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GRAIN MARKETING BOARD
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HEAD OFFICE

www.gmbdura.co.zw | publicrelations@gmbdura.co.zw

GMB fast-tracks distribution of top dressing fertiliser

■ 'Time to start preparations for winter wheat'

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GMB fast-tracks distribution of top dressing fertiliser

Edgar Vhera
Agriculture Specialist Writer

THE Grain Marketing Board (GMB) has allayed fears of a decline in cotton yields saying they were accelerating the disbursement of top-dressing fertiliser and chemicals to all growing areas to enable farmers to access and use them without delay.

A recent X (formerly twitter) post by GMB said with planting coming to a close, GMB was accelerating the distribution of top-dressing fertiliser under the Presidential Inputs Programme (PIP) adding that 87 percent of top-dressing fertiliser had so far been distributed to farmers.

This year, Government mandated GMB to also distribute cotton inputs in addition to cereals under the PIP.

This follows complaints by some farmers that they were only issued with seed and basal fertiliser minus top dressing arguing that the early planted crop was now in dire need of top-dressing fertiliser for enhancement of yields.

Cotton Council of Zimbabwe (CCOZ) chief executive officer Engineer Chris Murove hinted that main challenge affecting the early planted crop was the unavailability of top-dressing fertiliser and chemicals to control pests and diseases.

"The early planted crop now requires top-dressing fertiliser for improved yields. As farmers are scouting their fields, there is also need for chemicals to use to control pests and diseases," the CCOZ boss said.

Cotton Producers and Marketers Associ-

ation (CPMA) chairman, Mr Stewart Mubonderi concurred urging GMB to speed up delivery of top-dressing fertiliser and chemicals to farmers to control pests and diseases.

"We call upon the GMB to expedite delivery of chemicals to farmers as the good-looking crop needs to be maintained at all costs. Farmers are also encouraged to scout their fields for pests and diseases and ensure that the fields are weed free," he said.

Mr Mubonderi said the recent heavy rains deprived farmers of time to do weeding and therefore needed to acquire post-emergence herbicides to control weeds.

"The yield of a crop is a function of doing the right operations at the right time. Fertilisation, weeding and chemical applications must be done timely," Mr Mubonderi added.

Cotton Ginners Association (CGA) acting chairman Mr Caos Nzenze concurred saying though most of their members had finished planting, the few remaining must be encouraged to continue planting especially in areas that have started receiving rains now.

"Weeding, chemical application and thinning for a uniform crop are the main activities in fields currently. The crop is looking exceptionally good and this season appears to be good for the crop," he said.

Government has on the one hand announced the 4R concept that is focussed on good agronomic practices of right variety, right fertiliser/chemical, right placement and right time in order to increase

yield.

Meanwhile, the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe (Cottco) has embarked on a widespread drive to encourage farmers to expand their hectareage under cotton especially in areas that have received effective rains. Such areas include Muzarabani, Mushumbi, Machaya, Rushinga, Hoya in the Zambezi Valley, then Chiredzi, Checheche, Ngundu as well as Zhomba in the Lowveld, Chireya in Gokwe and Uzumba in Mashonaland East.

Statistics from the Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) show that inputs with potential to cover 306 113 hectares had been disbursed to 212 653 growers by all contractors as at January 19.

This represents 86 percent of the targeted national hectareage of 357 250. Seven of the registered contractors have given inputs to growers this season with Galaxy Cotton and Cangrow still to play ball.

Alliance Gineries, Zimbabwe Cotton Consortium and Agri-Value Chain have surpassed their revised target after achieving 115 percent, 124 and 109 respectively.

Innovative has disbursed 89 percent of its revised target followed by Cottco on 80, Southern Cotton Company at 69 and New Cotton Company at 61.

At least 4 591 701 kilogrammes of seed, 13 900 177 of basal fertiliser and 4 796 159 of lime have been disbursed by all contractors. The country initially set a target of 271 286 hectares before revising it upwards by 32 percent to 357 250.

'Time to start preparations for winter wheat'

Fildah Gwati

WITH the winter wheat season just a few months away, Government has called on farmers to start their preparations to ensure they do not miss production deadlines, as the nation moves to beat last season's wheat output.

Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development permanent secretary Professor Obert Jiri yesterday said although there was no targeted hectareage for the winter wheat yet, the country was pushing to surpass last season's yields to boost food security and have surplus for exports.

Last winter wheat season the country managed to cultivate 90 000 hectares.

Chief agronomist with the Ministry, Ms Rutendo Nhongonhema added her voice saying the winter wheat season was fast approaching and farmers needed to get their preparations underway without delay.

"For now the farmers can focus on preparing fields that are free of crops adding that for fields where other crops, such as soybeans, are present, they should make necessary harvesting arrange-

ments and preparations that include securing of combine harvesters to ensure harvesting begins as soon as the crop reaches physiological maturity. This will allow them to remove the crop promptly and initiate the preparations required for winter wheat cultivation," said Ms Nhongonhema.

She emphasised that farmers needed to carefully select herbicides urging them to consider the persistence period of the herbicides and opt for those with a low persistence period in the soil.

Said Ms Nhongonhema: "We are advising farmers intending to grow winter wheat to consider the herbicides they are going to use and the persistence period of the chemicals in the soil. They should use those with low persistence periods to ensure they prevent the negative impact of residual herbicides on the harvested crop."

It is essential for the farmers to consult agricultural experts to determine suitable herbicides for use and their appropriate application rates, she observed.

Ms Nhongonhema also urged farmers to acquire their inputs timely paying close atten-

tion to quality and ensure that they secure their requirements from reputable sources so that the transition from summer to winter cropping goes smoothly.

"Farmers should make effort to ensure their water reservoirs are in optimal condition to meet the water requirements of the winter wheat cropping season. Timely inspections and necessary repairs should be carried out to prevent possible water scarcity issues during the cultivation period," Ms Nhongonhema advised.

Additionally, farmers venturing into wheat production for the first time should seek knowledge from extension officers and fellow farmers who can provide them with valuable insights on prevalent local weeds and offer guidance on early engagements with service providers for tillage and planting operations.

Chairperson of the Food Crop Contractors Association (FCCA), Mr Graeme Murdoch chipped in highlighting that the planned hectareage for private contractors was most likely to remain similar to that of last year, which was 30 000 hectares.





Kutsaga adopts tobacco green plan revolution, phases out EDB

Ashton Mutyavaviri

AFTER years of extensive research on the harmful effects of using Ethylene dibromide (EDB) in producing tobacco, Kutsaga Research Station has called for an end to the use of the chemical by the end of 2024 and save people plus the environment from the toxic substance.

Speaking during a tobacco field discussion at the station yesterday, Kutsaga Research Station nematologist Mr Tafadzwa Mahere said Kutsaga was looking at finding sustainable ways of containing nematodes that could be used by growers.

"For the past decade, you may appreciate that nematodes were not a problem in the tobacco industry. This is because we had a broad spectrum of nematicides that the grower could use, which are methylbromite, EDB, Ethochrophos but in recent times due to their toxicity they are being withdrawn or phased out," he said.

People who came for field discussion tour a tobacco field

He said one of Kutsaga's major mandates was to find greener alternatives to replace the toxic

chemical that is being phased out.

"We have several nematicide options that underwent rigorous testing. We usually test our products for a minimum of three seasons under the Pesticide Approval Scheme Services before they are registered for use by growers," he explained.

Kutsaga has several types of nematicides that were successfully tested and registered for grower use, which include Fluopyram tradename Velum, Cyclobutrifluram trade name vaniva instead of EDB, said Mr Mahere.

He added that the Kutsaga had invested hugely on the production of nematode-resistant varieties that growers can use depending on the nematode infestation levels in their tobacco growing regions.

Kutsaga, as mandated by the Tobacco Marketing and Levy Act [Chapter 18:20] continually tests, approves and monitors all Crop Protection Agents (CPAs) for use on tobacco under the Pesticide Approval Scheme Service (PASS). The Act further states that no person shall treat any tobacco with a remedy, which is not registered or reap or offer for sale any tobacco treated with a non-registered

remedy (Sec. 65).

Furthermore, any tobacco so treated will be destroyed without compensation to the grower (Sec. 66), and this legislation has been used to destroy tobacco in the field or offered for sale where the regulations are infringed.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe Tobacco Growers Association (ZTGA) chairperson Mr George Seremwe commended the decision by Kutsaga to outlaw the use of EDB for tobacco production.

"Since it has been researched and found that it has some side effects to the environment and ozone layer, it is a good idea to mitigate the effects of climate change and protect the environment," said Mr Seremwe.

Tobacco Farmers Union Trust (TFUT) president Mr Victor Mariranyika also reacted to the move to ban the use of toxic chemicals in the tobacco production.

"It is good to ban those chemicals if they are posing danger to the environment, human and animal life. Today, we are promoting environmentally friendly agronomic practices that suit global standards," Mr Mariranyika explained.



Ashton Mutyavaviri

IN a move that underlines the importance of the aquaculture industry to national food security, Government is training farmers to make fish feeds using locally available resources like the black soldier fly, duck weed and organic manure to address the challenge of feed shortages.

Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Department (FARD) in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development Mr Milton Makumbe said they had trained 13 357 people across the country on the on-farm feed formulations in 2023.

He said communities were trained to make feeds according to their agro-ecological regions.

“Our training programmes in communities include on-farm feed formulation training, which focus on use of accessible materials specific to the farmer and what is available for them.

“We also have projects running on black soldier fly larvae production and meal worm larvae, duck weed and azolla, which are alternative sources of feed to lower production costs generated from feeds,” he explained.

Azolla can be used as a potential diet for fish, as it is easy to grow, has a high yield and is inexpensive to produce, which is reflected in its lower price compared to the price of a kilogramme of fish feed.

It is a good replacement for protein from costly sources such as fish oil and fish meal depending on the feeding behaviour of the fish species.

He added that good quality feed was expensive and often unavailable on the market, hence Government was promoting production of alternative feed sources.

“We also had trainings with WorldFish on feed formulation, which was done for farmers to enable farmers access to affordable materials in the feed production process on the farm

“WorldFish is an international body that works on capacitation of fish farmers globally. A team from Nigeria came to Zimbabwe to train people on catfish farming under the technical assistance for agricultural transformation in countries in transition project (TASF),” he explained.

Fish breeders, academia, some Government departments, feed millers and fish farmers were also trained, said Mr Makumbe.

He added that they were producing and testing the feeds’ efficacy in fish growth compared to commercial feeds.

Meanwhile, Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Production Department expert Ms Lorraine Kudakwashe Salimu also concurred saying on-farm feed formulation programmes would be more affordable because they used locally available resources.

“Fish farming has transformed the livelihoods of people across the country, but of late farmers have been affected by the rising inflation, which resulted in some failing to buy fish feed formulations,” said Ms Salimu.

Govt rolls out on-farm fish feed formulation trainings





Farmers urged to use correct pesticides, as war on armyworm intensifies

Fildah Gwati

THE department of Migratory Pests Control yesterday warned farmers against buying pesticides from undesignated sources saying they risked buying ineffective fake chemicals that could lead to pests developing resistance and becoming difficult to contain.

The warning comes on the backdrop of reports that some farmers in Raffingora recently incurred significant losses after using suspected fake chemicals to control fall armyworm in their maize crops.

Acting director in the Migratory Pests Control Department, Mr Shingirayi Nyamutukwa yesterday urged farmers to acquire pesticides from reputable sources and apply them correctly to reduce the devastating impact caused by armyworms.

“One of the primary reasons for the failure of pesticides, is improper mixing and dilution of chemicals by farmers. When farmers fail to follow the recommended mixing ratios, pests can develop resistance to chemicals, for instance, if

the dilution is excessive, the dosage may fail to eradicate the armyworm,” said Mr Nyamutukwa.

He challenged farmers to make sure pesticides come directly into contact with the caterpillars because if the pesticide is not directly applied to the funnel where the armyworm resides, the caterpillar may survive and cause extensive damage to crops.

“While fall armyworm requires direct contact with the pesticide for effective control, African armyworm is more exposed and thus more susceptible to pesticide treatment, so farmers need to focus their application on the funnel where fall armyworm is lodged, instead of spraying the pesticide on top of the plant,” he said.

He further explained that Government had adopted regulations requiring all agro-chemical sellers to be registered with the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development. Farmers must ask for a valid license from sellers to ascertain the authenticity of the products they purchase, he added.

Mr Nyamutukwa also urged farmers to be proactive and do regular scouting for armyworm eggs, rather than wait for visible damage to occur.

Meanwhile, director of private firm Farm Makeover and agronomist Mrs Lucy Kundayi Zvaraya has concurred with Mr Nyamutukwa saying some pests were becoming extensively voracious and resistant to available pesticides.

“We may need to look into more ways of managing the pests,” she said.

She explained that current pesticides were failing to control pests compared to yesteryear’s and attributed the behaviour to resisting pesticides to the current climate change problems that are disrupting the delicate balance between pests and their natural predators, rendering traditional pest control methods less effective.

“The proliferation of counterfeit pesticides exacerbates the problem, as pests can develop resistance when they multiply,” she said.

Agriculture Commodity Prices — Mbare Market 26 January 2024

Product	Description	Price
Potato/Pocket	Chat	US\$4-US\$5
	Small	US\$6-US\$7
	Medium	US\$8-US\$10
	Large	US\$11-US\$13
	Extra large	US\$15
Tomatoes	30kg sandak	US\$15-US\$25
	Wooden box	US\$2-US\$7
	Plastic dish	US\$1-US\$2
Vegetables	Cabbage head	US\$0,25-US\$1
	Covo/bundle	US\$2-US\$4
	Rape/bundle	US\$2-US\$3
	Tsunga/bundle	US\$2-US\$4
	Red cabbage	US\$0,50
	Beetroot/bundle	US\$1-US\$2
	Onions -10kg pocket	US\$4-US\$7
	Red onion	US\$8-US\$9
	Mushroom wild/bucket	US\$25-US\$30
	Cauliflower/kg	US\$2
	Brocoli/kg	US\$2
	Ginger/kg	US\$1,50-US\$2
	Garlic/kg	US\$3-US\$4
	Turmeric/kg	US\$2
	Chilli pepper	US\$2-US\$3
	Green pepper/kg	US\$2
	Red and Yellow pepper	US\$2,50
	Cherry tomatoes/punnet	US\$2
	Lettuce head	US\$0,50
	Jamsquash/kg	
	Egg plant/kg	
	Okra/5litre tin	US\$2,50
	Parsley/head	US\$0,50
	Radish	US\$2
	Celery	US\$2
	Coriander	US\$0,25
	Fresh mint	US\$0,25
Fresh leaches	punnet	US\$1
	White carrot/kg	US\$2
	Bottle guard	US\$1,50
	Bitter guard pannet	US\$0,50
	Baby marrow/crate	US\$18-US\$20
Matemba	20 litre tin	US\$44
Matemba	60 kg	US\$270
Madora	20 litre tin	US\$55
Madora	60kg	US\$330
Magandari	20l tin	US\$55
Magandari	60kg	US\$330
Sugar beans	20 litre tin	US\$28-US\$32
Soyachunks	5 kg	US\$2-US\$3
Munyemba	20 litre tin	US\$8-US\$10
Munyeve	Bucket	US\$14
Mutsine	Bucket	US\$14
Dried Covo	20 litre tin	US\$8
Dried Cabbage	20 litre tin	US\$8
Dried fish	Small	US\$1
Dried fish	Medium	US\$4
Dried fish	Large	US\$8
Sweet potato	20 litre tin	US\$9-US\$10
Sweet potato	5 litre tin	
Butternuts	60 kg	US\$26-US\$30
Green pepper	60 kg	US\$12-US\$15
Carrots	60KG	US\$35-US\$50
Peas	20 litre bucket	US\$15-US\$20
Fine beans	60kg bag	US\$15-US\$20
Cucumber	60kg	US\$20
Magogoya	20 litre bucket	US\$18-US\$20
Magogoya	90kg bag	US\$150-US\$180
Green mealies	Dozen	US\$1,50-US\$2
Apple	box	US\$14-US\$30
Avocado	basket	US\$15-US\$18

Banana	crate	US\$9-US\$10
Banana	Unripen 90kg	US\$40-US\$45
Blueberries	Crate	
Strawberry	Crate	US\$12-US\$15
Pawpaw	Each	
Coconut	Single	US\$1
Water melon	Single	US\$2-US\$3
Masawu	5litre tin	US\$2-US\$3
Matohwe	5litre tin	
Nyiii	5litre tin	US\$3
Rusika (Tamarind)	5 litre tin	US\$1,50-US\$2
Oranges	Pocket	US\$8
Pears	box	US\$9-US\$10
Naartigies	Box	US\$14
Mazhanje	5l tin	US\$2
Leaches	pallet	US\$1
Peaches	box	US\$20-US\$24
Mango	box	US\$1-US\$2,50
Oranges	BOX	
Sweet mellon	box of 7	US\$15
Grapes	Pallet	US\$3-US\$3,50
Maize grain	20 litre tin	US\$8-US\$10
Maize mumhare	20 litre tin	US\$22-US\$24
Shelled groundnuts	20 litre tin	US\$22-US\$25
Fresh nzungu	20 litre tin	US\$8-US\$10
Unshelled groundnuts	Bucket	US\$10
Nzungu mumhare	20 litre tin	US\$10
Nyimo dried	20 litre tin	US\$20-US\$25
Macadamia nuts		US\$1
Pecan nuts		US\$1
Chestnuts	pallet	US\$1
Soyabean	20 litre tin	US\$12
Wheat	20 litre tin	US\$15-US\$18
Popcom	20 litre tin	US\$14-US\$16
Cowpeas (Nyemba)	20 litre tin	US\$8-US\$10
Sunflower	20 litre tin	US\$8-US\$10
Finger millet (Zviyo)	20 litre tin	US\$18-US\$20
Mhunga	20 litre tin	US\$8-US\$10
Sorghum (mapfunde)	20 litre tin	US\$7-US\$8
Shelled brown rice	20 litre tin	US\$80
Unshelled brown rice	20 litre tin	US\$40
Broiler	Ordinary	US\$4-US\$6
Broiler	Mother	US\$7-US\$8
Road runner hens	each	US\$6-US\$7
Road runner cocks	each	US\$10
Guinea fowl (hanga)	each	US\$9-US\$10
Ducks	each	US\$8-US\$12
Turkey	each	US\$18-US\$25
Pigeons	each	US\$2,50
Rabbits	each	US\$8-US\$12
Eggs (small)	crate	US\$3
Eggs (medium)	crate	US\$3,30
Eggs (large)	crate	US\$4,50
Roadrunner eggs	crate	US\$3
Refined cooking oil; palm oil, Sunflower	2litre	US\$2,50-US\$3,20
Maheu	packet	US\$2
Meali-meal	10kg	US\$4-US\$4,50

Dovi	1 litre	US\$2-US\$2,50
Chimera	5l tin	US\$4
Finger millet meal	5l tin	US\$6-US\$10
Sorghum meal	5l tin	US\$5
Millet meal	5l tin	US\$5
Wheat meal	5l tin	US\$5-US\$10
Soya meal	5l tin	US\$5
Cassava meal	5l tin	US\$10
Rice meal	5l tin	US\$10-US\$15
Tealeaves tangada	20l tin	US\$15-US\$18
Makoni tea leaves	5l tin	US\$2
Market information comes to you courtesy of The Herald & eMKambo 0772137717		
Makoni tea leaves	20L	US\$20
Groundnuts umhare	Bucket	US\$8
Fresh groundnuts	Bucket	US\$10
Bottleguard		US\$2-US\$2,50
fennel		US\$1
Bettle guard		US\$0,50
FRESH peanuts		US\$9- US\$10
Roadrunner eggs	crate	US\$3
	Okra box	US\$36
Refined cooking oil; palm oil, Sunflower	2litre	US\$3
Broiler	Mother	US\$8-US\$9
Broiler	Ordinary	US\$5-US\$6
Offlayer	each	US\$3-US\$4
Road runner hens	each	US\$6-US\$7
Road runner cocks	each	US\$7-US\$9
Guinea fowl (hanga)	each	US\$8
Ducks	each	US\$8-US\$12
Turkey	each	US\$15-US\$20
Pigeons	each	US\$2,50
Rabbits	each	US\$8-US\$12
Eggs (small)	crate	US\$3
Eggs (medium)	crate	US\$3,20
FRESH GROUNDNUTS	20L	US\$10
baby marrow	crate	US\$16-US\$24
okra	box	
pawpaw	crate	
sweet mellon	box of 5-7	US\$16-17
Goats		
Maheu	packet	US\$1.80
PEACHES	BOX	US\$24
GRAPES	PUNNET	US\$3.50
DOWI	1 LITRE	US\$1.50
CHIMERA	5L TIN	US\$4
	Lettuce head/ kg	US\$1
TEALEAVES TANGADA	20L TIN	US\$18



The Herald AGRONEWS

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor: Obert Chifamba

E-mail: obert.chifamba@zimpapers.co.zw

Phone: 0772 886 986

Agriculture Specialist Writer: Edgar Vhera

E-mail: edgar.vhera@zimpapers.co.zw

Phone: 0774 844 050

Reporter: Tariro Stacey Gatsi

E-mail: gatsitarirostagey@gmail.com

Phone: 0719 071 638

Reporter: Ashton Mutyavaviri

E-mail: ashtonmutyavaviri26@gmail.com

Phone: 0781 229 680

Reporter: Fildah Gwati

E-mail: gwatif@gmail.com

Phone: 0735 409 516

Design, Layout & Sub Editing

Group Design Editor: Tatenda Moyana

E-mail: tatenda.moyana@zimpapers.co.zw

Phone: 0776 413 627

Advertising & Marketing

Advertising & Marketing Executive: Simbarashe Magora

E-mail: simbarashe.magora@zimpapers.co.zw

Phone: 0772426122 or 0712316470

For all enquiries:

Address: PO Box 396, Corner Sam Nujoma and
George Silundika, Harare

Phone: 08677004323, +263 (24)2795771