

AGRO-NEWS

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AMTA
FROM LAND TO NATION

Inside this issue!



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FOREWORD



Lungameni Lucas
Managing Director: AMTA

Dear Readers,

It is my pleasure to introduce AMTA's first online newsletter "**AGRO-NEWS**". Take a tour around this edition and discover some aspects of Agriculture you might not have been aware of, meet the people who are working hard at supporting the agricultural sector and the wheels behind AMTA.

To start your journey, here is some background on the Agro-Marketing & Trade Agency (AMTA). AMTA was established in 2013 as an agency of the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) tasked with managing and operating the National Strategic Food Reserve (NSFR) and National Fresh Produce Business Hubs (NFPBHs) infrastructure for the marketing and trade of agricultural products. AMTA's brand is there to facilitate the marketing and trading of agricultural produce and promote food security. AMTA's broad mandate is to:

- Facilitate market access to small and medium scale Agricultural producers and Agro-processors;
- Stimulate sustainable local agricultural production and activity;
- Enhance national and household food security;
- Meaningfully contributing to employment creation;
- Re-invigorate economic activities and spurs industrialisation;
- Reduce income inequalities.

This government initiative strongly advocates for Namibia to become an independent and self-sustaining nation in terms of food security. AMTA in its Five Year Strategic Business Plan clearly outlines the need to improve stakeholder collaboration and promote local agro-produce thus the introduction of this bulletin. AGRO-NEWS will be an online and quarterly published Newsletter informing the farmers, well wishers and the nation at large on current events around the field of Agriculture and Farming. The bulletin is aimed at assisting AMTA's operations to reach a larger audience by means of using social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and the World Wide Web.

Editor's Note

As we wrap off the 2020/21 financial year, allow us share with you the highlights that transpired during the period of Jan-Mar 2021. As we embark on this new 2021/22 financial journey, may the team spirit continue hovering. Thank you for your continued support and dedication towards achieving AMTA's mandate.

Happy reading.



Pasval Elijah
Corporate Communication Officer

Namibia steps into the direction of Import substitution

There's a famous saying, "an apple a day keeps the doctor away". One such project that is making sure Namibia walks in this adage is the Stampriet Roots Development (SRT) Project which wowed the nation with its first local production of apples. Stampriet Roots Development, an agricultural village located in the heart of Hardap Region, south of Namibia offers community-based living with a sustainable future. The SRT recently took it to the markets when they announced their first harvest of locally produced apples.

Amidst the adversities of Covid-19, this project took on the prevailing challenges by creating opportunities for changing livelihoods and re-directing mindsets of the Namibian people to help Namibia achieve its set goals and objectives stipulated in the Harambee Prosperity Plan.


Apples are known to be some of the most sought after fruits in the world. The fruits are rich in essential vitamins as well as antioxidants needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and as such can be eaten as on-the-go-snacks, in fruit salads, cakes etc...



AMTA's mandate amongst others is to ensure market access for local agricultural produce especially to small and medium scale agricultural producers and agro-processors, stimulate sustainable local agricultural production and activities, as well as enhance and promote national and household food security.

We take pride in the SRT Project for such an immense initiative of locally producing apples. As a country, we cannot depend on other countries for food production. We have to produce our own products to ensure food security and sustainability, AMTA thus urges local farmers to emulate Stampriet Roots Development Project and start producing a variety of food products. This will not only ensure food security, but, it would also provide locals with much needed employment which will subsequently increase our Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

To taste locally produced apples, visit all AMTA Fresh Produce Business Hubs at an affordable price.

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- ◆ Apples are nutritious
 - ◆ Apples may be good for weight loss
 - ◆ Apples may be good for your heart
 - ◆ Apples may lower risk of diabetes
 - ◆ Apples may have prebiotic effects and promote good gut bacteria
 - ◆ Substances in apples may help prevent cancer
 - ◆ Apples contain compounds that can help fight asthma

Unlocking Agronomic potential in Omaheke region



Agro-Marketing & Trade Agency with intent to steer the nation into agricultural produce and marketing, responded positively to the Governor of Omaheke Region, Honourable Pijoo Nganate's invitation to visit his region. The week-long site visit aimed at engaging farmers and educating the communities on the roles and responsibilities of AMTA. Additionally, AMTA also went to establish supply arrangements of produce and link producers within the region to markets such as OMAs and general retailers.

Mr. Lungameni Lucas, AMTA's Managing Director noted that Omaheke region was privileged to have been one of the first regions to be visited upon the launch of the Public Enterprises road show campaign which was aimed at visiting areas of need and engaging stakeholders on local market production.

In a meeting held on Monday, 15 February 2021, The Hon. Governor noted that, the region was known to be a cattle country, investing only in cattle farming and it was about time that the region diverted its resources and capacities into agro-farming. In his statement, Hon. Nganate said that the region was in a process of re-branding Omaheke from the well-known "Cattle Country" to the "Agro-Processing & Innovation Hub of Namibia". A term that defined Omaheke with pride to venture into crop-production.



"There's no better taste, than the taste of your own home grown produce"

The site visit revealed that there was indeed potential in the region in terms of growing fresh produce and other agro-products. Some of this potential was poultry farming. The region, with the availability of prime farming land, political and farmer's willingness and geographical location to supply to neighboring countries, can soar to the heights it has determined.

Amongst others, AMTA and the Governor's delegation visited areas of Gobabis, Otjinene, Epukiro, Aminuis and Buitepos . It was however noted that, some emerging farmers had basic to little knowledge on crop husbandry, some farmers' produce were not branded and packaged as Namibian products — a cause for concern that highlighted farmers had no negotiating powers in terms of their produce when supplying to markets which therefore calls for interventions.

AMTA, as an entity established to market and facilitate agro-produce, is committed to its mandate and thus intends to establish a distribution centre in Gobabis, train farmers through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR) and enter into supply agreements with local farmers from the region.

Gervasius Thikusho, AMTA's Manager: Markets & Business Development said that in an effort to facilitate consistency in the supply of produce, AMTA would introduce a cropping calendar aimed at advising farmers on what and when products are to be produced to avoid flooding of products in the markets. He urged farmers in the area to create community-based groups which will work collectively to ensure sustainability.

Life of a young farmer

Kaujanda Hijakaere, a 29-year-old Otjinene-based male, tells his story on what it has been like being a farmer at a tender age.

Kaujanada says, after several attempts at his dream of attaining his Junior Certificate proved futile, Kaujanda challenged his capabilities by joining his family's business to make ends meet.



"There is no shame in making a living without a school certificate"

He currently survives by selling fruits and vegetables to local markets. He urged fellow Namibians to have divergent views when pursuing future goals as far as success is concerned.

There are various legitimate ways of making a living such as agricultural farming, which may impact others positively if one follows their passion no matter how small they start.

Water what feeds you

Says 23 year-old Kakunaa Katuu, an Industrial Psychology student at the University of Namibia, who found her passion in watering what feeds her family. Kakunaa reminisced on how she had no interest in staying at the farm and rather preferred to be in town until **Covid-19** turned the tables around.

At first I used to enjoy my comfort of being home browsing through social media, during that time, I did not even like watering the lemon tree in our yard in Windhoek. In March 2020, when the Head of State announced the first lockdown due to **Covid-19**, my family and I trampled over tables and chairs so we could make our way to the nearest retailers to get house commodities so that we would not starve during the lockdown.

That is when I realised and learnt the importance of growth at home and not depending on government and other outside entities to bring bread on the table. Orivia, is a farm based in Aminuis, Omaheke region, where Kakunaa and her family established a plantation to feed not only themselves but also to sell to the market.

{ A healthy OUTSIDE starts from the INSIDE. Support your roots and eat Local!!! }



Initially they began with farming lettuce and gradually grew to the production and supply of fruits and vegetables. She noted that, they used to supply their lettuce to Namibia Wildlife Resort (NWR) and/or sell other produce twice a week at the local auction as well as sell to local street vendors.

However, due to devastating impact of **Covid-19** on the hospitality industry, they stopped supplying to NWR. She however stated that, they face challenges with supply to the markets noting that they compete with big retailers and at the end of the day, are forced to sell their products at a very low price.

Mr. Lungameni Lucas applauded the young farmer's initiative and encouraged the nation at large to make use of the land at their disposal because the future of the Namibian nation is on the land.

AMTA inaugurates Katwitwi Mill Facility & Golden Fresh Brand

Agro-Marketing & Trade Agency officially launched its first ever Milling facility and Golden Fresh brand. In a statement read by Honourable Muha, Chairperson of National Council, highlighted that AMTA had a critical role to perform in realising Government's mandate which is that of rendering services to the Agricultural sector and enabling the industry to contribute towards creating a strong agricultural value chain system as well as national food security to help boost the Namibian economy.

“As a country, we need more interventions to support value addition diversification and thus grow at home through a needs-oriented and comprehensive approach”, he said. Hon. Muha urged leaders with responsibilities to ensure that Government policies were translated into practical business ventures.

AMTA’s Board Chairperson, Mr. Desiderius Tshikesho noted that as an Agency, AMTA was established to manage Fresh Produce Business Hubs and National Strategic Food Reserves. AMTA is committed to fulfill part of its mandate through this facility to supply final maize meal and mahangu flour products to the communities and also the OMAs. Further, this facility will assist with the replenishment of grain NSFR facilities which will also minimise quality loses through prolonged storage.

These products will be traded under the “**Golden Fresh**” brand — a brand that symbolises the pride of quality and fresh identity of the value-added products. Mr. Tshikesho further added that, the milling facility would contribute to skills development, employment creation and value addition. Products would include maize meal, mahangu flour and animal feed with prices ranging between N\$75.00 and N\$ 320.00.



DID YOU KNOW?
The English name for Mahangu is Pearl Millet.



Otjondjupa Governor calls for AMTA's presence in the region

Otjondjupa region, being known for its cultural diversity and being the largest region with over 5 constituencies, called for AMTA in its strategic planning to consider having a fresh produce business hub and a national food reserve (silo) that would cater for remote areas of Gam, Tsumkwe and others in order to ensure that they have access to both domestic and commercial markets.

This request was brought forth by the Governor, Hon. James Uerikua, during AMTA's regional visit held from the 14-20 March 2021. The purpose of the visit was to engage farmers within the horticulture and poultry production for the purpose of linking these farmers to commercial markets.

The one week long engagement revealed that women were more participatory in farming compared to the male counterparts, in his statement, Hon. Uerikua indicated that the will and commitment was overwhelming, however farmers lacked access to markets. He highlighted the sale of fresh produce on the around the region including vending at Otavi service station which implies mass production.

On the same note, Hon. Mutjavikua, the Okakarara Constituency Councillor, welcomed AMTA's move of engaging farmers, noting that the initiative would enlighten farmers on how to align their production to what is needed in the market and promote food security. He further added that AMTA, being a strategic partner, needed to work as a team to assist farmers supply of produce to OMA's through contractual agreements. He urged farmers to grasp the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity presented to them by AMTA so they would have bargaining powers. He further advocated for the adoption of a universal strategy that would benefit everyone.

AMTA also visited the San Community in Tsumkwe the area, together with Hon. Mbakera, Chairperson of the Otjondjupa Regional Council, and handed over facemasks and fruits as part of its corporate social responsibility and celebrating Independence Month.



AMTA's Marketing Requirements

National Strategic Food Reserves:

- The marketing season for grain usually starts from the 1st of May until all locally produced grain is absorbed or marketed as per the Closed Border Policy mechanism that is determined by the industry through the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB). At the beginning of every season, farmers can approach our office to establish prices.
- All producers that are intending to sell grain to AMTA can register annually from the 1st of April through the nearest Agricultural Development Centres (ADCs), Constituency Offices, Farmers' Associations/Unions or at any of AMTA's offices as soon as the registration programme is announced.
- Surplus grain producers are required to supply their identification documents (IDs), contact details, production areas, intended time of harvest and expected quantities to be marketed, during registration.
- AMTA contacts all registered grain producers before the start of the grain purchase or procurement program through the ADCs, radio and or contact details provided during registration to inform them to prepare and deliver their grain to the various purchasing points and/or silo centres.
- At the point of sale, all grain to be purchased has to be graded, according to the following specifications; age of the grain (that year's harvest), absence of live insects, moisture content (not above 12.5%), presence of foreign matter (hygiene) and general grain quality in terms of smell (odour).
- If the quality of the grain is satisfactory, payment is processed within 7 working days after all the required documents are prepared.
- Where required, AMTA may avail transport to producers to supply grain to AMTA on cost-recovery basis.

Fresh Produce Business Hubs:

- In terms of fresh produce, producers should register with AMTA by completing a producer registration form to be captured on AMTA's data base.
- Producers can register throughout the year at all AMTA offices, nearest ADCs and farmers' representatives by providing the following information; identification documents (IDs), contact details, area of production, varieties of produce, intended time of harvest and expected quantities to be marketed.
- Once registered, producers are issued with a unique identification code for stakeholders' engagement and traceability purposes for both local and export markets.
- The registered producers are required to contact AMTA, ADCs and farmers' representatives to arrange and facilitate their crop production plans and if applicable sign off-take agreements.
- Products to be supplied to AMTA are expected to meet the minimum marketable quality standards in terms of shape, colour, texture and size and food safety specifications (use of approved agro- inputs and chemicals) where applicable and AMTA should frequently conduct farm inspections for all contracted producers.
- Once produce is delivered, cleared and all documentations are completed, payments are processed within 4 working days.
- If required, AMTA may avail transport to producers to supply produce through AMTA on a cost-recovery basis.



Faces around Places



"AMTA's Strategic Planning Session-2021"



Mr. Reagan Kooper (Senior Finance Manager) & Mr. Lungameni Lucas (Managing Director)



"Work-in Group Session"



"Farmers spotted in Omaheke region during AMTA's regional visit"



"Spotted @ Otiponic, Otjozondjupa region"



"What's a better way to improve our food security than collaboration?"



"Availability of packaging facilities in all our FPBHs"



"Stakeholders engagement @ Olushandja"



"Spotted with the San Community in Tsumkwe area"



"Members of the community welcomes Katwitwi Mill Plant"



"Mr. Gervasius Thikusho presenting AMTA's AGRO-Projects"



"Spotted in Omaheke with a bottle of homemade Omaere"



"Growth @ Home Strategy is Namibia's way to self-sustainability"



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OUR MANDATE

Vision:

To be the centre of excellence in facilitating food security and agricultural marketing and trade in Namibia.

Mission Statement:

- To enhance food security and facilitate marketing and trade in Namibia
- To efficiently manage and operate the marketing and storage of facilities of agricultural produce
- To promote value addition, industrialisation and standards compliance of agricultural products
- Promote and enhance the consumption of local agricultural produce
- Ensure a conducive marketing and logistics system for fresh produce trade.

Core Values:

- Transparency
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Partnership
- Service Excellence
- Innovation