

# What Future For Agriculture Students?

SINCE the inception of the Agricultural Diploma in Namibia some years back, it had been understood that the purpose of the diploma was to prepare students undertaking the course for fulfilling national objectives so that after completion of their studies, they should go out and teach farmers the methods of maximum food production from the limited resource (land) without exploiting it.

Some years back, students who graduated from the three Agricultural Colleges, namely, Ogongo, Neudamm and Tsumis were immediately taken in by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (Mawrd) to fulfil their objectives.

The circle is turning around. Today a lot of Agricultural graduates end up roaming around the streets of each and every town in Namibia without knowing where the future is taking them. Where should we go?

Where is the future of these poor graduates? This year only will see more than forty students graduating from the two Agricultural Colleges, viz, Neudamm and Ogongo respectively. And every year a similar number will be graduating. Where will these graduates-to-be go if the Mawrd is still failing to employ their previous graduates?

Someone might say they should go and take loans from Agribank as we were told by one respondent from the Mawrd the previous year. Can anyone give me an example of a bank

which can give loans without an assurance that the loan will be repaid back (security)? Some of us never worked before, where will we get the security for the loans?

One of the respondents from the Mawrd last year said, "it is better to have educated people in the streets". Why is the ministry still taking more students to undergo similar training without a future?

Why should they continue on producing similar fruits without a market for them?

If the market is saturated with the current product, why don't they try and change the structure of the product so that they can produce different products?

I know that every product have a life cycle and believe the agricultural graduates are know in the decline stage. But what will the producer do if his product in the decline stage. Will he not make some renovations to the existing product. Why is the Ministry not doing the same?

I think it is time the Ministry take this into consideration. They should realise the cost involved in training students and should also see the need to employ these students after successful completion of their studies so that they can pay back the training costs through taxes they will be paying to the government.

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