

# Commercial farmers show interest in Mozambique

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**FOLLOWING** the recent passing of the Constitutional Amendment Bill, which will virtually empower government to expropriate productive commercial farmland earmarked for resettlement purposes, several Zimbabwean commercial farmers are said to be seriously contemplating their emigration to neighbouring countries.

Unconfirmed reports say that a Zambian delegation was recently in Harare to hold meetings with commercial farmers to lure them to Zambia where no such laws exist, but the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) this week said it had no official knowledge of such a visit.

Dr Jeremy Grant, Deputy Director of the CFU, said he was not aware of any approaches from the Zambia side. But, he said, he was aware that there was a lot of interest in Mozambique in local commercial farming circles, noting that

the Mozambican Minister of Agriculture had recently told his Zimbabwean counterpart that farmers would be encouraged to farm along the Corridor.

"There is a lot of interest in Mozambique at the moment, with some farmers going over to have a look there. But from our point of view, the last thing we need is for our dwindling number of experts to leave."

## Staff Reporter

"Zimbabwean experts bolstering our neighbours is just not on. We need to retain all our experts, not only farmers, but also teachers, engineers and others. I believe that any government policy which results in neighbouring countries becoming more attractive is a very dangerous policy."

Dr Grant said indications so far were that the Mozambican authorities would welcome farmers on long-lease agreements, which he said, would

give every encouragement to farmers wishing to farm there.

However, he said that the infrastructure there was almost non-existent and there was no provision for the movement of plant and machinery under present emigration laws in Zimbabwe.

"I would rather Zimbabwe continued to provide food security for the region than any other country in the future," said Dr Grant.

At the question and answer session held on January 11 between the Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement and the CFU on the land issue, the question was asked whether a farmer who wants to move to Mozambique or Zambia where 99-year lease agreements are available, will be able to move his livestock, implements, and money in the event that his farm is compulsorily purchased for resettlement.

Minister Mangwende replied that the issue of 99-year lease

agreements in Mozambique or Zambia had no bearing whatsoever on the land situation in Zimbabwe.

He said that if any farmer felt that he would be better off in another country and wished to move capital, whether in the form of money, livestock, implements, or any other form, then he or she would have to obtain permission from the Reserve Bank for such transfers.

"The issue of whether the move is to Mozambique or Zambia, and whether or not leases are available in those countries is not relevant. The conditions of export of capital apply to all destinations and no specific rules apply for export of capital to particular countries.

"Such cases will be governed by the normal laws of emigration and capital repatriation which are outside my responsibility," the minister told farmers.