



Livestock & Meat Advisory Council

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OVERVIEW

The new Livestock Business Forum introduced by the Council to create a single platform for discussion of livestock issues by all stakeholders has been welcomed across the industry. This engagement will enable the industry to be more proactive in identifying and resolving challenges and driving livestock productivity. It is planned to hold the Livestock Business Forum every six weeks.

Livestock stakeholders in the South of the country have applauded the holding of the Livestock Business Forum in Matabeleland, 'the beef basket of the country'. The Food and Agriculture Organisation hosted the meeting in collaboration with LMAC.

A Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Committee has been established in the wake of the worsening spread of FMD in the country. The Committee will meet weekly to monitor the situation on the ground and to strategise on the way forward for managing FMD.

Livestock Business Forum, Bulawayo

The Livestock Business Forum held in Bulawayo on 1st February attracted a cross section of livestock stakeholders and other interested parties. With herd rebuilding underway and two new abattoirs to be established in the south of the country this year, the Bulawayo Livestock Business Forum focused on cattle.

Livestock Business Forum, Harare

The inaugural Livestock Business Forum in Harare took stock of the operating environment for livestock production, reviewing inputs supply, access to the required foreign currency and finance, the regulatory framework and other challenges. Against the backdrop of the ongoing national 'Ease of Doing Business Initiative', it was noted that several impediments remain in the way of efficiency and the ability of the livestock industry to be competitive and keep the cost of producing protein as low as possible for the end consumer.

Duplication of levies and processes under different authorities was cited as a cost driver in livestock production. Currently, cattle producers are paying \$116 in levies, duties and taxes

per animal slaughtered. This runs counter to the efforts of the Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) which is seeking to improve efficiency at all levels.

Under both the Manufacturing and Agriculture RRI, multiple regulations have been identified for negatively affecting performance of the livestock sector. A World Bank project is now underway in Zimbabwe to define universal 'ease of doing agribusiness' principles for the livestock sector. Statutory Instrument 129 of 2017 is currently under review, pending further consultation between government and stakeholders.

The Forum noted that maintaining animal health and disease surveillance to underpin production and sustaining export markets is a shared responsibility across the industry. With taxpayer funding no longer adequate, strong public-private partnerships will be needed to build veterinary capacity. The Principal Director, Department of Veterinary and Livestock Services, called on all players to commit to the long-term sustainability of their industry by observing veterinary authority protocols and regulations.

The Zimbabwe Republic Police Anti-Stocktheft Unit reported a 20% increase in stock theft since November. Police road blocks are being mounted again in some areas as a control measure against cattle rustling and to curb illegal cattle movement which is contributing to the spread of FMD.

To proactively address some of the challenges to livestock production, the following were proposed at Livestock Business Forum:

- i) Strategic and aggregated procurement of imported raw materials for stockfeed manufacture, as local production will not be sufficient. This will help ensure adequate stocks of raw material for the livestock industry, at a consistent price. To fill the soya bean requirement gap this year, it is advocated that soya beans are imported for local crushing to ensure that Zimbabwean industry can benefit from value addition.
- ii) Streamlining of the regulatory framework to ensure that unnecessary duplications are avoided, and unwarranted charges are not unnecessarily driving up the cost of livestock production – and the cost of protein products to the consumer.
- iii) Adequate foreign currency for procurement of veterinary and nutritional supplements required for the livestock industry are made available. The high cost of foreign currency is currently also a cost driver.

This is critical to build an efficient and competitive business environment for livestock production in Zimbabwe. It is also essential if the country is to reap the benefits of the massive livestock development programmes in 2018 – Command Livestock, Command Fisheries and the EU funded Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme, outlined at the Livestock Business Forum.

Schedule of forthcoming meetings and events: February and March

<i>February 28th</i>	Council meeting of the Stockfeed Manufacturers' Association
<i>March 2nd</i>	Council meeting of the Zimbabwe Fish Producers' Association
<i>March 7th</i>	Council meeting of the Zimbabwe Poultry Association
<i>March 14th</i>	Open meeting of the Zimbabwe Association of Abattoirs
	Open meeting of the Pig Producers Association of Zimbabwe
<i>March 22nd</i>	Livestock Business Forum, Harare