



# AGRI TALKS

ZFU YOUNG FARMER NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1

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## Editorial Comment

Agri-Talks is a new and unique publication ZFU is introducing to give voice to the orchestra of young people who have made foray into agriculture as well as those contemplating to venture into the exciting sector.

The publication, which follows hard in the heels of our recent launch of the Young Farmers' Profiling Project, will also add impetus to various initiatives ZFU is pursuing to showcase the farming experiences of young people in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the thrust of Agri-Talks, which is to bring young farmers in the limelight, stems from our realization of the unbridled strength and skills that youths possess, critical for driving agriculture into the future.

In this issue, we share the riveting story of Munyaradzi Shamuyarira, whose farming exploits on a small piece of land hardly bigger than an acre in the sprawling suburb of Marlborough in Harare corrects ill perceptions often associated with "backyard farming," sorry-Urban Agriculture. But it is not only the story of youthful Munyaradzi that inspires youths to seize the limitless opportunities that agriculture presents today.

There are far too many success stories out there, which young people are carving in the annals of history. And Agri-Talks will track the indelible footprints young people are imprinting on the local agriculture terrain.

We cordially invite you to join us on this intriguing journey of adventure.

*Tinashe Kairiza*



## AGRIPRENEURS

A term or reference given to entrepreneurial people involved in agriculture.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Zimbabwe Youth Agripreneurship Summit  
2014 from 27 to 29 August

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## Featured:

**Leveraging on limited land**



# ZFU LAUNCHES YOUNG FARMERS PROFILING PROJECT

By Takudzwa Mutohho

The Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) recently launched the Young Farmers Profiling Project, which is meant to showcase the success stories and experiences of youths in the agriculture sector. Government officials, development partners, and representatives of parastatals, private sector and civil society attended the launch, which was held at the Zimbabwe Germany Society in Harare.

Speaking at the launch, ZFU First Vice President Mr Abdul Nyathi said the profiling initiative was crucial to expose the limitless opportunities agriculture presents to young people.

He implored youths to tap into the opportunities agriculture presents.

“The Profiling Project, which is also running concurrently with our efforts to form functional Young Farmers' Clubs across the country dovetails well with our goal to inspire young people to identify and tap into the limitless career and business opportunities that agriculture presents. The agriculture value chain is broad to absorb a large pool of our young farmers,” said Mr Nyathi.

He also noted that as global unemployment levels peak, agriculture's resilience as a growth frontier would cushion youths from the scourge of joblessness.

Stakeholders were encouraged to use the Profiling Project as a platform to explore solutions to address the host of challenges besetting start up young farmers.

*(Cont on page 3)*



*Above: ZFU 1<sup>ST</sup> Vice Mr Abdul Nyathi.*

*Below: ZFU Executive Director Mr Paul Zakariya.*



*Below from left to right: Young farmers Munyaradzi Shamuyarira, Francis Chirimuuta, Ruramiso Mashumba & Bright Nezomba.*



## ZFU LAUNCHES YOUNG FARMERS PROFILING PROJECT

*(cont)*

Speaking at the same occasion ZFU Executive Director Mr Paul Zakariya said it was imperative for stakeholders to invest in young people.

“We call upon all players in the sector to channel their knowledge, resources and skills towards building the capacity of young farmers,” he said.

During the profiling launch, the four (4) young farmers namely Munyaradzi Shamuyarira, Ruramiso Mashumba, Bright Nezomba and Francis Chirimuuta shared their farming experiences with stakeholders.

The Young Framers' Profiling Project will see the documentation of the experiences of young people in agriculture on various mediums of communication ●



*Pictured from left to right:* Young farmer Francis Chirimuuta, GMB -General Manager, Mr Albert Mandizha, Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development –Permanent Secretary, Eng R.J Chitsiko and the ZFU -1<sup>ST</sup> vice, Mr Abdul Nyathi.

To view the profiles please visit; <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCscluqHcCLcWqIHnUfiANqg>



# LEVERAGING ON LIMITED LAND

By Tinashe Kairiza

...a reverting account of how a young farmer transformed his backyard into a viable commercial enterprise.

Imagine ripening and glistening tomatoes dangling heavily on the boughs of several plants competing to touch the roof of a neatly constructed green house.

A young man immaculately dressed in a blue overall and gum boots trudges along, stopping here to prune wilting leaves from the crop and stopping there to inspect an intricate network of drip irrigation pipes running across the green house. He moves on, finally bending over to pluck a handful of succulent tomatoes, which he deposits in a basket.



Surely you would think that just for that brief moment, your mind had taken flight to a highly mechanised and expansive horticulture farm, far from the hustle and bustle of Harare. But it is not so.

Munyaradzi Shamyarira’s piece of land, where juicy tomatoes and other horticulture crops flourish, can hardly be described as a farm. Barely measuring an acre, Munya’s piece of land, which he has converted into a thriving commercial horticulture enterprise, is situated in the backyard of his parents’ house in the sprawling suburb of Marlborough in Harare. It is even more unimaginable that his produce of tomatoes, broccoli, English cucumber and cauliflower finds a place of choice in the shelves of most supermarkets dotted around Marlborough. Much of his produce is delivered to the local supermarkets by a small truck he bought.

At 23, Munya is an unassuming character whose farming industry points to far much bigger things in the future. Through sheer hard work and skill, his bustling ‘backyard farming’ enterprise casts away all misconceptions often associated with that kind of farming. “It is a derogatory term to call it backyard farming,” he says, “rather people should refer to it as Urban farming or Agriculture. Extensive literature is now being written to correct the misconceptions around farming done at home or in urban areas,”

*(Cont on page 5)*



**“I’m no backyard farmer...this is what we call urban Agriculture. Nowadays, Farming is more intensive and one can yield more on a smaller piece of land and have a bigger impact. It’s not about vast pieces of land anymore.”**

Apart from the smaller size of Munya's piece of land, everything else, including the bigger tomatoes and heads of cauliflower and broccoli at the 'farm' speak of a young man's unyielding dream to grow his farming enterprise.

"It has always been my plan to expand my project to meet the growing demand of horticulture products on the local market. But for now, I want to maximise on the little piece of land I have," he says. "Actually, the little piece of land gives me the opportunity to profitably utilise it."

While Shamuyarira pockets the rich pickings from his project, his mother is only far too happy that she no longer has to visit the local supermarket to buy vegetables. A penny saved!

"Ever since he started this project, I don't remember buying vegetables. All the fresh vegetables we consume are produced here," she says. She remains unfazed that her son has not broached the idea of looking for employment elsewhere.

"Jobs are hard to come by these days. What he is doing here is worthwhile," she says.

It is an easier bet to place that Munya's exploits will evolve into something far much bigger than the acre of land that he profitably tills at his parents' home. But for now, his focus is to extract maximum benefit from that small piece of land ●



*Munya shows off some of his produce.*



*“Catch them young”. Chemhondoro young farmers’ club in Murewa.*



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