

# **NATIONAL AFRICAN FARMERS UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA**

PO Box 9624. Centurion. 0046 - 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Sharp Building, 12 Pretorius St, Pretoria



## **Progress Report Maize Desk Development At NAFU**

**31 October, 2006**

INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT				
Project Full Name	NAFU Maize Desk Development			
Proposal Acronym		Project No.		
Strategic Goal/s to be addressed by Proposal	Business approach through commodity establishment	Increasing services to membership		
Strategic Objectives to be addressed	Development of commodity associations			

PROPOSAL ADMINISTRATIVE OVERVIEW				
Contact person for the Project				
Title	Ms			
Full names	Surname	Thahane	First Names	Lerato
Contact Details				
Address if different from the NAFU address	P O Box		Town/city CENTURION	
	Postal code		Country	South Africa
	Telephone No.	086 111 4850	Fax Number:	012 323 5799
Email:	<a href="mailto:Thahane.lerato@gmail.com">Thahane.lerato@gmail.com</a> ; or <a href="mailto:tsadi@nafu.co.za">tsadi@nafu.co.za</a>			

PROJECT OBJECTIVES
Objectives of the Project/Program/Activity :
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promotion of maize production among emerging farmers</li> <li>2. Empowering resource poor farmers</li> <li>3. Attending and participating on a sustained basis in the Maize Forum and Industry working groups.</li> <li>4. build the foundation for the maize desk to be elevated to a grains desk to handle other grains on a similar basis</li> </ol>

PROGRESS TO END OCTOBER, 2006
<p><b>1. OBJECTIVE 1: PROMOTION OF MAIZE PRODUCTION AMONG EMERGING FARMERS</b></p> <p>The project proposal acknowledged that capacity was a problem within NAFU SA and provision was made for seed capital to develop some capacity to be able to promote maize production in the maize growing areas among emerging farmers at the local and regional level.</p> <p><b>CAPACITY BUILDING TO ENSURE A FUNCTIONAL AND SUSTAINABLE MAIZE PRODUCTION PROGRAM AT NAFU SA</b></p> <p>1.1 A grain executive has been recruited. Ms Thahane was appointed to fulfil this role in April, 2006. In support Ms Melia Thema was appointed to ensure confidence building by sponsors and continuity in the NAFU administration. In the previous report, it was envisaged that Ms Thahane's appointment would be reviewed and upgraded to full time but initial field work indicates that the project would benefit more from using the resources to appoint a few field assistants even if for a short duration so that information gathering and farmer interaction can be augmented for accelerated results. The review has thus been deferred until more data is gathered. It</p>

is envisaged that once this report is accepted and more resources transferred field assistants under the supervision of Ms Thahane will be appointed to accelerate progress in the maize growers data base development and organisation of study groups. These officers will be oriented by Ms Thahane and work closely with extension.

1.2 Office space was secured and minimal work station equipment such as computers and printer and copier were secured.

1.3 A strategy workshop was held with the leadership of NAFU SA to embed the grain desk development as a firm commitment of NAFU in all its activities. It is important to note that even though this was not directly related to the maize desk, NAFU felt that any commodity desk would be vulnerable to change if it was not entrenched in the overall strategy of NAFU. The strategy development was seen as an essential capacity development that would ensure that the commodity desks, starting with the maize, followed by grain and others would continue to be a focus of NAFU. Following the strategic workshop of NAFU, Ms Thahane was charge with the compilation of the strategic plan which would focus the organisation. Maize desk is expected to benefit from the focus deriving from the strategic plan. The strategic plan is now printed and continues to be circulated as a foundation document for all NAFU SA activities.

1.4 Leadership training workshop on commodity association formation including study groups was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2006. Leadership was further sensitised on how to mobilise farmers according to their commodities and guided on how they could use study groups to improve the performance of farmers. Again here the approach adopted was broader than maize but aimed at ensuring that when the maize desk is established it would fit into a structure that would be enduring instead of a short term project. Follow up leadership workshop where they planned the commodity approach and affiliation to NAFU SA from the commodities perspective was held at Eskom College from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2006.

## 2. EMPOWERING RESOURCE POOR FARMERS

To empower resource poor farmers, it has been necessary to find out where they are, what their levels of performance currently are and the reasons behind the less than satisfactory performance in order to be able to develop quick interventions that can yield improved results in the shortest possible time. This first step has not taken the form of a research study but is being achieved through meetings with farmers, development of a Resource Poor Farmers data base.

### ***Achievements and actions taken to date include the following:***

2.1 Desk top determination of the major areas producing maize in all Provinces has been accomplished in some areas, with Mpumalanga being the most complete and the following areas have been identified:

Province	Districts	Localities by nearest town or village
Mpumalanga	Gert Sibande, Nkangala	Dondoland, Elukwaitini, Badplaas, Mooiplas, Steynsdorp(Vlakplaas), Ferne, Daggakraal, Amersfoort, Volksrust, Wakkerstroom, Driefontein, Piet Retief, Armsterdam, Breyten, Sheepmore, Lothair, Ermelo, Standerton,

		Rooikoppen, Morigozon, Bethal, Leandra, Hiveld ridge-Secunda, Greylingstad, Sizanani, Harambe, Vlakfontein. <i>(Detailed localities have only been determined for Gert Sibande. NOTE: Most RPFs are concentrated in the municipality of Albert Luthuli)</i>
Kwazulu-Natal	Umgungundlovu Ugu	Detailed localities still to be determined. (Only leadership talks made so far) This Province was not prioritised and will be dealt with in the later phases of the project.
Free State	Thabo Mofutsanyane	No details of localities determined
North West	Central Southern Bojanala Platinum	Some communication problems have delayed the gathering of information on this province which is important both as a major maize producing Province with a substantial number of RPFs, some of whom have significant land for farming.
Limpopo	Capricon Waterberg	Phooko, Mholomong, Kopermyn, Ga Lekgothwane, Morotse, Serobaneng, Laeste Hoop, Ga Maja Mmatobole, Doorndrai, Marobala Dikgale, Schoongezicht, Tooseng, Ga Mothapo, Malekapane, Mogodi Ga Mphahlele, Mamaolo, Mooiplaas, Dihlophaneng, Matlapa, Soetfontien, Makatsane, Mankgaile ga Molepo, Ga Mojapelo, Setumong Ga Matlala.
Eastern Cape	No further work has been done except that we now are aware that there are significant numbers of Resource Poor Farmers (RPFs) Planting Maize in the Province and have thus decided to include the Province.	Work to commence once additional resources are available.

## 2.2 INFORMATION GATHERING FOR DATA BASE DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ A questionnaire has been developed and has been distributed among the farmers of Capricon and Waterberg in Limpopo. A meeting with the extension officers covering the two districts has been held and more forms given to them and the Provincial Maize Chairperson for further work. A

meeting with a representative group of 60 farmers covering all the municipalities of the two districts has been held and they have undertaken to distribute the forms. They have also undertaken to form study groups in their villages. Guidelines are now being developed to assist them and the extension officers in forming study groups.

- ◆ The questionnaire has also been distributed in Mpumalanga in the districts of Gert Sibande and Nkangala. Information from the Gert Sibande has begun coming in and covers all RPFs. A few follow up meetings are necessary to ensure that the quality of information is good and that as many farmers as possible respond.
- ◆ The plan has been send to North West Province and in the next fortnight meetings will commence in North West with the distribution of questionnaires.

## **2.2 MARKET ACCESS FOR RESOURCE POOR FARMERS (RPFs)**

The strongest emerging issue in all interaction is the issue of market access for the RPFs. Where they do get access to markets, the prices are so poor as to be totally discouraging. This is an area for which some form of intervention is needed and we will work closely with Mr John Gordon to develop an interim program to alleviate the market constraints in the area and to ensure that farmers who are already growing maize are not discouraged.

Farmers have been encouraged in Limpopo to quickly organise themselves on a village by village basis into study groups so that the full information of maize planted per village can be roughly estimated in order to plan and negotiate market interventions.

## **2.3 ASSISTING FARMERS WITH PLANTING**

The late start with the project has meant that the envisaged facilitation of a few farmers in at least THREE locations to plant to the best practice as a form of demonstration to what is possible has failed due to a late start in organising farmers. NAFU now proposes to cover more than 3Provinces in organising maize growers into study groups, a process that will last till at least June 2007. The current information gathering forms are going to be modified to capture the establishment of study groups, the regularity and attendance of study group meetings once they are formed and the benefit that farmers feel they are gaining from them in line with the suggestions of Mr John Gordon.

It will be much easier to plan for information dissemination and assistance with access to finance to bring the most promising farmers into maize production for the 2007/8 season.

## **3. SUSTAINED MEETING ATTENDANCE AND GENERAL NETWORKING WITH THE MAIZE INDUSTRY AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS.**

The executive manager in charge of the Maize desk has met with many stakeholders among which the following are worth mentioning:

Deputy Director General of Agriculture in Mpumalanga, Regional Director of extension services in Gert Sibande Mr Peter Thabethe and Ms Emma Mahangu. Thefollowing extension personnel in Limpopo have also been consulted: Matome Mosipi who is an extension officer at Molemole in Limpopo, Moloko Raserushe in Blouberg Limpopo, Richard Ngoepe in Mopani, Florah Mogale in Lepelle Nkumpi, Mr Matahabatha in Polokwane and Duncan Mothapo also of Lepelle Nkumpi.

In pursuit of clarity of the expectation from the project Ms Thahane has consulted with:

- ◆ Mr Jannie De Villiers
- ◆ Mr Leon Du Plessis
- ◆ Mr John Gordon

These interactions have been very useful and other industry meetings of importance to maize

have been highlighted and attendance is expected to broaden as expected.

We have had two consultations with Mr John Gordon in this early stage but will increase our interactions with him in the next phase as Ms Thahane will periodically consult with him for input into the work done in pursuit of the Maize desk development. In particular we have reached an agreement that Ms Thahane will discuss with him all plans and progress on a monthly basis or at the beginning of a new activity or end of an activity to ensure his input into the process.

The marketing problem which has emerged as interaction with Resource Poor Maize producers will be addressed working closely with Mr Gordon.

Ms Thahane has attended all Maize Forum meetings since she joined NAFU SA, she has also attended the Grain Crops Institute planning and Mr Duze attended the Grain marketing on her behalf.

Ms Thahane has also attended all the bio-fuels workshops organised by the Department of Agriculture where she was invited, she has interacted with Dr Moephuli and his team and the National Organic Program Initiative with the understanding that the bio-fuel will significantly influence the Maize growers and all other grains.

#### **MISSED MAIZE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

This meeting was unfortunately missed due to :

- ◆ A misunderstanding by Ms Thahane. She did not understand that the steering Committee meeting was an important once a year meeting, which was different from the forum meetings.
- ◆ An earlier commitment to attend the Africa Stockpiles Program which was scheduled to coincide with an International Conference in Cape Town and aimed at lobbying the International Sponsors to support the South African Network of Non Governmental Organisations dealing with pesticide stockpiles was prioritised by her mistakenly.

This misunderstanding is highly regretted and NAFU SA apologises.

#### **CONCLUSION**

While some progress has been made it is NAFU SA's belief that more will be achieved after this first phase which was complicated by the transition from the organisation being run by elected officials and fairly junior support staff. The capacity deficit was perhaps higher than envisaged but there are indications that this project will produce valuable data which will be useful even for other grain commodities in the future.

Interaction with Grain South Africa has been less than satisfactory but there was a need to get the project started and this will be improved in the next phase. Contact with Grain Crops Institute has not yet reached satisfactory levels. In the next phase the collaboration with GSA will be enhanced starting with seeking their assistance with their own study group materials and engaging them where NAFU does not have the capacity including sharing with them the developing data base. Increased interaction with GCI will also characterise our interactions as we gain a deeper inside into the main bottlenecks of the Resource Poor Farmers. Mr Gordon is also expected to play a bigger role in the development of a marketing plan to assist Resource Poor Maize Producers by the end of the current growing season. It is important to express NAFU SA's gratitude to the Maize Trust for enabling a better interaction with Resource Poor Farmers on the ground. We are convinced that this will improve NAFU's advocacy role but also in identifying other developmental programmes. The expenditure figures are attached.

#### **ANNEXURES:**

1. The questionnaire for information gathering.
2. Financial Report