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NEC AGRICULTURE 2025

4TH QUARTER NEWSLETTER



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CEO'S FOREWORD



On the back of a challenging year 2025, we look back with pride at some of the achievements that we have made nonetheless. In what turned out to be a year of both unprecedented challenges and unprecedented successes, as an organisation we have endeavoured to show you, our stakeholders, the quality and value in our service provision, guided by our empowering statute and our strategic plan.

In everything that we have done, we have put having the correct personnel who are equipped with the right skills front and centre of our activities. We therefore invested in knowledge and capacity-building, guaranteeing that our Designate Agents are able to confidently answer to your concerns. We have been recognised not only in the private sector with various accolades, but performed outstandingly among NECs in the eyes of our parent Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, winning several prizes in the inaugural Ministry NECs Awards at the most recent General Secretaries and Chairpersons Symposium held at Victoria Falls.

To solidify these accolades, we have intensified our programming around compliance training to ensure that employers and employees do not fall foul of national and industry labour standards. We continue to maintain sensitivities towards ensuring the eradication of Gender-Based Violence and Harassment in the workplace, as well as disability and HIV/AIDS discrimination.

This year was special in our training programming as NEC Agriculture played a central role in socialising the industry job re-evaluation outcomes and ensuring that jobs and job grades are being gazetted per subsector. Issues have been resolved as they arise and we believe that the implementation has gone smoothly so far. Designated Agents continue to conduct spot inspections to ensure that all employees and employers are conforming to these standards. NEC Agriculture has also been very busy litigiously albeit under forced circumstances where the interests of the industry had to be defended. We continue to pursue unity in the industry and fair, orderly conditions of collective bargaining in fulfilment of our mandate. Where these fundamental issues are threatened, the Council spares no lawful means to ensure that sanity prevails in the industry.

We continue to find ways to add value to our clients as well. We have responded to the need for contract templates in the industry covering the different contract types recognised in the industry, and have made contract templates available to the industry free of charge. As we look forward to 2026 which is already ahead of us as a year unspoilt, we look forward to new exciting initiatives, consistent service provision, and collaboration with our agricultural undertakings particularly employers and employees in the industry. I take the opportunity to thank you for your support in 2025, which was well appreciated, as well as to implore your continued cooperation to meet the national aspirations together of a rejuvenated, prosperous, agricultural industry, which in turn will give us a rejuvenated and prosperous nation. I wish you a good summer cropping season!

Sincerely

David Madyausiku

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AWARENESS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

By SIBUSISIWE MARUMA

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains a critical concern within Zimbabwe's agricultural sector, where farm workers often live and work in close-knit communities. GBV undermines dignity, safety, productivity, and social cohesion, and its effects extend beyond individuals to families, workplaces, and the broader farming community. The national legislature addressed this issue in the Labour Amendment Act No. 11 of 2023 by inserting a definition of conduct considered to be "gender-based violence and harassment". In this regard, it provided in an insertion to section 2 of the Act that "gender-based violence and harassment" means violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment.

NEC Agriculture recognizes that a safe and respectful working environment is fundamental to decent work and improved productivity, with the most vulnerable groups being women and persons with disability. Violence, harassment, and abuse—whether physical, emotional, sexual, or economic—negatively affect worker morale, health, and performance, leading to absenteeism, labour disputes, and reduced output. Violence, harassment and abuse are aggravated when they are linked to the sex or gender of persons who are victims, and it is now expressly recognised in the Labour Act, aligning Zimbabwe fully to the International Labour Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.

NEC Agriculture has a lynchpin role to play as at one time an inspectorate and an advisory body in eliminating GBV and Harassment. Through awareness initiatives, stakeholder engagement, and enforcement of fair labour standards, NEC Agriculture promotes a zero-tolerance attitude to GBV and Harassment on farms. By encouraging reporting mechanisms, respect for fundamental rights, and gender equality, the NEC supports safer workplaces and harmonious labour relations, upholding the maxim that prevention is better than reaction.

Addressing GBV is not only a social responsibility, but a productivity imperative. An informed, protected, and empowered workforce contributes to stable farm operations, sustainable agriculture, and national development.

HIV and AIDS Awareness in the Agricultural Sector

HIV and AIDS awareness is centred as an issue deserving the enduring attention of Zimbabwe's agricultural industry, given its effect on farm workers, their families, and productivity on farms. The impact of HIV and AIDS extends beyond health, influencing labour availability, workplace performance, and household livelihoods in farming communities. Hence entities are required to put an HIV/AIDS sector policy in place within the workplace, in line with SI 105 of 2014, and to make this statutory instrument available to employees in the workplace.

NEC Agriculture's programming ensures awareness, prevention, and non-discrimination in the workplace for the Agricultural Industry. In line with labour standards and national policies, the NEC exists among other things to promote fair treatment of workers living with HIV, confidentiality, and equal access to employment opportunities. Stigma and discrimination not only violate workers' rights but also discourage testing, treatment, and disclosure, sustaining the spread of HIV and its destructive cycle.

Through awareness programmes and stakeholder engagement, NEC Agriculture encourages prevention strategies, safe work practices, and access to health information and services at all farms and agricultural undertakings. Supporting HIV treatment regimen adherence and reasonable workplace accommodations helps maintain a healthy, productive, and stable workforce in an environment that enables all to thrive.

Sibusisiwe Maruma is a Designated Agent at NEC Agriculture stationed at Harare.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

By Monalisa Mpambawasha

Conflict is an inevitable part of any workplace. When employees with different backgrounds, perspectives, and values come together, disagreements are bound to arise. In this context, how conflict is managed takes on greater importance. Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in conflict resolution, enabling individuals to navigate complex emotional situations and find mutually beneficial solutions.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize and understand emotions in oneself and others. It involves being able to regulate one's own emotions, empathize with others, and use this awareness to guide thought and behavior. In the context of conflict resolution, EI is essential for managing one's own emotions and responding to the emotional needs of others.

The Benefits of Emotional Intelligence in Conflict Resolution

When individuals with high EI are involved in a conflict, they're more likely to:

Remain calm and composed: EI helps individuals recognize and manage their own emotions, reducing the likelihood of escalating conflict.

Empathize with others: By understanding the emotional perspective of the other party, individuals with high EI can build trust and rapport, creating a more constructive dialogue.

Communicate effectively: EI enables individuals to communicate their needs and concerns clearly and respectfully, reducing misunderstandings and miscommunications.

Find creative solutions: By understanding the underlying emotional needs and concerns of all parties involved, individuals with high EI can identify creative solutions that meet everyone's needs.

How Designated Agents apply emotional intelligence

Active listening: DAs use active listening skills to understand the concerns and emotions of all parties involved in conflicts. This helps to build trust and rapport and ensures that all issues are addressed.

Empathy: DAs demonstrate empathy by acknowledging the emotions and perspectives of all parties and showing understanding of their concerns.

Remaining calm and composed: DAs remain calm and composed, even in difficult or confrontational situations, which helps to de-escalate tensions and create a more constructive dialogue.

Understanding underlying issues: DAs use EI to identify underlying issues and concerns that may be contributing to the conflict and address these issues in a constructive manner.

Managing emotions: DAs are aware of their own emotions and manage them effectively, ensuring that their emotions do not influence their decision-making or interactions with others.

Building trust: DAs build trust with all parties involved in the conflict by being transparent, fair, and consistent in their approach.

Fostering a positive work environment: DAs promote a positive work environment by encouraging open communication, respect, and empathy among employees.

Strategies for Developing Emotional Intelligence in Conflict Resolution

Self-awareness: Recognize your own emotions and how they impact your behavior in conflict situations.

Active listening: Pay attention to the emotional cues of the other party and respond with

empathy and understanding.

Label and validate emotions: Acknowledge and validate the emotions of the other party, even if you don't agree with their perspective.

Use "I" statements: Instead of blaming the other party, use "I" statements to express your thoughts and feelings.

Seek common ground: Look for areas of agreement and try to find mutually beneficial solutions.

Here are some instances where EI is applied by Designated Agents (DAs)

Managing Parties during Conciliation or Arbitration Proceedings

DAs need to establish a rapport with both parties to facilitate open and honest communication. DAs must recognize and manage their own emotions, as well as those of the parties involved, to prevent conflicts from escalating. For example, in the case where an employee's contract was terminated without notice. The DA may use emotional intelligence and discover that the parties just had a misunderstanding and the employer used emotions. In that case DAs must remain neutral and unbiased, using their emotional intelligence to understand different perspectives and find mutually beneficial solutions.

Conducting Inspections

DAs need to establish trust with employers and employees to gather accurate information and promote compliance. For instance, when a DA conducts a field inspection and an employee may seem hesitant to answer her questions due to fear of reprisals by the employer. The DA needs to recognize the worker's emotional state and empathize with his/her situation, and in so doing reassure the employee of the confidentiality of their discussion and the legal protections that he or she enjoys. The DA then should adapt to the worker's approach and create a safe space for the worker to open up about potential labour violations.

Recommendations for Organizations

The need for EI is reciprocal and enhanced EI for Designated Agents, employers and employees will create greater likelihood for swift resolution of any issues that may arise in the context of the workplace. Organisations may therefore consider the following recommendations:

Provide EI training: Offer training programs that focus on developing emotional intelligence skills, such as self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication.

Encourage open communication: Foster an open and supportive work environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their emotions and concerns.

Model EI behavior: Leaders and managers should model EI behavior themselves, demonstrating empathy, self-awareness, and effective communication.

Emotional intelligence is a critical component of effective conflict resolution. By developing EI skills, individuals can better navigate complex emotional situations, build trust and rapport, and find creative solutions that meet everyone's needs. In today's fast-paced and often conflict-prone work environments, EI is an essential tool for anyone looking to resolve conflicts effectively and improve workplace relationships. By prioritizing emotional intelligence in conflict resolution, organizations can create a more positive and productive work environment, where employees feel valued, heard, and empowered to resolve conflicts effectively.

Monalisa Mpambawasha is an Industrial Relations Intern at NEC Agriculture stationed at Harare.

SUGARCANE, AGRO SUBSECTOR & GENERAL AGRICULTURE SUBSECTOR JOBS AND JOB GRADES GAZETTED

By Veronica Nyoni

Stakeholders are hereby advised that the job re-evaluation reports for the Sugarcane, General Agriculture and Agro subsectors were officially gazetted as Statutory Instruments, in terms of the laws of Zimbabwe, having been registered with the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare.

The jobs and job grades determined through the job re-evaluation exercise that was done for the industry from 2022 to 2024 were gazetted for the Sugarcane Subsector as Statutory Instrument 224 of 2025, for the General Agriculture subsector as Statutory Instrument 231 of 2025, and for the Agro subsector as Statutory Instrument 232 of 2025.

The registration of these agreements as Statutory Instruments accords them full legal force, rendering the prescribed job evaluation, grading, and remuneration frameworks binding on all employers and employees within the respective subsectors. The effect of the gazetting is the partial repeal of S.I. 41 of 2022 as far as it provides for jobs and grades in the two subsectors.

This development represents a major milestone towards the standardisation of employment practices, catering for the diversity and specific conditions of the different subsectors of the industry, promotion of equity in job grading, and strengthening of industrial relations across the agriculture industry.

The job re-evaluation exercise was formally socialised with Designated Agents performing visits to stakeholders and various awareness initiatives being implemented to ensure smooth implementation. Council meanwhile approved that the implementation of the outcomes of the Job re-evaluation process would take effect from 1 September 2025. Designated Agents of the Employment Council will be conducting checks on the implementation of this important exercise across all farms and subsectors in order to promote fairness and productivity in conditions of equity and social justice for the agricultural industry. To access all Job Evaluation Reports gazetted so far, kindly consult our website or contact your regional Designated Agent for assistance.

Veronica Nyoni is a Designated Agent at NEC Agriculture stationed at Marondera Branch

END-OF-YEAR GET-TOGETHER

By Stella Jalazi

On 19 December 2026 NECAIZ held its end-of-year get-together for secretariat staff as part of efforts to promote staff team compatibility, cohesion, and organisational alignment. The initiative, organised by the Chief Executive Officer, provided an opportunity for employees to engage with one another in person, strengthen working relationships, reflect on the year's achievements, and to plan and align the team for the objectives of 2026. The gesture was widely commended by employees as a demonstration of people-centred leadership.

The event was graced by Dr Request Machimbira of Blackbelt Human Capital Institute, who presided over an unexpected training opportunity for the secretariat staff. He applauded NECAIZ for its exemplary performance among National Employment Councils, especially in setting the pace for best practices for NECs, as well as in effective information management. He emphasised that information is a strategic asset whose value depends on how it is collected, analysed, and utilised. Dr Machimbira noted that to its credit, NEC Agriculture's success is driven by deliberate strategy, structure, and organisational orderliness.



Dr Machimbira also shared useful guidance on personal and professional improvement, encouraging the staff members to adopt **Individual Development Strategies (IDS)**, highlighting the importance of personal planning and alignment with organisational goals. He cautioned that lack of strategy leads to misalignment, which ultimately affects effectiveness, trust, and performance. Commitment and orderliness, he stressed, remain critical for both personal and organisational success.

As the organisation prepares for 2026, Dr Machimbira also taught the team about the **Stop-Continue-Start (SCS)** framework as a tool for reflection and renewal. He urged employees to stop unproductive behaviours, continue good practices that yield results, and start doing new identified things that improve them and the organisation in the new year.



Addressing team dynamics, Dr Machimbira highlighted the importance of balancing organisational “hardware” (infrastructure and systems) with “software” (culture, leadership, and teamwork). He cautioned against negative internal competition, selfishness, “backbiting”, and “territorial behaviour”, urging staff to embrace collaboration, openness, and adherence to organisational ethos. He further noted that performance should be measured by effectiveness and results rather than mere physical presence at the workplace. The engagement concluded with a call for renewed alignment, teamwork, and commitment as NECAIZ moves into the new year with a shared vision for excellence.

The CEO also outlined his exciting vision for 2026 and the expectations that staff have to meet in serving the industry. He highlighted the key milestones achieved in terms of the strategy of the organisation, and the strategic objectives for 2026 together with the means to be employed for their attainment. The presentation of the CEO left the staff members excited to implement the vision for the benefit of the agricultural industry.

Stellah Jalazi is a receptionist stationed at Marondera Branch

ANTICIPATED HEAVY RAINFALL

By Irvine Muchenje

There is mixed news on the weather front. The recent heavy rainfall in many parts of the country is a blessing to some, but a challenge for some of our farmers. While the rain is a welcome boost for crops, the excessive water might lead to waterlogging and potential yield losses for some.

Areas with poor drainage are at risk of flooding, which could damage the crops, and too much water can lead to root and other diseases.

Farmers should check their drainage systems:



When there is too much rainfall farmers should consider the following.

Check Drainage: Ensure fields have proper drainage to prevent waterlogging.

Monitor Crops: Keep an eye on crops for signs of stress, disease or pests.

Protect livestock's: Move animals to higher ground if flooding is likely.

Safety First: Stop fieldwork if conditions are risky (e.g. lightning, flooding, slippery terrain and provide workers with protective clothing suitable for rainy conditions).

When dealing with harsh weather conditions we should consider the following:

- Protect farm workers from heat stress, sun exposure, and extreme conditions.
- Ensure livestock are also protected (shelter, hydration, veterinary care if needed).
- Provide PPE suited for weather to farm workers (sun heats, rainy gear, gloves).



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NEC AGRICULTURE STAKEHOLDERS' CAPACITY BUILDING: DESIGNATED AGENTS AND TRADE UNIONS TRAININGS

By Dumoluhle L Ndebele

Alan Garcia infamously stated that it is important to "Invest in people, and they will invest in the future." This appears to be the motivation behind NEC Agriculture's capacity-building programme, which saw Trade Union officials and Designated Agents being trained. The main aim was to ensure that both Designated Agents and Trade Union officials provide a productivity-based and growth-oriented approach in the agricultural industry. The two-day training program was facilitated by the expert in Labour Law, Mr Samson Mugumisi.

Participants

It is the culture of NEC Agriculture to capacitate Designated Agents through training. What made this training unique and historic is the involvement of all trade unions registered with the NEC Agriculture. All Designated Agents from NEC Agriculture and representatives of Trade Unions registered with NEC Agriculture were invited to participate. This was not limited to Harare officials, where the event was held, but it was devolved to officials across Zimbabwe. The aim was to ensure that both Designated Agents and the Trade Union officials around the country sing from the same hymn book in terms of ensuring industry growth, fairness, and sustainability.



Delegates follow proceedings at the Designated Agent and Trade Union officials training, organised by the NEC Agriculture

Training Content

The program was designed to ensure that participants understand their contemporary roles in the industry. Some areas of focus included in the program are discussed below.

Beginning with the end in mind: Purpose of the Labour Act (Chapter 28:01).

The facilitator emphasized to participants that the purpose of the Labour Act, as stated in section 2A, is "to advance social justice and democracy in the workplace...". This should be the guiding principle in all activities of Designated Agents and the Trade Union officials.

Employee Rights under the Constitution and the Labour Act

Employee rights in Zimbabwe are fundamentally enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), particularly Section 65 of the Declaration of Rights, and elaborated in the Labour Act

[Chapter 28:01], Part II (Fundamental Rights of wages and conditions of service through employment councils, protecting workers against unfair labour practices, and ensuring compliance with workplace democracy. Trade unions also provide a platform for employees to participate in dispute resolution, organize collective job action such as strikes, and defend members against victimization or discrimination. Furthermore, they foster solidarity among workers, advocate for safe working conditions, and act as a voice for employees in policy dialogue with employers and government institutions.

Contemporary Trade Union Official

A contemporary trade union is no longer just about wages and strikes; it is a multifaceted institution that negotiates fair employment terms, protects vulnerable workers, advocates for progressive labour policies, and adapts to the realities of globalization and digital transformation. They aim to promote policies that further employment through promoting industry productivity.

The NEC Agriculture stakeholders' capacity-building programme demonstrated the importance of aligning the roles of Designated Agents and Trade Union officials with the broader objectives of social justice, workplace democracy, and industry growth. The participants were reminded that their mandate extends beyond enforcement to fostering productivity, fairness, and sustainable development in the agricultural sector. The inclusion of all trade unions alongside NEC Designated Agents marked a historic step towards unity of purpose, ensuring that both sides of the employment relationship work collaboratively to uphold employee rights while promoting employer interests.

Dumoluhle L. Ndebele is a Designated Agent, stationed at Bulawayo Branch

FOCUS ON NEC AGRICULTURE CBA: GRATUITY

By Nyarai Maparara

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) is an important document that provides guidelines for operations in each industry. For employers and employees in the Agricultural sector, the guiding CBA is Statutory Instrument 41 of 2022. In this quarter, a topic under consideration in the CBA is gratuity.

Numerous cases have been brought before Designated Agents on allegations of unpaid gratuity. This article aims to equip employees and employers with better ways of preventing disputes emanating from gratuity.

GRATUITY

Gratuity can be defined as a form of monetary reward or compensation provided by employers to employees for their service to the organisation. Unlike regular salary or wages, gratuity is typically paid as a lump sum amount upon the completion of a certain period of service, such as retirement, resignation, or termination. In the Agricultural Industry, a minimum standard was negotiated for gratuity, meaning that at the end of service, an employer may be expected to give, or an employee may be entitled to receive a gratuity if they meet the minimum service period. According to Statutory Instrument 41 of 2022, a gratuity is payable to all employees at termination after completion of five (5) years or more with the employer, irrespective of the circumstances of termination.

The primary purpose of gratuity is to acknowledge and reward employees for their long-term commitment and contributions to the organization. It serves as a financial safety net and a means of ensuring employee loyalty, motivation, and retention. By offering gratuity benefits, employers demonstrate their commitment to employee welfare and recognize the value of employee tenure and loyalty.

Who is it payable to?

In the Agricultural sector, gratuity is paid to an employee who has completed five or more years of continuous service with the employer. If an employee's contract happens to be terminated irrespective of the circumstances, he or she is to be paid gratuity of not less than the amount derived by multiplying the appropriate percentage of his or her current monthly wage by the number of completed years of continuous service.

Formula for calculating Gratuity

The formula for paying gratuity is as follows: -

Basic pay x percentage given (based on the number of years) x Number of years worked

The table below provides percentages applicable to the number of years completed.

Length of Service (Years)	Percentage of the monthly wage on Termination of employment
5	10
6	11
7	12
8	13
9	14
10	15

11	16
12	17
13	18
14	19
15	20
16	21

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