



FORTH SESSION – EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

SECOND REPORT

OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON LANDS, AGRICULTURE, MECHANIZATION
AND IRRIGATION DEVELOPMENT

ON

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES AND COMMAND AGRICULTURE.

Presented to Parliament July 2017

S.C 11/2017

ORDERED IN TERMS OF STANDING ORDER No. 17:

- At the commencement of every session, there shall be as many committees to be designated according to such government policy areas as the Standing Rules and Orders Committee may deem fit.
- It shall be the function of such committees to examine government policies which fall under or relate to the designated theme or themes, and other matters falling under their jurisdictions as the Standing rules and Orders Committee may determine.
- The members of such committees shall be appointed by the Standing Rules and Orders Committee, from one or both Houses of Parliament, and such appointments shall take into account the expressed interests or expertise of the Senators and the political and gender composition of Senate.
- Each Select Committee shall be known by the theme determined for it by the Standing Rules and Orders Committee.

On Thursday, 6 October 2016, Mr. Speaker announced that the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders nominated the following members to serve on the Portfolio Committee on Lands, Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation Development;

Hon. Chidhakwa S.	Hon. Mashonganyika D.
Hon. Chitembwe J.	Hon. Matangira R. T.
Hon. Chitindi C.	Hon. Mavenyengwa R.
Hon. Chipanga K.	Hon. Mudambo T.
Hon. Chisorochengwe T.	Hon. Murai E.
Hon. Dube S.	Hon. Mliswa T.
Hon. Dutiro P.	Hon. Musanhi K. S
Hon. Gava M.	Hon. Musvaire W.
Hon. Gezi T.	Hon. Ncube H.
Hon. Gwanetsa K. K.	Hon. Nkatazo M.
Hon. Kanhanga W.	Hon. Nleya L.
Hon. Karoro D.	Hon. Seremwe B.
Hon. Kaundikiza M.	Hon. Masiya D

Hon. Chitindi C. to be the Chairperson.

1.0 Introduction

Agricultural education and training plays an important role in providing the much needed human resources in the agricultural sector. Education is often the most valuable asset for rural people wishing to engage in jobs in the agricultural value chain where they need both technical knowledge and business skills. Innovation, often regarded as a pre-condition for successful entrepreneurship, is positively related to the level of education in most developed countries. Against this background, the Portfolio Committee on Lands, Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation Development resolved to inquire into the functional status of Agricultural Colleges in Zimbabwe. In addition, the Committee took advantage of the visit to agricultural colleges to conduct an assessment of the Command Agriculture throughout the provinces. The Committee was prompted to conduct an enquiry into Command Agriculture against a backdrop of; a substantial budgetary allocation, the high rainfall experienced in the 2016/2017 summer-cropping season as well as negative media reports regarding the management of the program.

2.0 Objectives of the Inquiry

2.1 The Committee was guided by the following objectives

1. To assess the state of agricultural colleges
2. To identify the policy gaps in the implementation of Command Agriculture
3. To assess the crop under Command Agriculture; and
4. Appreciate the challenges faced by farmers under Command Agriculture

3.0 Methodology

The Committee invited Mr. J. Chitsiko, the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation Development for an oral evidence session on the 7th of February 2017. In addition, the Committee conducted fact finding mission to agricultural colleges and selected beneficiaries of the Command Agriculture from the 13th – 19th of March 2017.

4.0 Committee Findings

4.1 Agricultural Colleges: Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation Development

4.1.1 The Permanent Secretary highlighted that Agricultural education in Zimbabwe began in the early 1950s when the first Agricultural College, Gwebi College was established 27km North West of the capital, then Salisbury. Thereafter, in 1961 another agricultural college, (Chibero College) was established 25 km South-East of Norton, a town located 41 km from the capital.

4.1.2 The purpose of these colleges was to provide trained human resources for the agricultural sector. Most of the graduates from these colleges went to become farm managers on the commercial farms while others joined the extension services and agro-industry i.e. companies that produce chemicals, fertilizers and farming equipment.

4.1.3 Soon after the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, the number of agricultural colleges increased, with four more colleges being added to the original two. Thus came into existence Esigodini, Mlezu and Kushinga Phikelela Agricultural Colleges. A few years later Mazowe Veterinary College was established and was mandated to train students in veterinary skills at both Certificate and Diploma Levels. Recently, in 2011 another college, Shamva Agricultural College came into existence in one of the Northern provinces i.e. Mashonaland Central. This brought the total number of colleges under Ministry of Agriculture to eight.

4.1.4 In 2005, the Department of Agricultural Education and Farmer Training was established under a Director to oversee the operations of the agricultural colleges and this is the current situation. Note that the name of the department indicates the added role of the agricultural colleges to train farmers through short courses, particularly during shutdown periods. The main

function of the Department of Agricultural Education and Farmer Training still remains the same i.e. to provide training for the agricultural sector, the main clientele being students and farmers. Eight colleges are operating under the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development, have a combined enrolment of 1971 students as at 30 January 2017.

4.2 Student Training at Diploma Level

4.2.1 Currently, 1791 students are enrolled under the conventional Diploma Training programme. The course is a residential course i.e. it is run while the students are at the college. In looking after the students, colleges have to provide basic necessities such as food, accommodation, and transport for educational visits, stationery and other facilities. In addition, the hostels have to be cleaned thus demanding further costs in cleaning materials such as soaps and detergents. The majority of the colleges have associate linkages with local universities. This assists in monitoring of academic standards and creates development of career paths.

4.2.2 Upgrading of National Certificate cadres to Diploma Level through modular training, between 2005 and 2011 the Department, working with Ministry of Youth Training Centres, produced over 10 000 graduates at Certificate Level who were targeted for service in the newly resettled areas (A1 and A2). After the conclusion of this programme, it was noted that generally the Certificate graduates were deficient in certain skills and knowledge which affected their service delivery. It was therefore decided to further train these Certificate cadres to Diploma level in order to address the shortcomings.

4.2.3 The Permanent Secretary highlighted that the method of upgrading is through training modules which were produced mainly by college lecturers. The cadres visit their respective colleges of enrolment during the normal shutdown periods, during which time they attend lectures, tutorials and practical sessions. Currently, there are about 330 students who are enrolled in the colleges under this upgrading programme at the following colleges: Chibero, Esigodini, Gwebi, Mlezu and Rio Tinto.

4.2.4 The Permanent Secretary emphasized that these students have also have to be catered for while on college during the normal shutdown periods. Young Commercial Farmer Training at Kushinga Phikelela National Farmer Training College. This programme is run at Kushinga Phikelela National Farmer Training College. It is designed to train students who leave the college with hands on skills in agriculture. The support to practical training in this programme is therefore critical. There are 180 students in this programme.

4.3 Farmer Training

4.3.1 All colleges are expected as part of their mandate to carry out farmer training according to needs assessment with respect to the farmers. The training courses are run on short term basis i.e. a day to a week or more depending on the situation. Kushinga Phikelela (which is located outside Marondera) is the National Farmer Training Centre and plays a coordinating role in farmer training. In this first quarter of 2017, the agricultural colleges are aiming to train at least 500 farmers in various agricultural activities which include agronomy of crops; poultry and pig production; beef cattle management; bee keeping and honey production; mushroom production; tractor operation and maintenance; farm machinery; farm records and budgeting; horticulture and management of the environment.

4.3.2 In view of budgetary constraints, there is need to cooperate with other farmer training organisations in the agricultural sector such as Farmers Unions, Seed Companies, NGOs and private institutions who may have funding for the development of farmers.

4.4 Major challenges facing agricultural colleges

1. Inadequate budgets, for 2017, the total annual budget for all the eight colleges is US\$703 000. This translates to less than US\$ 100 000 per college or less than US\$ 10 000 per month per college. This is too low and has a negative impact on operating capacity and quality of delivery of services.
2. The current financial management system is centralized and takes too long to react to the requirements of an agricultural institution.
3. Inadequate training materials such as computers, text books, periodicals, office equipment, photocopiers, projectors
4. Inadequate Farm equipment for student training and farm production. This includes tractors, tillage implements and other related equipment. The current equipment is old and unserviceable; there is need for replacement in order to achieve the desired quality of delivery of training.
5. Staff development. Many members of staff would wish to upgrade themselves but are constrained by inadequate financial resources.

4.4 Tour of Agricultural Colleges

3.4.1 Agricultural education allows students to learn and experience the importance of agriculture in the economy. In Zimbabwe, this is critical given that the economy is agro-based and following the land-reform program of 2000, most of the arable land is in the hands of indigenous people. Graduands and agricultural colleges have a responsibility to provide knowledge and information to farmers in order to boost productivity of the sector. These colleges have the mandate to train students in various agricultural activities which include; agronomy of crops, poultry and pig production, beef cattle management, farm machinery, farm records and budgeting among other topics. However the colleges are facing a number of challenges which are detailed below:

4.5 Funding for Colleges

4.5.1 Since 2015 the financial system has been centralised and colleges no longer retain fees paid by students. The new system entails applying and collecting the money at head office in Harare. The Committee was told the process was cumbersome and affected productivity at the college. For instance, the colleges highlighted that whenever there was a crisis like an animal disease outbreak they had to wait for a minimum of 3 weeks before they received the money to contain the problem. For Colleges such as Esigodini, its accountant has to travel more than 800 kilometres to and from Harare to get the financial resources. The Committee was also informed that it was difficult for the lecturers to conduct assessment visits of students due to lack of vehicles. Furthermore, students were not benefitting from the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) despite the fact that agricultural companies such as seed and stock feed manufacturers contribute to this fund. As a result students were struggling to make ends meet whilst on attachment, because some of them were not getting any stipends from the employers.

4.6 Calibre of Students

4.6.1 The Colleges admitted to the Committee that they were producing half-baked students. This was due to lack of adequate teaching and learning materials. The Committee was told that most students were exposed to the latest technologies and modern farming machinery or equipment during attachment or when they got employed. The colleges had outdated and obsolete equipment. Furthermore, after completion of studies, students fail to access land to enable them to utilise their skills and to be productive.

4.7 Land Use and Management at the Colleges

4.7.1 Most of the colleges save for Rinto Tinto have vast tracks of land, ranging over a thousand hectares. However most of the land is lying idle due to lack of investment. Effort has been made to secure public-private partnerships, triple 'Ps' at Kushinga Phikelela and Gwebi for crop production such as tobacco and maize. These partnership arrangements were hailed by the colleges for enabling students to get exposed to modern technologies and practices in farming. At Gwebi, concern was raised that the partnership arrangement had shortfalls in that the Chinese were not willing to disclose the profits made in the arrangement. As a result, the College was at the mercy of the other partner.

The failure to effectively utilize the land has led to Gwebi losing 200 hectares, which was acquired by the Ministry of Lands and Rural Settlement and allocated to others. In the same vein, Rio Tinto also lost 1 000 hectares of land under Sherwood block, which it had been allocated in 2004. The land was acquired by the Ministry of Lands and given to other beneficiaries, hence the college does not have adequate land for learning and practising for the benefit of its students. Currently, the college has 100 hectares which is occupied by college buildings and other infrastructure. The Committee learnt that all the agricultural colleges do not have an advisory boards, an organ which is critical in mapping out policies for the college, such as sourcing of investment partners.

4.7.2 The Colleges highlighted that they cannot pay farm labourers the rates that are stipulated by the Civil Service Commission. The rates are too high and they need to be reviewed in line with General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) and the National Employment Council for the Agricultural Industry. The Committee was also told that Esigodini College is without a substantive Principal since 2014. This makes it difficult for the Acting Principal to make substantive decisions on the operations of the college.

4.8 Command Agriculture and Food Security

4.8.1 The recipients of the Command program told the Committee that it was a noble program in view of limited financial support given to farmers by financial institutions. Hence Command Agriculture was viewed as a positive development that would enable farmers to be productive, promote food security at household level and for the nation at large in line with Cluster one of the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation.

4.8.2 The Command Agriculture is a three year program that supports farmers in different parts of the country. According to Dr Chitsiko, the targeted hectarage for maize production is 400 000 hectares. The program focuses on 3 groups of people namely; farmers with irrigation facilities and adequate farming equipment, farmers that were not fully equipped with irrigation and farming machinery, and farmers that rely on rain-fed agriculture and have minimal resources for farming. The recipients would receive the following; seed, fuel coupons, fertilizers, chemicals and tillage services and these would be collected at the recipients' nearest Grain Marketing Board depots (GMB).

4.8.3 The program is managed through a contract system between the farmer and the government. The loan is serviced partly in kind where the farmer surrenders an agreed portion of his or her grain to GMB. The Permanent Secretary highlighted that abuse of the inputs was a criminal offence. The offences and penalties are highlighted in a Statutory Instrument (SI) of 2017 known as the *Money Laundering and Proceeds of Crime (Declaration of a Serious Offence: Misappropriation of Agricultural Inputs) Regulation*. The SI highlights that any misappropriation of agricultural inputs issued under Command agriculture will lead to a fine of level 14 or imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or both fine and imprisonment. The offender can also lose his or her piece of land if it was gotten through the land reform program. Misappropriation is identified as the intentional trading, donating or barter trade of the inputs

without the written approval by a government agency. The Committee was informed that there are some offenders that have since been imprisoned for diverting the inputs to the black market. The major issues that arose during the Committee's enquiry include:

4.9 Co-ordination Committee

4.9.1 The Committee was informed that the Command program has Co-ordinating committees at national, provincial and at district level. It includes persons from the Ministry of Agriculture, especially the Agricultural Extension (Agritex) officers and Ministry of Defence. Officials from the Ministry of Defence are the team leaders especially in co-ordinating the distribution of inputs. Agritex officers assist in monitoring and advising farmers.

4.10 Distribution of Inputs

4.10.1 In all the provinces that were visited by the Committee, the recipients had the following complaints: They did not get the inputs on time. In one case, at Chibero College they received their Ammonium Nitrate (AN) fertiliser on the 9th of March 2017 and this was of no use because the crop had been badly affected by lack of nutrients in the soil. The College highlighted that they would store the fertilisers for use in the next season.

4.10.2 Some of the farmers did not get an entire package and had to use their own resources to buy the rest of the inputs. A case in point, is a farmer in Norton, Mr Chikonzo who had to buy chicken manure as a substitute for compound D and the Committee was impressed by his crop and the initiative he made. However, another farmer Mr Maponga, of Kwekwe district did not get the same joy when he tried to be innovative by making a concoction to contain the fall armyworm. The home-made concoction which comprised of surf and other chemicals managed to contain the pest but destroyed the crop.

4.10.3 Farmers expressed concern that they were not collecting their inputs at the nearest GMB depots. For instance farmers in Norton collected their inputs in Chegutu which is on average 100 kilometres away, farmers in Umzingwane collected at two distribution points for different inputs either at Filabusi or Gwanda depots which is on average between 50 to 100 kilometres away from the district. The commercial farm in Masvingo collected its inputs from Harare because that seemed to be the most convenient location. The farmers complained of time losses and cost implications on production and this was also exacerbated by the poor road infrastructure especially in rural areas.

4.10.4 The Committee was informed by the farmers that the documentation process at the collection points took a greater part of the farmers' time, hence reducing productivity at the farms. This was attributed to the lack of computers for speedy processing. Farmers complained that some of the government officials, especially from the Ministry of Agriculture were arrogant and unhelpful. A case in point is a widow in Umzingwane district, Mrs Ncube, who complained of ill-treatment by officials who were coordinating the Command program. She attributed this to gender discrimination.

4.10.5 The Committee was told by some farmers that they faced challenges in getting farming equipment for tillage and for pumping water. Farmers in Insiza who had planted early maize crop over 35 hectares lost the entire crop because the Mechanisation department took more than 6 weeks to respond to their request for assistance. A farmer in Umzingwane had to plant manually because she failed to get a planter from the department of mechanisation. Farmers told the Committee that packaging of the inputs in some cases was not suitable for small hectareage. For instance, Mr Maponga wanted 25kg for his hectareage but was forced to get 30 kg and furthermore he could not acquire Carbaryl for the fall armyworm because the quantities were not suitable for small-holder farmers. Seed varieties were being distributed without regard of the ecological region. Most farmers under Command Agriculture received varieties that

take the longest to mature. This presented a challenge especially for farmers who depend on rain fed agriculture.

4.11 Information Dissemination

4.11.1 Most of the farmers who interacted with the Committee learnt of Command Agriculture through secondary sources such as neighbours and not from the official channels. This is due to the fact that most small-holder farmers do not belong to farming associations and Agritex officers are not mobile due to lack of vehicles.

4.12 Perceptions on Command Agriculture

4.12.1 The Committee encountered both negative and positive perceptions about Command agriculture. In Kwekwe District, in one ward only 3 farmers were courageous to participate in the program. The rest of the farmers shied away because of fear of the word 'Command'. The perception was that this is a military program and if one does not live up to the expectations, the consequences will be meted out military style. In Norton, the farmers expressed displeasure that some people who did not have land or had small hectareage received inputs which they went to sell on the black market. Furthermore, while waiting to collect their inputs at Chegutu depot, various trucks received first preference and the army were at the forefront in initiating the speedy collection of these inputs. One farmer in Norton refused to collect his inputs after being told he would only get seed and was not given assurance of when he would receive the rest of the inputs. His fear was that he would experience total disaster given that he did not have resources to acquire other inputs such as fertilisers and chemicals.

4.13 Crop Yields

4.13.1 Most of the farmers told the Committee that they were expecting yields of between 5 tonnes to 10 tonnes per hectare. The variations were attributed to pests, lack of adequate inputs and excessive rainfall which caused leaching. Irrespective of these challenges the farmers were content that they were going to harvest something to feed their families and the nation at large, especially given that the previous season was a difficult one due to the *El Nino* induced drought.

5.0 Committee Observations

5.1 AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

1. Funding of Colleges, - Centralising funds is constraining the ability of colleges to make decisions that directly affect their operations.
2. Calibre of Students, - the Ministry of Agriculture should ensure that its colleges receive agricultural machinery that it sources for some of its programs. There were so many missed opportunities such as the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Mechanisation program and the More Food for Africa program. It is not proper that students are behind in terms of technology and modern farming equipment. This will constrain the graduands to advise farmers on the best type of machinery and farming methods. The curriculum at these colleges need to be reviewed so that it is in line with modern trends.
3. Land Use and Management of Colleges, - The Ministry of Agriculture needs to come up with a policy to enable the colleges to enter into partnership agreements. This will enable the colleges to be productive and for student to be exposed to best farming practices and machinery. The Committee noted with concern that most of the colleges were not engaging in meaningful production and had to scale down their operations, in livestock and crop production due to limited funding from the fiscus. Hence land and infrastructure such as cattle pens, fowl runs were either empty or underutilised. The colleges have niche markets for their produce particularly from the surrounding communities.

4. The Ministry of Lands has unprocedurally acquired land that belongs to the colleges and allocated it to beneficiaries of the land reform program for example Gwebi Agricultural Colleges.
5. Agricultural college students are not benefiting from ZIMDEF, yet agricultural companies are contributing to this fund.
6. The colleges cannot afford to pay farm labourers the rates that are stipulated by the Civil Service Commission. A policy shift is required so that the colleges are able to utilise their land effectively.

5.2 Command Agriculture

1. It has brought hope to a lot of farmers, given the tight liquidity crunch that is affecting the country. The farmers showed determination and a desire to participate in improving food security at both household and national level. However the program was too ambitious, as it sought to accommodate as many farmers as possible without aggregating it with the financial resources and capacity of personnel to manage the program. Furthermore, the program will be implemented in three seasons which is too short to have made an impact in terms of boosting food security and productivity on farms. Government through its different agencies was slow in signing supply contracts with the various manufacturers in the country. The summer-crop is seasonal hence distribution of inputs should be time-based if the sector is to achieve high returns.
2. Co-ordination Committees, - there is lack of coordination between Committees at Head Office and those at District level.
3. Distribution of Inputs, - a lot of work needs to be done to improve on the distribution of inputs. Farmers travel long distances to get inputs and yet there are GMB depots or other Community Centres that are used for distribution of things like the Presidential Input Scheme and food assistance.
4. Information Dissemination, - there is inadequate information that has been disseminated to farmers on Command agriculture. Government departments are not giving timely information to farmers on the program, this is also attributed to the fact that Agritex officers are immobile due to lack of vehicles to meet farmers on a regular basis.
5. Perceptions on Command Agriculture, - negative perceptions about this program need to be addressed in order to recruit deserving and capable farmers in all the provinces of the country. Farmers may have observed abuse of inputs by others but there was no mechanism or adequate information on whistle blowers.
6. Crop Yields for the 2016/2017, - crop yields could have done better if farmers had received all the inputs on time and at the same time. The farmers under Command agriculture, especially for the long season varieties would have harvested at least 10 tonne per hectare.
7. Post Harvesting, - given that the country is expecting a bumper harvest, the Ministry of Agriculture has not disseminated adequate information to farmers on the availability of grain bags, transport and payment modalities in order to motivate farmers to continue participating in this program.
8. Climate Change, - the Committee is concerned that in light of climate change, budget allocation for irrigation development for this current year was reduced by 10% when compared with the previous year's allocation. There is no guarantee that the country will have another high rainfall season in the next two seasons under Command Agriculture and therefore, there is need to rehabilitate existing irrigation schemes and to construct new schemes in areas with high potential in crop production.

9. Expansion of Command Agriculture, - Command Agriculture should be expanded to include other sectors such as livestock, soya beans, small grains sugarcane and horticulture. The program needs to be sensitive to the productivity status of the different ecological regions of the country.
10. The Contract System, - the contract should clearly lay out the cost of inputs and the market price of the maize. Secondly, breach of contract should not be criminalised but civil charges should be exerted in order to recover the lost inputs.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Command Agriculture

	Recommendation	Action	Timeline
5.1.1	Timeous distribution of a complete package of inputs	Government to sign the supply contracts with manufactures on time and the Command Co-ordination Committees to ensure farmers acquire their inputs as a complete package by farmers.	Summer Crop Inputs should be ready by July and for Wheat end of February each year
5.1.2	There is need to computerise the processing and management of input scheme.	The Co-ordination Committee and the Ministry of Agriculture should be adequately equipped with computers and other information communication technologies (ICTs), for effective communication with farmers and easier management and processing of the inputs. This will also ensure less congestion at collection points and save farmers' time and energy in queuing for the inputs.	Before September 2017
5.1.3	Farmers should access inputs at the nearest GMB depot or community designated points.	The Command co-ordination Committee should ensure that inputs are accessible to farmers in a cost beneficial manner.	Suitable and accessible Distribution Points to be identified before September 2017
5.1.4	Investment for irrigation and mechanisation is needed in light of the impacts of climate change and variation	Government through the Ministry of Agriculture should source more equipment and machinery for the development of irrigation and to assist small holder farmers that rely on rain-fed agriculture.	On-going.
5.1.5	Command agriculture needs to be diversified.	The Ministry of Agriculture should develop a policy to expand Command agriculture to include livestock and other crops based on the ecological regions of the country.	Policy Position should be in place before September 2017.
5.1.6	Packaging of inputs and seed varieties should be designed to meet the	The Command Coordination Committee to make logistical arrangements to ensure that	Corrective action to be taken before July 2017.

	different categories and ecological regions of farmers and hectareage under Command.	packaging of inputs and seed varieties meet the needs of the farmers.	
5.1.7	Post harvesting program to be announced to enable farmers to effectively deliver the maize to GMB	The Ministry of Agriculture should announce policy position on collection of maize from farmers under Command in terms of: availability of grain bags, combine harvesters, storage facilities, grain dryers' collection points and payment for modalities for maize deliveries.	Position should be announced by end of April each year.
5.1.8	Women farmers should be respected and encouraged to participate in command agriculture	The Co-ordination Committee and Ministry of Agriculture should be gender sensitive in the implementation of Command Agriculture. An assessment should be made on the number of women that benefitted from this program, given that women account for 80% of labour in agriculture.	Before September 2017.
5.1.9	There should be a cut-off period for the distribution of inputs.	The Co-ordination Committee and the Ministry of Agriculture should distribute inputs in line with the agricultural season. Inputs should not be distributed way after the recommended periods of farming.	The Policy position to be developed before August 2017.
5.1.10	The Input Scheme for Winter Wheat should be clearly laid out before the Season commences.	The Ministry of Agriculture need to announce the preparations that have been made for the winter wheat season before its commencement.	Before end of February each year.
5.1.11	Command Agriculture should receive adequate budgetary support from Government.	Parliament should ensure that the Command program receives adequate budgetary support from the fiscus in order to promote food security, reduce the import bill, create employment and reduce poverty.	On-going.
5.1.12	Agritex officers need to be mobile in order to monitor and evaluate programs of this nature.	Parliament needs to ensure that adequate resources from the National budget are channelled for the purchase of vehicles and for travel and subsistence to enable Agritex officers to do their work effectively.	On-going
5.1.13	The lifespan of Command Agriculture should be reviewed to a longer period	The Ministry of Agriculture needs to consider extending the lifespan of the program to 10 years, in light of huge investment required for	The policy position should be announced before December 2017.

		irrigation and acquisition of farming machinery and equipment, which have longer repayment periods. Furthermore, the first year had teething problems, some of which need long term solutions	
5.1.14	Government officials should improve their communication skills as they relate with farmers.	Some officers in the Ministry of Agriculture need to undergo communication skills programs to enable the Ministry to timeously and effectively respond to the needs of farmers.	On-going.

5.2 Agricultural Colleges

5.2.1	Agricultural Colleges should retain 100% of tuition fees.	The Ministry of Agriculture should decentralise the funding mechanism for colleges.	Before end of 2017
5.2.2	Agricultural Colleges should benefit from Government sponsored programs on Mechanisation and Irrigation development.	The Ministry of Agriculture should prioritize agricultural colleges, whenever mechanisation programs, like the RBZ one are being implemented.	On-going
5.2.3	Students in agricultural colleges should benefit from ZIMDEF.	The Ministry of Agriculture should liaise with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education on policy reform that will enable agricultural colleges to benefit from Zimdef.	Before end of 2017
5.2.4	A substantive Head should be appointed for Esigodini College.	The Ministry of Agriculture to liaise with the Ministry of Public Service to speed up the process of appointing the Principal for Esigodini College.	Before end of 2017
5.2.5	Land taken from agricultural colleges should be returned.	The Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement should return the land it expropriated from agricultural colleges.	Before end of 2017
5.2.6	Agricultural College Students should be given preference in land allocations.	Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement should reserve a quota for land allocations to graduands from agricultural colleges.	On-going.
5.2.7	Advisory Boards should be appointed for all the Colleges.	The Ministry of Agriculture should ensure that Advisory boards are appointed for all the colleges in order to spearhead policy and developmental programs for the Colleges such as triple 'P's.	Appointment before end of 2017

5.2.8	Rates for farm labourers' wages should be based on the rates agreed between Government and the NEC for the Agricultural Industry.	A policy shift is needed by the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that farm labour rates are in line with prevailing rates of the industry, to enable the colleges to contract affordable labour	Review to be made by end of December 2017.
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6. Conclusion

The Government should be commended for introducing the Special Maize program as it will go a long way in addressing the issue of food security in the country. It will reduce poverty and create sustainable livelihoods for the majority of the people in the rural areas. On agricultural education, investment is needed to enable these colleges to be viable and to churn out students with requisite skills and knowledge to impart to the farming community.