

## NEWSLETTER: June 2015

*Most members have finished harvesting; the school holiday is around the corner, and the fortunate ones are heading for the hunting grounds or simply the warmer climes of the Bushveld. Enjoy it and come home safely!*

### **Conference**

A very successful conference was held on 20 May 2015 at the Nelson Wine Estate outside Paarl. The large number of members and guests were addressed by the well-known journalist and political commentator, Max du Preez, and the respected US agricultural economist, Prof. Nick Vink. Max spoke without notes and we therefore do not have copies of his speech, but copies of Prof. Vink's statistics presented to the audience are available on request from our office in Paarl. He focused on agriculture's production figures and profitability, as well as investor confidence and employment – also the affordability of food.



*From left to right: Francois Malan (chair); Max du Preez, Jack van Dyk and en Prof. Nick Vink.*

### **Annual general meeting**

In his chairperson's report, Francois Malan said our membership now stood at 411. He thanked members for their faithful support, and also referred to the successful flash surveys recently completed to determine housing and employment trends. He encouraged members to support the new survey being conducted at present to determine the extent of labour union membership within agriculture. The CAEO will again make presentations to the Employment Conditions Commission regarding the annual three-year review of the Sectoral Determination for Farmworkers. He also mentioned that Jack van Dyk had indicated that he would retire at the end of the year – after 16 years at the helm! Recruitment for his successor will start next quarter.

The audited financial statements for the year ended 28 February 2015 were approved and the current Executive Committee was re-elected. The members are Francois Malan (chair), Estelle Engelbrecht (vice chair), Suzie Mudge, Blackie Swart, Albert Rust and Neil Hamman. They were thanked for their service and their willingness to be re-elected.

### **Review of membership fees**

The meeting resolved that membership fees, which currently amounted to R1 500 per year, would increase by R100 (+6,7%) to R1 600 per year but, instead of being applied across the board, a sliding scale will be introduced based on workforce size, namely:

- < 10 workers = R1 200 per year, i.e. a decrease of R300 per year (-20%) [This currently affects 14 members]
- 10 to 499 workers = R1 600 per year (+6,7%) [currently affects 377 members]
- > 500 workers = R2 000 (+33,3%) [this affects 24 members].

This increase comes into effect at the beginning of the new financial year, i.e. 1 March 2016.

The once-off registration fee for new members increases with immediate effect from R800 to R1 000 (+25%), with the proviso that should a new member not require representation within six months after registration, they would be entitled to a rebate of R200.

### **Review of the Sectoral Determination for Farmworkers**

Public hearings will take place in August 2015 for the purpose of reviewing the sectoral determination. The CAEO will make a written submission and provide oral testimony. Besides the complex determination of a new minimum wage, we also wish to highlight various provisions within the determination, where a difference of opinion exists in terms of its interpretation, with a view to obtaining legal clarity.

Naturally we shall again address representations when the Department of Labour starts its inquiry into a national minimum wage.

### **Flash survey to determine the extent of union membership within agriculture**

This survey was launched a week ago (also beyond our membership base in the Western Cape), and producers responded in large numbers – which will give us in a very representative and reliable finding. Simply visit our webpage at [www.caeo.co.za](http://www.caeo.co.za), click on “NEWS” and then on “Flash survey 2”. This is in electronic format and takes only minutes to complete. Producers who participate can request a copy of the survey report.

Friday, 12 June 2015