

1 Chairman's report

This Annual Report gives an excellent overview of exactly how the Namibian Agronomic Board has strived to achieve its Objectives, Vision and Mission over the past financial year.

For producers of grain – mahangu, maize and wheat – and horticultural products, Namibia always presents a challenging production environment. Floods and droughts can easily occur simultaneously and even within close geographic proximity, as we have seen for the past few years. Grain production, and especially mahangu surplus production, could seriously be hampered if we do not find alternatives and solutions in terms of crop insurance, production methods, cultivars, alternative crops, financing schemes and, of course, an effective and reliable market.

Our grain producers have certainly had such a market for all their produce over the past few years. This, and the fact that mahangu has now been gazetted as a controlled crop, will hopefully contribute to more mahangu surplus production in the years to come. In terms of volumes, Namibia's total consumption and production of grain is very low in comparison with that of its neighbouring countries. Our production would also not have a big impact on grain-exporting countries in our region, but imports of surpluses into our country could well have a big impact on our production environment. This should be borne in mind during trade negotiations, especially those in respect of the current Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union. We appreciate the fact that our Government continues to discuss the matter with the aim of a more acceptable outcome for Namibia.

For horticulture producers, excessive rain, extremely high temperatures (and, in some areas, freezing temperatures) constituted a challenge similar to that faced by grain producers, with similar solutions – including the efficient reliable market being a prerequisite for any surplus production.

To support their efforts, horticulture producers have the Namibian Market Share Promotion, in terms of which importers are required to purchase an escalating minimum percentage of their turnover within Namibia. However, producers – especially new and small-scale surplus producers – will have to look at issues like the quality and continuity of their products in the market, which can only be achieved through excellent planning and management.

“Creating a marketing environment that is conducive to growing and processing crops in Namibia” remains the NAB's core function whilst some of the other challenges are met through the activities of our Development Projects Division. This Division is always on the lookout for challenges being faced by producers, resolving their issues through relevant projects.

For their support in all our efforts, I would like to thank the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Members of the Board, the Secretariat and all other stakeholders in the industry.

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