

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

05 April 2024

NAMIBIA CELEBRATES FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY



Namibia has achieved a significant milestone in its agricultural sector by attaining a 55% self-sufficiency level in local vegetable production. The country has also reached a combined total of 45% self-sufficiency in the local production of agronomic (grains) and horticultural (fruits and vegetables) crops. This accomplishment is the result of the combined efforts of smallholder farmers and large-scale commercial farmers.

The achievement underscores a reduction in the country's reliance on food imports, particularly for staple grain crops such as white maize, pearl millet and wheat which has experienced substantial growth to 50% in a good rainy season. This growth is primarily attributed to collaborative efforts between farmers and agro-processors through industry marketing agreements to enhance crop production, market access, and overall sustainability. Notably, this achievement stands in contrast to the fact that, fifteen years ago, Namibia's self-sufficiency rate was merely 5% for horticultural products and about 20% for agronomic crops.

Honourable Lawrence Sampofu Governor of the Zambezi region, during his keynote address delivered on his behalf by Honourable Matengu Simushi, councillor of the Katima Rural



Constituency underscored the current market shares of the Zambezi region. Noting that it accounts for approximately 7% of white maize and 25% of Mahangu grains. However, he pointed out that the region's contribution to horticultural crops is relatively low, standing at less than 1%. Further urging farmers to leverage the region's fertile land and favourable rainfall conditions in order to positively contribute to the national food basket, capitalizing on the untapped potential for horticultural crops. Additionally, Hon Sampofu emphasized the importance of participating in the Market Share Promotion (MSP) scheme, encouraging farmers to capitalize on this initiative for enhanced market opportunities

The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB), in fulfilment of its mandate, regulates the movement of agronomic and horticultural products. It facilitates import restrictions during periods of sufficient local production to protect local producers from competition with cheaper imports and promotes food self-sufficiency as a sovereign state. This is done in line with the Market Share Promotion (MSP) Scheme, Special Controlled Product Scheme, and Grain Marketing Scheme. Hence, all controlled grain crops, including white maize, wheat, and pearl millet (mahangu), as well as controlled fresh produce products are only imported or exported with permits issued by the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) and other regulatory agencies, upon satisfying the Market Share Promotion requirements.

Dr Fidelis Mwazi, CEO of the NAB, reaffirms the commitment to implementing a robust import substitution program, including initiatives like the MSP, to create a conducive environment and a thriving market for local farmers. "The objective is to expand operations, increase crop production, and propel Namibia towards food self-sufficiency while diminishing dependence on imports, he concluded.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is amongst the entities at the forefront championing end-to-end food systems approach to achieve food security in Namibia. To date, WFP has provided climate-smart agricultural technology, drought-resistant seeds, as well as investment in Agri-infrastructure and clean energy sources. This is in addition to facilitating market access, training on good agricultural practices and value addition.

"Over the years, WFP has been complementing the Government of Namibia's priorities in scaling up domestic food production, facilitating partnerships and investments that enable the country to capture greater value from the food system as well as strengthen systems and structures that demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness to deliver on this mandate," says Ericah Shafuda, WFP's Deputy Country Director, and Representative in Namibia.

WFP in Namibia provides technical support to the Government to help strengthen food systems value chain as well as accelerate rural transformation towards the attainment of Zero Hunger.

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About the World Food Programme

The United Nations World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability, and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters, and the impact of climate change.

About the Namibian Agronomic Board

The NAB is a public entity governed by the Agronomic Industry Act, 20 of 1992 and is mandated to promote the agronomic industry and facilitate the production, processing, storage and marketing of controlled products in Namibia.

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