



# NEC AGRICULTURE 3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER NEWSLETTER 2025

DRIVEN BY INNOVATION, RESILIENCE AND  
GROWTH



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# CEO's Foreword



Dear Reader,

We have concluded the third quarter of the year and as we steadily approach its final stretch, it is fitting that we pause to reflect on the work we have undertaken together so far, the challenges we have navigated, and the collective progress we continue to make as an industry. This edition of our newsletter offers not only an update on the activities of the National Employment Council for the Agricultural Industry in Zimbabwe (NEC Agriculture) but also a window into the shared striving that binds employers, employees, and the Council in pursuit of a fair, competitive, and sustainable agricultural sector.

The articles contained in this new edition of our e-zine speak to a common thread: that effective regulation, responsible labour administration, and constructive social dialogue are the cornerstones of a resilient agricultural economy. From our frontline work in supporting farmers with registration, compliance, and advisory services, to the hands-on stakeholder engagements in specialised subsectors such as Kapenta, the Council continues to demonstrate that structured collaboration is indispensable to industrial harmony and agricultural development.

Our article contributors eloquently highlight themes that are central to our national discourse: the imperative of lawful and ethical practice in farming operations; the importance of comprehensive record keeping and clearly articulated employment relationships; the value of building enduring partnerships between regulatory institutions and industry players; and the necessity of honouring statutory obligations as a shared investment in the institutions that uphold orderly labour relations.

In the engagements held across various regions, including our featured stakeholder engagement in Kariba, the message has been unmistakable: the sector's success depends on alignment between stakeholders, adherence to labour standards, and a willingness to address our challenges through informed, participatory, and forward-looking dialogue. Whether the issue at hand relates to working hours, wage structures, or the unique operating conditions of our seven specialised subsectors, the Council's role remains one of guidance, support, and ensuring that collective agreements reflect both the realities of the industry and the principles of fairness and decency.

As the year is fast drawing to a close, the work before us remains considerable. Yet, the strides made in the months past give us confidence that our sector continues to move in the right direction, contributing to a vision that is bigger than us individually or as an industry: a vision of building a successful and prosperous Zimbabwe! We are encouraged by the increased uptake of our services, the growing interest in compliance training, which we have availed at constant intervals, and the positive responses to our capacity-building initiatives. Equally, we draw inspiration from the hardworking agricultural employers and employees who continue to demonstrate that agriculture is the heartbeat of the nation, built upon the foundations of trust, transparency, harmonious work, and shared responsibility.

Let us carry our momentum into the final quarter of the year that is already underway. The nation anticipates the advent of a promising rainy season. Let us draw strength from the progress we have made in the recovery of the industry from devastating drought of the 2023-2024 season, and remain steadfast in advancing a sector that contributes critically to national development, food security, and the dignity of all who work within it. Together, we have the opportunity and the obligation to consolidate the gains of 2025 thus far and position our industry for an even stronger year ahead.

*Pamberi nekushanda, Phambili ngomusebenzi!*

Regards

**DAVID MADYAUSIKU**



# Supporting Farmers Through Service, Registration, and Development

By Yolanda Veremu

The National Employment Council for the Agriculture Industry in Zimbabwe (NEC Agriculture) plays a vital role in ensuring stability, fairness, and growth in Zimbabwe's agricultural sector. Beyond its function as a regulatory body, NEC Agriculture provides a range of services designed to support both employers and employees, ultimately fostering sustainable agricultural development.

## 1. NEC Agriculture's Services for Farmers

NEC Agriculture offers comprehensive services that benefit farmers, farm employees, and the industry at large. Among the most important are:

**Registration of employers and workers** within the agricultural sector, ensuring compliance with national labour laws and collective bargaining agreements.

**Dispute resolution mechanisms** that address workplace conflicts, wage disputes, and grievances in a structured and fair manner.

**Training programs** on labour relations, occupational safety, and compliance requirements, helping both employers and employees better understand their rights and responsibilities.

**Compliance inspections and advisory visits**, which promote adherence to agreed labour standards and improve working conditions across farms.

These services are essential in maintaining harmonious relations and ensuring that productivity in the sector is not disrupted by avoidable disputes.

## 2. The Importance of Registration with NEC Agriculture

Registration with NEC Agriculture is not only a legal requirement but also a strategic investment for employers and farmers. By registering, employers gain access to structured guidance on employment contracts, wage compliance, and dispute resolution. For employees, registration ensures protection under the collective bargaining agreement, safeguarding their rights to fair wages, safe working environments, and dignified treatment.

Unregistered employers risk penalties, disputes, and reputational harm that can affect their productivity and market access. More importantly, international buyers and development partners increasingly seek assurance that farms are compliant with labour standards. Registration with NEC Agriculture provides that assurance, giving registered farms a competitive edge in both local and international markets.

## 3. NEC Agriculture's Role in Promoting Agricultural Development

Beyond labour relations, NEC Agriculture actively contributes to the **growth and development of the agricultural industry**. By fostering industrial harmony, NEC creates a stable environment where farmers can focus on improving yields, adopting modern technologies, and exploring export opportunities.

Through its training and outreach programs, NEC Agriculture equips farm managers and workers with knowledge that enhances efficiency and safety in agricultural production. The Council also supports government and industry initiatives aimed at boosting food security, diversifying crops, and modernizing farming practices.

In this way, NEC Agriculture is more than just a regulatory body, it is a development partner for farmers, farm employees, and the nation. By aligning labour relations with broader agricultural goals, the Council ensures that Zimbabwe's agriculture remains resilient, competitive, and inclusive.

**Yolanda Veremu is a Receptionist at NEC Agriculture, Karoi Branch.**

# Regulatory Compliance- Why It's a Must in Agriculture

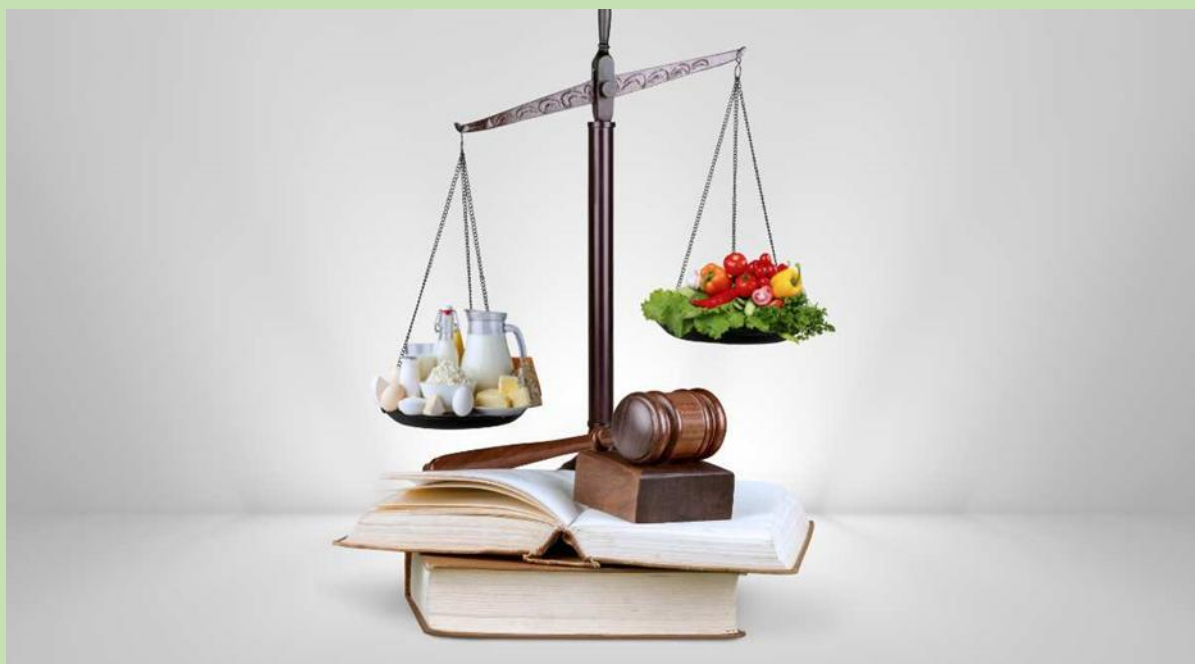
*By Peter Makusha*

## What it is

Regulatory compliance entails the adherence of business organisations and individuals to the laws, regulations and guidelines to ensure that business operations are done within legal framework and maintaining ethical standards. Organisations bear an obligation to uphold the law and operate in a professional manner. Regulatory compliance yields many benefits to those who adhere to it. Conversely, violators suffer huge consequences.

In agriculture, regulatory compliance encompasses a range of laws, guidelines and standards which guide farming practices. Regulatory compliance is not just a legal obligation. It is crucial for the health of the crops, safety of the consumers, and the sustainability of farming practices.

## Regulatory Compliance- The route to non-compliance.



## What Does Compliance Involve?

Compliance involves adherence to pesticide regulations, honoring collective bargaining agreements, practicing soil and water testing and thorough record keeping.

## Collective Bargaining Agreements and other laws

The agricultural industry is regulated by legislation as well as through collective bargaining agreements reached by social parties to the agricultural industry, namely employers, employer organisations, and trade unions. Statutory instrument 41 of 2022 is a must-have for

every farmer and farm employee as it sets out the basic conditions of service binding on all farmers, including contractors, and farm employees. Further to S.I. 41 of 2022, negotiated minimum wages serve as guidelines to safeguard against underpayments for farmers who cannot afford to pay higher salaries.

Different other laws administered by regulatory agencies such as NSSA, ZIMRA, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare among others place varying legal obligations on farmers to comply with as they conduct their farming operations. Building relationships with these agencies exposes farmers to relevant legislation which should be complied with. These, for instance, include NSSA Act, Income tax Act, Labour Act, Pneumoconiosis Act, export regulations, *et cetera*.

### **Pesticide Regulations**

This ensures that pesticide application meets safety standards and safeguard against exceeding allowable residue limits.

### **Soil and Water Testing**

It is important to conduct soil and water tests to monitor the health of soil and the quality of water so that crop yields are not affected.

### **Record Keeping**

There is need to maintain thorough records of all agricultural inputs and practices as they are essential to demonstrate compliance during inspections.

### **Benefits of Compliance**

Several benefits can be derived from regulatory compliance as explained below.

#### **Enhancing Market Access**

Many retailers and consumers prioritise sourcing products from farms which demonstrate a commitment to regulatory compliance and sustainable practices. Farmers can thus enhance their market access and appeal to broader consumer base by adherence to compliance. More new avenues for sales can open because of certifications related to organic farming, sustainable practices, and safety standards.

#### **Improving Crop Yields**

Regulatory Compliance leads to improved crop health and yields. It involves implementing best practices in soil management, pest control, and irrigation. For instance, by practicing regular agricultural testing of soil, farmers can detect nutrients deficiencies and do precise amendments which enhance productivity. With healthy soils, farmers realise better profitability.

#### **Ensuring Food Safety**

Compliance with regulations ensures that farmers follow best practices for food production, minimizing risks of contamination and harmful residues in their crops. This is critically important for vegetables and fruits which are often consumed raw. Consumers have great concern about the safety and quality of their food. Thus, one of the primary reasons for regulatory compliance is to ensure the quality and safety of food supply.

#### **Protecting the Environment**

Regulatory Compliance plays a pivotal role in protecting the environment. The upholding of regulations related to pesticide use, nutrients management, and waste disposal by farmers mitigates environmental footprints. For instance, possible runoff into water bodies is prevented by responsible pesticides application, and protection of aquatic ecosystem, water quality and biodiversity is enhanced. Non-adherence can have a profound effect on ecosystems, soil health and biodiversity.

### **Avoiding Adverse Legal Consequences**

It is common cause that non-compliance with regulations results in severe legal consequences including fines, sanctions and even the loss of farming licenses. Noncompliance can be detected by regulatory bodies through inspections and audits resulting in costly legal penalties thereby jeopardizing a farmer's reputation and ability to secure a market for his or her crops. Staying compliant thus protects farmers from these risks and creates a viable business environment.

### **How to Achieve Regulatory Compliance**

#### **Stay Informed**

Changes in agricultural regulations evolve rapidly and farmers need to stay updated. It is important to regularly review guidelines from regulatory authorities as well as attending workshops. NEC Agriculture has a website and a newly launched Facebook platform which can provide required information to farmers. NEC Agriculture also created social media platforms like WhatsApp groups for all regions where information is freely shared for the benefit of farmers. Designated Agents of the Employment Council are also available free of charge at the point of assistance to render any compliance advice.

#### **Implementing Best Practices**

Best management practices align with regulatory requirements and promote sustainable farming. Farmers need to adopt best management practices for pest control, nutrient management, and irrigation. The diagram shows healthy crops and the magnitude of productivity from best practices/ compliance which is pesticide control.





### **Engage with Regulatory Bodies**

Valuable insights can be drawn from building relationships with regulatory bodies which can offer training, guidance and support for achieving compliance. For instance, relationships with the Nec Agriculture and NSSA provides farmers with an opportunity to get to grips with compliance requirements.

### **Conduct Regular Testing**

Farmers should implement routine agricultural testing for soil, water and crops to detect potential issues early. This is a proactive approach which enables farmers to address problems before they escalate, and it ensures that safety and quality standards are met.

### **Maintain Accurate Records**

All farming activities should be well documented for demonstration of compliance as well as for tracking where things may go wrong for ease of identification and swift remediation. This includes information on inputs, outputs, and testing results.

### **Implications**

Farmers need to religiously comply with regulations, requirements and expectations for the agricultural industry. It is more valuable for the business and safeguards against unnecessary legal battles.

**Peter Makusha is a Designated Agent at the NEC Agriculture based in Gweru Branch.**

# Kapenta Sub-Sector Stakeholder Engagement Kariba

*By Sarafina Shoshore*

Stakeholder engagement within the Kapenta subsector in Kariba is a complex and ongoing process involving various groups with different interests, challenges, and goals. The management and sustainability of kapenta fishery in Lake Kariba, which is shared by Zimbabwe and Zambia, are at the heart of these discussions. As NEC Agriculture, the Chairmanship, Chief Executive Officer and management graced the Kariba district and engaged with the Zimbabwe Kapenta Producers Association (ZKPA) which is an employer organization, Kapenta Workers Union of Zimbabwe (KWUZ) and General Agriculture Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) as employee representatives on the best practices within the Kapenta sub-sector.

## **Declining fish catches**

The employers and employees shared the same sentiments on the decline of fish catches over the years. This is premised on influx of fishing rigs both legal and illegal, overfishing in Zambian waters beyond the control of Zimbabwe's authorities, and climate change which affects the water levels, water temperatures, nutrients and breeding cycles of the kapenta fish.

## **Working Hours**

This was a topical issue as the stakeholders wanted to know the stipulated working hours. They raised the special circumstances of the subsector and the need for conditions that reflect the unique practices of the subsector. They were advised that section 8(1) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement 41 of 2022 the ordinary hours of all employees shall not exceed two hundred and eight (208) hours per month. If the hours of work are not in line with S.I. 41 of 2022, then the employer may become liable to pay overtime to the employees required to work these additional hours. As such the subsector representatives were advised that if they so wish, it is open to them to come together to lobby and collectively bargain for any special arrangements for their subsector.

## **Permit holders**

It was reiterated that the permit holder is the farmer and must comply with the various statutes that govern the industry. These include the payment of dues to NEC on a month-on-month basis as per SI 96 of 2024 and the Collective bargaining agreement 41 of 2022. In addition, they need to adhere to SI 197 of 2020 regarding Safety and Health regulations, by providing proper personal protective equipment and clothing (PPEC) that is safe to use in the water during fishing.

## **Kapenta wage agreement**

The Kapenta wage negotiations were done at a meeting for that purpose involving employers and employees in the subsector. The parties agreed on increasing the Kapenta sub-sector minimum wage. The last minimum wage had been negotiated in September 2024, and the new negotiations resulted in a move in the A1 minimum wage from USD \$129.00 to USD \$140.00 in August 2025.



This was a welcome and accepted wage increase by both the employers and employees.

### **Kapenta Audit Team**

During the Kapenta subsector stakeholder engagement meeting several issues were identified and can only be addressed from within the industry. There was a motion that was proposed and adopted to form a committee that would investigate the prevailing challenges affecting both the employer and employees in their operations. These would then be presented and map a way forward in addressing them as a sub-sector.



**Sarafina Shoshore is a Designated Agent stationed in Karoi Region.**

# The Importance of Record Keeping and Contracts of Employment

*By Tapiwa Svuvure*

In today's dynamic workplace, maintaining proper records and ensuring every employee has a formal contract of employment is not just good practice—it's a legal requirement under Zimbabwe's Labour Act [Chapter 28:01]. These measures protect both employers and employees, fostering clarity, transparency, and accountability in the workplace.

## 1. Contracts of Employment: A Foundation for Workplace Clarity

A contract of employment is a formal agreement outlining the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of both the employer and employee. According to the Labour Act, every employee should receive a written contract that specifies key terms such as:

- Job title and description
- Working hours and leave entitles
- Remuneration and benefits
- Conditions for termination

Having a clear contract prevents misunderstandings, disputes, and potential legal complications. It also provides a reference point in case of disagreements regarding roles, pay, or working conditions.

## 2. Record Keeping: Protecting Rights and Supporting Compliance

The Labour Act mandates that employers keep accurate records of employees, including personal details, employment history, leave taken, remuneration, and disciplinary actions. Proper record keeping:

- Ensures compliance with labour laws
- Provides evidence in the event of disputes or audits
- Supports timely and accurate payroll management
- Enhances workforce planning and performance monitoring

## 3. Consequences of Poor Compliance

Failure to maintain proper records or provide written contracts can lead to serious consequences, including:

- Labour disputes and unfair dismissal claims

- Penalties or fines under the Labour Act
- Damage to the organization's reputation

#### **4. Best Practices for Employers**

- Issue contracts to all employees, even temporary or part-time staff
- Update contracts and records whenever terms change
- Keep both physical and digital records securely
- Regularly review compliance with the Labour Act

By prioritizing proper record keeping and formal employment contracts, organisations not only comply with legal requirements but also build a fair, transparent, and professional workplace culture.

#### **5. How NEC Agriculture is helping you to meet these requirements**

NEC Agriculture has recently recognized the need among employers in the agricultural industry for contract templates. Accordingly, NEC Agriculture has availed templates for contracts without limit of time, seasonal contracts, and fixed term contracts setting out the basic information that is required in terms of the Act.

While these are not compulsory for use, the contracts will go a long way to providing certainty to work arrangements between employers and employees. Stakeholders requiring use of the contract templates may download them free of charge on our website or enquire from any of our officers from any one of our 10 offices around Zimbabwe.

**Tapiwa Svure is a Designated Agent at the NEC Agriculture based in Chiredzi branch.**



# Demystifying employment council dues

By Erica Dumba

The future of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector depends on unity, fairness, and compliance with our Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs). Among the CBAs of the industry are the provisions of Section 28 of Statutory Instrument 41 of 2022, which is reaffirmed by Statutory Instrument 96 of 2024, which must be read in light of S82 of the Labour Act. The collective bargaining agreements entered into by employer organisations and trade unions making up the National Employment Council for the Agricultural Industry in Zimbabwe award dues to NEC Agriculture to meet its expenses in relation to fulfilling its mandate in terms of the Constitution of the employment council, in terms of the Labour Act, and in terms of all other collective bargaining agreements of the industry.

## What are the requirements?

1. Employee Contribution – Employers must deduct 1.5% of the basic monthly wage/salary from each permanent, seasonal, casual, or fixed-term contract employee.
2. Employer Contribution – In addition to the above, the employer also contributes 1.5% of the total basic monthly wage bill.
3. Total Contribution – Together, this makes a 3% monthly contribution to NEC Agriculture, remitted in the same currency in which wages are paid.

## Why does it matter?

Employment council dues are the funds that allow the employment council to carry out many of the aspects of its statutory mandate for the benefit of employers and employees in the agricultural industry, such as:

- Facilitating collective bargaining and initiatives supporting social dialogue to foster fair wages, decent work standards, and cooperation among stakeholders.
- Supporting oversight and regulatory functions and hiring and retaining skilled professional staff to succeed in this mandate.
- Capacitating the NEC to visit farms to conduct statutory inspectorate functions.
- Ensuring the monitoring and enforcement of industry-wide agreements in line with statutory provisions.
- Providing a suitable environment and expertise in dispute resolution, compliance, and advisory services to protect the rights and interests of both farmers and farm employees.
- Offering industrial relations training, capacity building, and policy development initiatives that address emerging challenges in the agricultural sector.
- Advocating for the collective interests of the industry with government, partners, and other stakeholders to promote growth and labour protection.
- Encouraging sustainable agricultural practices that balance productivity, environmental stewardship, and worker welfare.

## Important to Note

- **Period within which to remit dues** – In accordance with Statutory Instrument 96 of 2024, all employment council dues must be remitted by the 10th of every month following deduction, and in the currency of the wage paid.
- **Declaration of employees** – Employers are required to submit a declaration form listing all categories of employees (permanent, seasonal, casual, and fixed-term) in the prescribed form as provided for by S.I. 41 of 2022.
- **Penalties for Non-Compliance** – Outstanding dues will attract a penalty of 10% annual interest, calculated daily until payment is made in full. While other measures of enforcement are not excluded, it must be noted that because of Section 82(3) of the Labour Act, persistent defaulters and clients who try to avoid this important obligation commit an automatically unfair labour practice and may be referred for prosecution by the national authorities.

By remitting your monthly dues faithfully, you are not only complying with the law but also strengthening the backbone of Zimbabwe's agricultural industry by capacitating the mechanism meant to guarantee fairness, harmony and productivity in the industry. Let us continue working together to build a fair, harmonious, productive, and sustainable industry for all.

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