



Swaziland Cotton Board

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ACTIVITY REPORT FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31ST MARCH 2016

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Swaziland Cotton Board is a Public Enterprise under the Ministry of Agriculture. It was established by Cotton Act No. 26 of 1967. It is controlled and monitored as a Public Enterprise, (Public Control & Monitoring Act, 1989).

VISION

To be a world class cotton enterprise that is financially sustainable to improve the economic status of Swaziland.

MISSION

The Cotton Board is a Public Enterprise with the objective of improving livelihoods through promoting cotton production, processing and marketing in Swaziland by providing growers with high yielding quality varieties, providing innovative extension advice, and making available to cotton processors a quality product.

MANDATE

- Regulate Cotton Industry in Swaziland
- Grow the Swaziland Cotton Industry
- Promote Cotton Production in Swaziland
- Provide Market and Marketing intelligence
- Provide Technical Advice to Farmers.

2. INTRODUCTION

The report entails achievements made during the period commencing on the 1st January to 31st March, 2016. The achievements include: Cotton planting, seed distribution to cotton farmers, Crop assessment, Credit Revolving Fund and cotton production in Buseleni farm.

3. COTTON SEED DISTRIBUTION

Swaziland is currently planting one cotton variety which is Alba Plus QM 301. Climatic conditions have not been conducive for all crops including cotton, due to limited rainfall distribution. A total of 0.545 tons of seed was distributed to cotton farmers over the quarter under review, totaling 6.115 tons distributed over the season. The Distributed seed this season was enough to plant 612 Ha. Most farmers could not plant and the few that planted, the seed could not germinate due to the prevailing drought condition.

The table below indicates Seed distributed to farmers during the period under review compared to the previous season

MONTH	DISTRIBUTED ALBA QM 301(kg) 2014/15	DISTRIBUTED ALBA QM 301(kg) 2015/16
UP TO 31st DECEMBER	23, 820	5, 570
JANUARY	520	330
FEBRUARY	15	50
MARCH	60	165
TOTAL	24, 415	6, 115

4. CHEMICAL PURCHASES

Farmers continued to purchase chemicals through the credit scheme to control various cotton pests including post emergency weed control chemicals. Chemicals distributed include Kalach (post emergent herbicide), Mulan to control aphids and Jassids, Cypermetrin, Deltrametrin, Decis Forte and Fastac to control bollworms, finally Buprofezin and Hamba Aphids were used to control mealy bugs. The indication is that fewer chemicals have been distributed this season compared to the previous season.

The table below indicates figures of chemicals distributed during the quarter compared to previous season.

Chemical Name	Jan - March 2014/15	Jan - March 2015/16
Kalash (1kg)	370	67
Roundup (1L)	93	263
Cotton feed (kg)	377	0
Agroprid(L)/Mulan (kg)	290	20
Cypermetrin (1L)	649	61
Deltrametrin (1L)	1221	51
Fenveralent (1L)	94	0
Decis forte (1L)	284	6
Biomectrin (1L)	699	52
Fastac (1L)	126	36
Diazanol/Hamba Aphids (1L)	742	53
Buprofezin (kg)	0	15.5

Mealy bug has been a major pest that threatens most cotton farmers in the past two seasons. Two chemicals have been identified and recommended to farmers for effective control of the insect, these are Buprofezin and Hamba Aphids.

The Board has established a collaboration forum with the University of Swaziland (Luyengo Campus) to find lasting solution to this pest. The collaboration has resulted on 20 samples collected countrywide and sent to the Agriculture Research Council (ARC) for identification and recommendation for effective control of the insect. The results will identify and recommend an integrated pest management (IPM) practice that will entail a recommendation for a biological control agent if required and affordable by farmers.

5. CROP ASSESSMENT

Crop assessment was carried out to evaluate crop performance in selected areas. Generally the crop stage ranged from vegetative to maturity stage. With only 117.9 mm total rainfall recorded at the Lowveld Experiment Station between January and March, few farmers took advantage of the rains and planted cotton. Those who planted in December were already spraying to control pests. The current crop was severely affected by high temperatures. The rain received in March brought hope to farmers in areas such as Mpolonjeni, Lokhayiza, Tikhuba, Buseleni, Mdlebeni, Nyakatfo, Velavela, Madlenya, Sithobela and Luve.

The estimated yield for 2016 season is at 140 Tons. Crop delivery is expected to stager starting from April to September 2016

Table 4: The table below outlines rainfall received during the 6 months period and recorded at the Lowveld Experimental Station, Big Bend:

MONTH	RAINFALL (MM)	
	2014/15	2015/16
September – December	243.6	258.2
January	46.8	39.5
February	42.5	7.2
March	10.3	71.2
TOTAL FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD	99.6	117.9
TOTAL FOR THE SEASON	343.2	376.1

6. STOCKS AT HAND AS of 31st MARCH 2016

The Board currently holds stocks of E1, 404, 393.67. The stocks entails, planting seed, seed cotton, packaging material, spraying chemicals, and production stocks.

The table below indicates the product stock, quantity and the value at the end the current reporting period

PRODUCT	QUANTITY (Tons)	VALUE (E)
SEED COTTON	26.170	147, 598.80
COTTON SEED	23.935	486, 296.02
TOTAL		633, 894.82

Other stocks available

PRODUCT NAME	VALUE
PACKAGING MATERIAL	459, 413.20
CHEMICALS	101, 236.80
PRODUCTION STOCK	209, 848.85
TOTAL VALUE	770, 498.85

7. CREDIT REVOLVING FUND

The purpose of this fund is to finance inputs for cotton farmers. The fund financed planting seed, spraying chemicals for cotton management, tractor hire and other cotton related financial costs. Most farmers could not repay their loans due to drought experienced in the previous season. This left the Board with a deficit of E1, 879, 266.

The current situation indicates that the Board is not in a good financial position to assist most farmers during the 2015/16 season. There were no sufficient funds to capitalize farmers for the seasonal cotton production. Persistent drought was also a major problem resulting in few farmers utilizing the fund. Only E219, 305 was issued to farmers during the quarter under review, making a total of E 676, 562 over the season.

World Vision provided funds to support 200 cotton growers in Matsanjeni and Somntongo constituencies. The support entailed tractor hire services, planting seed and chemicals for pest management. 128 farmers received the support totaling E225, 053.40 which was utilized to buy inputs for farmers. 97% of the farmers could not plant due to drought. The Board is grateful for effort made by World Vision to enhance farmer’s livelihood and contribute to poverty alleviation through cotton production.

Performance of the revolving fund during the review period:

CARRY-OVER FROM PREVIOUS QUARTER	LENDINGS FOR THE QUARTER	RECOVERIES AND ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE QUARTER	BALANCE AT 31ST DECEMBER 2015
E 2, 328, 061	E 219, 305	E 15, 025	E 2, 532, 341

8. BUSELENI FARM

The Board continued to plant cotton in Buseleni. 183.5mm of Rainfall was received during the quarter at Buseleni farm, 3 additional ha were planted during the quarter to increase the acreage to 40 ha. The crop is at various growth stages. A total number of 20 people were engaged to work in the farm during the quarter.

9. RENOVATIONS OF THE GINNERY AFTER THE STORM DAMAGE

Protechnology civil and engineering was nominated by Swaziland Royal Insurance (SRIC) to perform renovation after the heavy storm damage that blow off the cotton ginnery in Big Bend. The process has been ongoing for past two months. The exercise is at 90 % completion. The engineering company is expected to complete the work by the 30th of April 2016.

10. AUDIT AND FINANCIAL

The current auditor's period has expired, the Board advertised through local newspapers for service providers for the next three years. 6 audit firms made application to audit the Board in the next three years. After shortlisting and evaluation Kobla Quashie and Associates was selected to audit the Swaziland Cotton Board for the next three years.

11. FOCUS FOR THE FOLLOWING QUARTER

1. Distribute chemicals for cotton pest management
2. Conduct crop assessments
3. Prepare for seed cotton buying and ginning
4. Crop management at Buseleni Farm
5. Conduct Audit
6. Work with the insurance to refurbish the building at the ginnery