



“Cane For Growth”

Eswatini Cane Growers Association Quarterly Newsletter

Executive Editor’s Note

It is with humility and warmth that I present the 11th edition of our in-house electronic newsletter. The document has proven very useful in connecting the cane grower community in general and specifically during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Office has been instructed by the ExCo to grow the newsletter beyond the electronic medium limits. The Office is currently investigating strategies to fund the desired growth.

As I write this note I am conscious that the Covid-19 impact has entered a second wave with rage and vengeance. Almost all sectors of the Eswatini society are represented in the 234 deaths related to the pandemic. May their souls rest in peace and their families be comforted. The latest number of diagnosed cases 10 700 and the known people still capable of infecting others (active) is currently estimated at about 3 000 having risen from less than 200 a mere month ago. Common sense has taught us that the known cases are just the tip of the iceberg. Cases have been found in all four zones of the cane growing business. Deaths have been reported both north and south of the industry.

The rate at which the pandemic is being felt calls for urgent graduation from academic debates to immediate individual and collective compliance with Government and WHO guidelines. We hope and pray that our members will find it inside themselves to do the right thing for themselves, their families and the rest of human kind. The office will continue to share available information and tips through email, WhatsApp and other media at the office’s disposal.

We trust members will derive benefit and somewhat still enjoy reading our latest publication.

– Dr. S V Nkambule



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Grower Competition

By Zinhle Ndlovu – GSM

The Eswatini Sugar Association, in collaboration with Eswatini Cane Growers Association held their annual Small scale Grower Competition on the 16th of October 2020 where best performers were awarded. The year 2020 awarding ceremony was a different one as the event which is normally open to all growers had only ± 50 people including the sponsors. This was done in compliance with the COVID-19 regulations.

This year's competition saw the introduction of a new category "The most consistent grower" which is sponsored by Standard Bank. The award went to Babe Mavelempini Dlamini an individual grower, from Vuvulane Irrigated Farms (VIF) who has demonstrated consistency over the years.

In his speech, Mr Dlamini thanked all the organisations for the work they do and the Extension Officers had been of much help in the frontlines. He also extended gratitude to Standard Bank for their contribution to the competition. As a way of encouraging other growers, he read two passages of scripture.

Proverbs (*Taga*) 28: 18 and 19;

"The one whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but the one whose ways are perverse will fall into the pit. Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies will have their fill of poverty."

Proverbs 28: 18-19



Cane Grower Competition 2020.

Left: Mr. M Dlamini rendering his speech.

Right: ESA & ECGA CEOs, Extension Team presenting awards to the Growers

And the book of 2 Thessalonians (*kwabaseThesalonika*) 3: 6 – 12:

"⁶In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you,⁸ nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you.⁹ We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate.¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

¹¹ We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies.¹² Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat."

2 Thessalonians 3: 6 – 12

With these words Mr Dlamini encouraged other farmers to work hard emphasising that they were lucky to farm the land in this country, free of charge. He further emphasised that a farmer cannot afford to be lazy. They must work hard in order to gain more from the business. He went on to say that farmers should work with humility as hard work and humility will take a man far.

We at ECGA take this opportunity to congratulate and celebrate Mr Dlamini and the other cane Growers who won prizes at the competition. We encourage other growers to emulate the example of the winners. We further wish to thank all stakeholders who made the event the success it was.



Annual General Meeting

By Dr. S V Nkambule – CEO

The Covid-19 pandemic brought about the catalyst to do things differently. On such area for thinking outside the box was the statutory ECGA Annual general Meeting. Historically the events open to all who are willing and available to attend. However, that was not possible in 2020 due to necessity to abide by the requirements to safeguard life from Covid-19. Exercising the power enshrined by the Constitution the Executive Committee resolved to waive the requirement hold the meeting by end of September with the hope that the situation would improve. However the opposite happened hence the meeting was held against all odds on 10 November 2020.

To enable holding the meeting within the regulatory limit of 50 people the Association invoked the Constitutional provision for proxy representation. A major drive to facilitating signing of the proxies was launched. The Exco and the Office wish to thank members for their cooperation during the exercise.

As a result of the cooperation the meeting was held with quorum of each Planters' Group. Key resolutions on audited financial statements and new budget and levy were taken to enable functionality of the Association during the 2021/22 Financial Year.



Annual General Meeting of 2020, at Mhlume Country Club.

Grower Report

By Dr. S V Nkambule – CEO

The 2020/21 season was nothing but grace in action. For the first time in the history of the Eswatini sugarcane industry the entire harvesting and milling campaign happened under a partial lockdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. It was grace that the industry was spared a complete shutdown and was never an epicenter of the infection. Growers and millers were able to duck and dive the virus until the campaign was completed.

When the season closed an estimated 783 971 tonnes of sucrose had been delivered and processed. Of greater significance is that growers were able to deliver their cane before the mill closures.

The latest estimate sucrose price is an average E4 309 per ton (Mhlume = E4 293, Simunye = 4 192, Bid Bend = E4 192). If confirmed the price will be approximately 15% up year on year.

We trust that growers will continue to do their best to overcome the effects of the second wave that are already proven more severe than the first wave. By another grace we hope that an effective vaccine will be rolled out before the next milling season begins.



World AIDS Day

By Zinhle Ndlovu – GSM

On the 1st of December, the whole world commemorates World AIDS Day every year. People around the world unite to show support for people living with HIV and to remember those who have died from AIDS-related illnesses. Each World AIDS Day focuses on a specific theme, which this year (2020) was “Eswatini in Solidarity to end AIDS by 2022: A shared responsibility” in SiSwati “*Sibumbene!! Ngimi nawe sincoba iAIDS nga2022*” This year’s theme seeks to join a growing list of challenges that World AIDS Day has alerted people globally which is solidarity.

Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever international day for global health.

Every year, United Nations agencies, governments and civil society join together to campaign around specific themes related to HIV.

The Kingdom of Eswatini has made major strides in its HIV response with targets set in 2016 that by 2020, 90% of people living with HIV will know their HIV status, 90% of people who know their HIV-positive status will be accessing treatment and 90% of people on treatment will have suppressed viral loads.



The well-known awareness activity is to wear a red ribbon, which is a universal symbol of support to people living with HIV/AIDS and are victims of this disease.

This year the Eswatini Private Sector’s Response to Health and AIDS, SWABCHA, has committed themselves to support the fight against

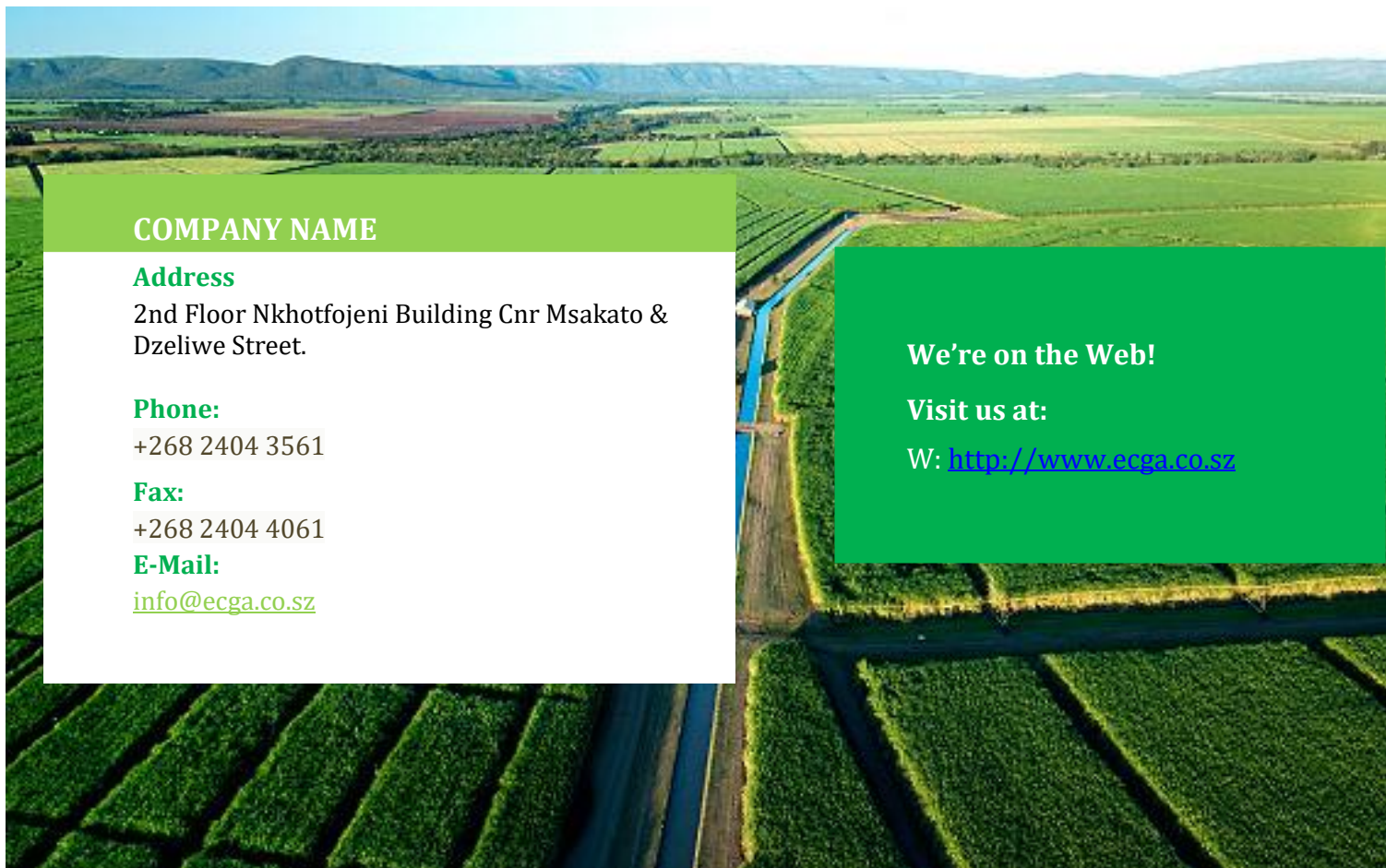
HIV/AIDS through the sub-theme **“The rights of women and girls, and gender equality, are at the centre”**

The Global theme for WAD 2020 is “Global Solidarity, Shared Responsibility”. In 2020, the world’s attention has been focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on lives and livelihoods. COVID-19 has demonstrated that, during a pandemic, no one is safe until everyone is safe and leaving people behind is not an option if we are to succeed. Eliminating stigma and discrimination, putting people at the centre and grounding our responses in human rights and gender-responsive approaches are key to ending the colliding pandemics of HIV and COVID-19.



Disposal of empty pesticide containers

The process of collecting and disposing empty pesticide containers started in March 2020. A total of **6 126** containers (*9.2 tonnes*) have been collected since the operation and an additional **1110** containers have been collected and disposed of since October.



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