

EC-SADC EPA interim agreement implementation – L Rantho

An interim agreement initialled by the EC and some Member States of SADC (EPA configuration) will be implemented on 1 July 2008. South Africa is not yet a signatory to the agreement. Both EC and SADC (EPA configuration), including South Africa agreed to conclude negotiations towards a full EPA by 31 December 2008. A full EPA will cover trade in services and investment.

New Partnership for Trade and Development Act - a draft bill to replace AGOA - H Konstant

Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA), an old supporter of [AGOA](#), introduced the first draft of NPTDA in October 2007. The legislation was seen to be a major step in advancing the national trade policy of the United States. It extends the benefits of AGOA to all least developed countries provided that these countries adopt the core labour rights of ILO, promote market economy, practice rule of Law, and protect human rights. Opening AGOA preferential market access to all LDCs brings in competition from the new entrants against regular Sub-Sahara African exporters to the USA. A group of African countries have expressed their concerns about the erosion of their preferences because of the new Act. Examine the [Draft Bill](#). [Record your views and comments](#).

South African official to chair WTO dispute panel – E van Renen

Mr Attie Swart, Chief Programmes Officer in the national Department of Agriculture, was requested to chair a WTO panel in a dispute between Australia and New Zealand. The dispute relates to the application of sanitary and phytosanitary regulations. Mr Swart represented South Africa as agricultural counsellor in the South African Mission to the WTO in Geneva, Switzerland from 1996 to 2000. This request speaks of the high regard in which his expertise in matters related to the WTO agreements, and trade policy, in general is held.

SACU agreement to be overhauled – L Tswai

An international consulting company is doing rounds in SACU member states to establish whether there are any implementation challenges encountered in implementing the Agreement. The Agreement was structured less elaborately in a general framework format, with most of its Articles open to different interpretation and therefore creating various implementation challenges for member states. SACU is revisiting it with the possibility of re-opening it up completely (or only the ambiguous parts) for improvement.

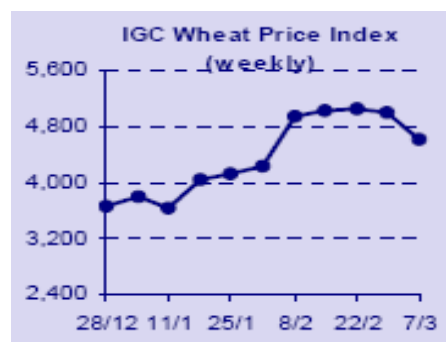
Food aid and surging food prices – J Verster

The United Nations' [World Food Programme](#) is contemplating rationing food aid because of recent spiralling agricultural commodity prices. Dissimilar to previous cases of disequilibrium, two important caveats are set against a timely supply increase. First, food needs fertiliser and transport, both requiring energy. The price of natural gas is one of the biggest components in the price of ammonia and potash and this is currently nearly double its 2001 levels. Oil prices have soared nearly 70% in the past 12 months. Secondly, in a bid to reduce oil dependence many countries are requiring additional production of bio-fuels that in turn competes with food. With climate change threatening

agricultural capacity, the elasticity of past supply responses may prove to be a poor guide for the future.

Exports restrictions on grain concerns food inflation, food security, trade policy – E Steenkamp

Various grain-exporting countries have either constrained or taxed their exports due to the drastic increases in world grain prices over the past year. Argentina has controlled exports by closing registration for exports of grains and oilseeds as well as increased their export taxes to curb food inflation. South African animal feed buyers had difficulty this past season in sourcing grain from its traditional suppliers to prevent potential grain shortages. In March 2007, Zambia put an export ban on grains to ensure that it has enough grain for the season. In June 2007, Australia changed its Wheat Marketing Act to include the right to veto bulk wheat export applications and control it through a single desk arrangement. China introduced value-added tax as well as temporary taxes on wheat exports during December and January 2008 to restrain exports. Export restrictions were also exercised by India, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Russia and the Ukraine. Brazil and the USA livestock producers have lobbied for export taxes to curb their local rising feed costs.



Source: [International Grains Council](#)

The graph displays the rise in wheat prices and subsequent leveling off in anticipation of good southern hemisphere maize crops and in part due to the substitution effect between maize and corn.

ITC developments – complimentary international market analysis tools – J Verster

The [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC) provides its market analysis tools - Trade Map, Market Access Map, Product Map and Investment Map - free of charge as of 1 January 2008 for all users in developing countries. This access was made possible by financial contributions from ITCs Global Trust Fund and the World Bank. [>> Free account](#)
[Trade Map](#) - This product has proven to be very useful in international business development with bilateral trade statistics, indicators on export trends, international supply and demand, alternative markets and competitor performance. [Market Access Map](#) - MacMap covers customs tariffs (import duties) and other measures applied by 182 importing countries to products from 239 countries. Direct enquiries to [Sandra Devillier](#).

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