transfer
	Grainco	US\$300.00	0719834782	Cash/Transfer
Rapoko	GMB	US\$335.00	0242-704538	Transfer
Millet	GMB	US\$335.00	0242-701885-99	Transfer
Sugar beans	PHI	-	0776 688301	7 days Transfer
	Ace Field	US\$900.00	0772956010	Cash/Transfer
	Grainco	US\$1000/ZWL\$ at interbank	0719834782	Cash/Transfer
	GMB	-	0242-701885-99	Cash/Transfer
	Nutrie Foods	USD\$900.00 /ZWL\$ at interbank	0773210307	Transfer
	ProBrands	-	0775265862	-
Wheat	GMB- (Grade A)	-	0242-701885-99	Cash/Transfer
	GMB- (Other Grades)	US\$520.00	0242-701885-99	Cash/Transfer
	PHI	-	0773381825	-

🚩 All GMB prices have a local currency and a foreign currency component.

🚩 The wheat price is a pre-planting producer price.

OILSEEDS

Table 2: Oilseeds Producer Prices

Product	Buyer	Purchase Price (ZWL\$/t)	Contact Details	Payment
Groundnuts	GMB (without shells)	US\$500.00	0242-701885-99	Transfer
	ProBrands Pvt Ltd	-	0775265862	-
	Ace Field	US\$1050.00	0772956010	Cash/Transfer
	Nutrie Foods (without shells)	US\$1100.00	0773210307	Cash/Transfer
Soya beans	GMB	US\$580.00	0242-701885-99	Cash/Transfer
Sunflower	Pure Oil Industries	US\$385.00	0773059588	-
	Grainco	US\$400.00	0719834782	Cash/Transfer
	GMB	US\$696.00	0242-701885-99	Transfer
Round nuts	GMB	-	0242-701885-99	Transfer
Popcorn	ProBrands Pvt Ltd	US\$650.00/ZWL\$ at interbank	0775265862	-
Sesame	Open Sesame Pvt Ltd	US\$850.00	0772870105	Cash/Transfer
	GMB	US\$800.00	0242-701885-99	Transfer

 All GMB prices have a local currency and a foreign currency component.

HORTICULTURE

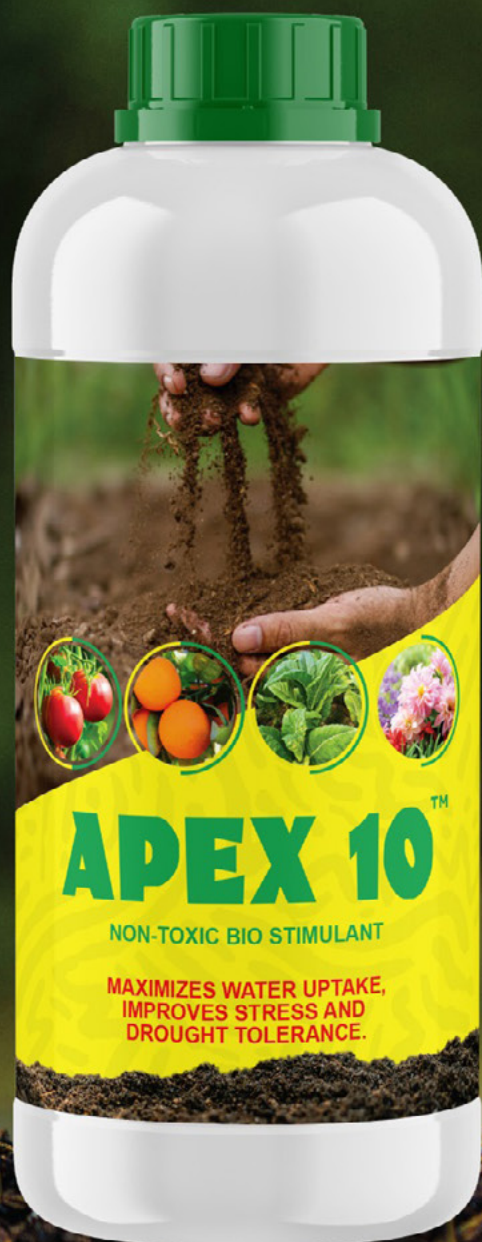
Table 3: Horticultural Produce Wholesale Prices as of 28 July 2023 at Harare Mbare Musika and Bulawayo CBD Market.

Commodity	Mbare Musika US\$		Bulawayo CBD Market US\$	
	21 July 2023	28 July 2023	21 July 2023	28 July 2023
Potatoes (medium) (kg)	0.40	0.50	0.50	0.60
Potatoes (large) (kg)	0.46	0.66	0.56	0.50
Tomatoes (kg)	0.50	0.43	0.50	0.53
Onions (dried) (kg)	1.40	0.93	0.98	0.98
Onions (fresh) (bundle)	1.50	1.00	1.20	1.20
Butternuts (kg)	1.42	1.00	0.50	1.00
Broccoli (kg)	1.50	2.00	1.50	2.00
Lettuce (per head)	1.00	0.50	0.75	0.50
Cauliflower (per kg)	0.75	1.50	1.50	2.00
Cabbages (per head)	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00
Covo (6.5kg)	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00
Sugar beans (kg)	1.00	1.25	1.10	1.10
Groundnuts (with shells) (kg)	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.25
Groundnuts (without shells)	0.95	1.10	1.10	1.20
Roundnuts (with shells) (kg)	0.70	-	-	-
Roundnuts (without shells)	0.95	0.80	0.80	1.00
Rice (local) (per kg)	2.00	2.00	-	-
Finger Millet (per kg)	0.80	0.80	0.75	0.80
Sorghum (per kg)	0.35	0.30	0.30	0.30
Sweet Potatoes (20l tin)	4.50	5.00	6.00	5.00
Yams (20l tin)	-	-	-	-
Carrots (per kg)	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00
Cucumbers (per kg)	0.50	1.00	0.50	1.50
Maize (dried) (20l tin)	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Green mealies (dozen)	2.50	3.00	-	-
Apples (local) (kg)	0.90	1.20	1.00	1.00
Bananas (kg)	0.28	0.30	0.50	0.30
Watermelon (head)	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00
Oranges (kg)	0.50	0.40	0.50	0.40
Garlic (kg)	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00
Ginger (kg)	1.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
Green Pepper (kg)	1.50	0.60	0.50	0.40
Matemba (20L tin)	40.00	44.00	40.00	44.00
Mopani worms (20l tin)	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
Eggs (crate)	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Okra (5l tin)	2.00	2.00	2.50	2.00
Broilers (per bird)	6.00	7.00	7.00	6.00

NB- Mbare market prices were provided by Emkambo.



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