



**ESWATINI CANE GROWERS
ASSOCIATION**
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

“CANE FOR GROWTH”



EXECUTIVE EDITOR'S NOTE

It always is a single honour for me to present to you the last quarterly newsletter for the year 2019. This issue covers the period from October to December 2019. There are important insights into issues including farmer record keeping and employer obligation to prevent sexual harassment in the work place. There is also news from the World Association of Beet and Cane Growers Association (WABCG) meeting that was held in London (United Kingdom) in November 2019. The Chairman attended and provided the feedback. We thank Mr Geldenhuys for that contribution.

Readers will notice that the Grower Support Manager (GSM) contributed copiously to the issue. On behalf of the Association we thank Ms Zinhle Dlamini-Ndlovu for her effort and energy in producing the document.

We wish our members and stakeholders an enjoyable reading. Any feedback on the articles is being anticipated and encouraged.

Dr. S.V. Nkambule, CEO

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ABOUT ECGA

The Eswatini Cane Growers Association is a member owned/funded non-governmental organization (NGO) and not for profit (NFP) entity established through a legal instrument (Cane Growers Act No. 12 of 1967 as amended) with retrospective effective to October 1963. The ECGA is a body corporate with capacity to sue and be sued. The main purpose of the ECGA is to serve and support cane growers through promoting, advocating and fostering their collective interests, sustainability and progress. The Act mandates the Minister of Agriculture to impose an annual levy on all grower upon the recommendation of the ECGA.

Historically, the operations of the ECGA have been funded exclusively by the levy which is charged per ton of sucrose supplied to and accepted by the Miller.

The ECGA and the Swaziland Sugar Millers Association (SSMA) are equal owner partners (50% shareholding each) in the Eswatini Sugar Association (ESA).



THE ECGA COMMUNICATES WITH ITS MEMBERS

By: **Dr S.V. Nkambule**

One of the beautiful cultures of Eswatini Cane Growers Association (ECGA) is the periodical engagement with its members for two-way communication. These meetings are held with each Planters' Group every 3 months. The purpose of the meetings is to report back to members on the work of the Executive Committee, the Office and developments in Eswatini Sugar Association (ESA).

Meetings for the last quarter of 2019 were held on 12, 13 and 14 November 2019. During the meetings growers celebrated finishing the milling season in time. By the meetings, most growers had finished delivering their cane and were then focussed on husbandry of the next crop. That was a contrast to the previous season when crushing continued to January. The Chairpersons of the Planters' Groups congratulated members for the accomplishment.

The ECGA presented a report from engagements with ESA. The highlights included

- ✓ Estimates for improved price and lower yields in recently completed milling season (ending March 2020).

- ✓ The Employment Bill was still going through the motions

- ✓ There was a Farm Dwellers Control Amendment Bill that, if passed into law, could affect those members farming on title deed land. Members were encouraged to study the Bill and feedback to Business Eswatini through the ECGA office.

During this round of meetings, the ESA Financial Director made a presentation on the plans to reduce the industry costs of borrowing. He presented a plan that was being considered for adoption effective March 2021. The growers appreciated the presentation and expressed appetite for further details. They also expressed hope that the industry would make progress on creation of an internal fund to assist individual growers contain their costs of production.

On the technical front growers were alerted to the observed rise in incidences of white grub, Eldana and yellow aphids. They were encouraged to report incidence in their areas to enable comprehensive monitoring and control.

At Mhlume, the Planters' group Committee reported on the progress on the initiative to assist Vuvulane growers with irrigation water management. Despite the complexity and multifaceted nature of the problem some degree of progress was noted especially on the operational front. The work is in progress.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER RECORDS MANAGEMENT

BY: ZINHLE NDLOVU

By its definition, a record is an account of **information or facts**, set down especially in **writing** as a means of **preserving knowledge**. The highlighted words present the character of records and the key things to note is that they must be **compiled, traceable and factual**.

Some of the known benefits of keeping records are;

- To measure financial performance and progress
- To analyse the business for future improvements
- To assist in decision making to improve managerial ability in a farm
- To assist in obtaining credit
- To fulfil tax requirements
- To reduce misunderstanding about past transactions
- For compliance purposes
- To support accountability and
- They are a basis for diagnosis and planning

For this article, I would like us to focus on 2 reasons why sugar cane growers must keep records.

1. TO DEMONSTRATE COMPLIANCE

Records are also important to demonstrate compliance. Global markets are expected to report on due diligence in their supply chains. More attention is put on issues around child labour, forced labour, health and safety and land rights to ensure that injustices within supply chains do not occur. One way of getting information is to visit the country of origin/source (growers) to conduct on-site audits.

“ Records management is knowing what you have, where you have it and how long you have to keep it. ”

A case study

An auditor visits Farm X and finds one of the workers not wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). While issues of safety are both the employer and employee's responsibility, the employer must prove that the;

- Employee was trained about the job and risks associated with it
- Employee was provided with the right PPE and it was explained to him or her how to use it
- The evidence to provide includes training report (contents and signed attendance register), PPE issue (what was issue and signature of recipient). Without these, the employer will not convince an auditor that they have done their bit to ensure safety of workers in the workplace. This can be tricky if an organisation doesn't keep proper records.

2. TO PROVIDE INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS SECTOR ANALYSIS REPORT

The Eswatini Sugar Association conducts an annual grower cost survey and produces a Business Sector Analysis (BSA) Report. The objective of the survey is to monitor the cost competitiveness of the sugarcane growers, identify trends over the years, and highlight areas of weaknesses and threats to sustainability (economic) which may require remedial action and support. The BSA records the productivity and costs structure of the growers and assesses their current viability by examining the gross margins and key performance indicators which include tonnes sucrose per hectare (TSH), operational costs, haulage costs and gross margin. Growers are expected to provide this data and if its incomplete, the objectives are not met. Growers are therefore encouraged to keep proper records and share such as and when needed.

NEWS FROM THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF BEET AND CANE GROWERS

By: Zinhle Ndlovu

The World Association of Beet and Cane Growers (WABCG), which counts 36 cane and beet growers' associations in 34 countries, met on 25th November 2019 in London (United Kingdom). The ECGA ExCo Chairperson Mr. Stuart Geldenhuys and other industry representatives attended the conference.

In the current context of low world sugar prices, which can discourage growers and weaken cohesion within the industry, WABCG underlined **that innovation should always be the guiding principle of the sugar beet and sugarcane sectors around the world.** The pronouncements of the meeting include the following;

a) Innovation in growing practices. WABCG has just finalized a study on certification and segmentation to bring extra value to sugar beet and sugarcane. Many examples around the world show that certification, when built by growers, can be a tool to spread good practices in the field. Growers' associations should be involved in such schemes: they are the ones who can demonstrate to growers that better practices can lead to increased prosperity at farm level.

b) Innovation to fight the effects of price volatility on growers should be promoted. Innovative contracts, facilitating cohesion between growers and factories, and mitigating risks for the production chain, should also be promoted. Growers' associations should be involved in building new tools, including, for example, the reasonable use of sugar futures to fix cane and beet prices.

c) Innovation in outlets: in addition to sugar, ethanol, electricity or biogas production, cane and beet have exceptional *diversification potential* that should be promoted. Ethanol is an excellent outlet to mitigate the effect of low sugar prices and remains an easy way to reduce CO₂ emissions in the context of climate change. Ethanol production and use in carburettor fuel systems should be promoted throughout the world.

d) Innovation in organisation. WABCG underlines that these innovations can be built only by recognized, united, financially independent sugar beet/cane growers' associations, committed to supporting independent growers in the sugar supply chain, and allowing them to be heard and respected.

Upcoming Meetings

Mhlume PG @ Hambanathi Hall: 11 February 2020

Simunye PG @ Caritas Centre: 12 February 2020

Big Bend PG @ Phum'lamcashi: 13 February 2020

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

By: Zinhle Ndlovu

Unwelcome sexual advances or conduct of sexual nature may interfere with performance of the victim and create an intimidating, hostile and offensive work environment. There is also a high reputational risk which may affect access to the already dwindling markets. It is therefore important to understand what sexual harassment is and how to prevent it to create safe working spaces.

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours, unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes the person feel offended, humiliated and /or intimidated, where a reasonable person would anticipate that reaction in the circumstances.

For something to be considered sexual harassment, what matters more is what the person who's being harassed thinks; It does **not** matter if the person who's doing the harassment thinks it's OK, harmless, not sexual, or welcome (i.e., they think you like it or don't have a problem with it.) It's still harassment if the behavior is something the victim does not want or finds offensive.

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Workplace sexual harassment takes many different forms. It can come from a coworker, a supervisor, a customer or client. Some examples of Sexual harassment are as follows;

- ✓ Offensive gestures/signs
- ✓ Stalking
- ✓ Unwelcome acts of physical intimacy e.g. touching, pinching, deliberately brushing up against another individual
- ✓ Conduct including indecent exposure, social media and telephone calls
- ✓ Transmission of sexually explicit material on social media and internet
- ✓ Uninvited kisses and embraces
- ✓ Making promises or threats to solicit sexual favours
- ✓ Repeated requests for a date after prior refusal
- ✓ Staring at a person or parts of her body
- ✓ Unwelcome Requests for sex
- ✓ Offensive jokes of sexual nature-inappropriate comments and humiliation
- ✓ Sexually explicit conversations
- ✓ Gossiping about someone's personal relationships or sex life

THE DUTY OF EMPLOYERS

- ✓ Every employer has a duty to take all reasonable steps to create and maintain a workplace environment that is free of sexual harassment.
- ✓ It is the employer's duty to develop policies and systems that are designed to prevent and deal with incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace. If an organization already has a policy in place, there is a need to review it to ensure that the requirements of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence (SODV) Act are well covered.
- ✓ Train your employees about the Sexual offenses and Domestic Violence (SODV) Act of 2018.

