

Our state of relations with oil- and protein seeds

By Zama Xalisa, CEO, NAMC

The National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) is pleased to add its voice to *Oilseeds Focus*, the mouthpiece of the oil and protein seeds industry.

Our role as the NAMC is skewed towards promoting market access. Even our tagline bears testament to this. We play the part of ensuring that there is efficiency in the market, enhancing the viability of the sector and optimising export earnings. These objectives work interchangeably. In all this, we aim to work in the interests of the sector and that of national government.

An unorthodox approach

Often, our determination to promote market access is construed as unorthodox by some in the industry. However, if government and the sector hold different positions of interest, the people who ultimately suffer are our important stakeholders – the farmers. As such, it is important to remember that engagements and disagreements are common hallmarks of healthy discourse when pitching the sector at a winner's podium.

Take for example the South African Corporate Training Association (SACTA), which applied for a breeding and technology levy two years ago. The NAMC painstakingly worked with all affected parties to scrutinise the application until it accommodated the various stakeholders. Such is our character – we seek a win-win solution, not acrimony.

Collaboration is welcomed

As the NAMC we are pleased with the funding the Oil and Protein Seeds Development Trust (OPDT) commits to

research. Tangible research is produced and is aimed at developing the sector. I read about the potential of using extrusion to add value to agricultural raw materials in a previous edition of *Oilseeds Focus*. Such untapped opportunity shows that the industry is serious about its own future.

Again, there are unlimited areas of collaboration between the NAMC and OPDT outside the parameters of trusts and statutory measures. One is the growing consumption of soya beans by the livestock feed industry. This is something we are taking seriously as we rationalise feed for one of our programmes, the National Red Meat Development Programme. In this respect, technical research support and training from the oilseeds industry is greatly welcomed.

We are aware of the 2018/19 drought that caused low yields and crop failures

in some of our country's regions. We are also aware of the challenges facing the OPDT and the industry, and we will do our utmost to relay them to the new political leadership. The state of our relations has a healthy bill and we look forward to exploring more opportunities. 🌱

For more information, contact the NAMC on 012 341 1115 or send an email to info@namc.co.za.

