



27 February 2023

PRESS RELEASE

The Livestock Producers Organisation (LPO), affiliated to the Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU), is alarmed by media reports published during the past week pertaining to MEATCO.

The LPO has established a culture and record of cooperation and dialogue with its members, role players in agriculture and the authorities over the past 33-years to address issues in the spirit of transparency and national interest, including MEATCO as a key stakeholder in developing Namibia's highly respected meat industry.

The LPO understands the crucial role of MEATCO in the livestock value chain with reference to export markets and income to local farmers and Namibia.

Moreover, the LPO is proud to have contributed to the establishment of Namibian meat as a premier international brand allowing Namibia to be the only country on the African continent to have access to the Chinese, American and European markets with numerous possibilities in the Middle-East and the rest of Africa due to its record of the highest health and quality standards.

Suggestions that "white farmers" want to see the demise of MEATCO are therefore malicious and absurd with the only intention to shift the attention away from genuine concerns and efforts to address the issues that might be obstacles in the way of MEATCO to benefit all meat producers in every corner of the country.

The disturbing allegations published in the New Era of 23 February 2023, claim that "commercial white farmers delivered a letter to Ghanaian authorities that states that the meat they import from Namibia's NCAs was not fit for human consumption as it is infected with FMD", should be condemned in the strongest possible way, as it intends to create division within the livestock sector, especially among producers in the north and south. The agricultural sector must unite and not be divided, as this is the foundation of nation building and national unity.

The LPO remains committed to render all assistance to government and its agencies, to protect and promote the Namibian meat brand that will contribute to job security and sustainable income for the whole of the farming community, a role pursued over the past three decades despite numerous challenges.

The LPO supports Government's intention for an urgent investigation into this matter to determine the authenticity and existence of such claim (letter), implicating serious economic sabotage. The culprit(s) should bear the full brunt of their actions.

The LPO has repeatedly – over several years – indicated that the growth of the beef value chain requires **ALL** livestock producers, whether north or south of the VCF, hence we as an organisation support initiatives relating to the development of both internal and external markets for NCA farmers. In fact, we believe that Government, Treasury and the industry should support MEATCO NCA to develop a sustainable business-entity to the benefit of farmers in the NCA.

Harmony between all producers, stakeholders and civil society, including the media, is essential for a combined search for solutions to the many challenges the livestock industry is facing.

It will be a sad day if allegations such as these, succeed in dividing producers north and south and across racial lines. We condemn these dividing actions.

The LPO and various affiliates and stakeholders should continue to find solutions through dialogue to keep Namibian meat the premier brand as recognised internationally.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thinus Pretorius', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Thinus Pretorius
Chairperson: LPO