

TIMB Blocks 448 Grower Numbers

As of the 6th of April, 2023 we at TIMB has blocked 448 grower numbers on strong suspicion of tobacco-side marketing. We interrogated the tobacco selling system, according to sales points, looking for irregular activity that strongly indicates the illegal practice and these growers are the alleged offenders.

The blocked grower numbers had sold tobacco five times or more in only 13 days of the 2023 tobacco marketing season. It is illogical and cost-ineffective to bring 20 bales to market on a Monday then bring 10 on Wednesday and 15 on Friday the same week only to bring similar amounts of tobacco in the following week.

Such sales behaviour is typical of tobacco farmers who sell tobacco on behalf of their peers or illegal tobacco buyers who buy the golden leaf from farmers at low prices only to come and resell it at auction or contract floors at a higher price.

We have blocked these growers from making more sales to make sure we only have legitimate tobacco farmers selling. The individuals with blocked grower numbers should approach TIMB with their sales sheets, and verify that they are legitimate tobacco growers selling their own produce. We will also send our technical team for farm visits to verify by physically inspecting the respective farms and if they are legitimate growers we will unblock their grower numbers.

Side marketing is when tobacco growers sell their tobacco to third parties in breach of the contractual agreement that tobacco shall only be sold to or bought by the contractor who provided inputs to the grower. It is also when an individual sells tobacco on behalf of another.

It is sufficient to mention that side marketing can be perpetrated by either a farmer, an unlicensed buyer or an errant licensed contractor. This criminal practice is responsible for the loss of millions of dollars annually and has the potential to kill the tobacco industry.

This year, 2023, we are on an accelerated drive to ensure orderly tobacco marketing and end tobacco side marketing. We are armed with SI 77 of 2022 as well as the Contractors' Compliance Administration Framework as our main tools to fight side marketing and there will be no sacred cows and unturned stones.

All tobacco stakeholders are mandated to fully utilise the TIMB booking system. A grower should book their tobacco for sale in advance. This helps us detect side marketing and stop it.

We have also extended the arm of our Inspectorate department, they will be conducting random inspections of farms, sales floors and warehouses throughout the season.

Our Inspectors will also conduct intelligence-led operations in partnership with law enforcement agencies for example surveillance patrols and stops and search at roadblocks.



As a Board, we continue to educate and carry awareness campaigns targeted at all tobacco industry stakeholders so that they know the implications and negative effects of side marketing and invite whistle-blowers to give us anonymous tip-offs on our toll-free number 0774 075 045 or any of our online platforms.

We encourage all players in the tobacco industry including licensed contractors to be honest stewards of the industry, varimi/ macontractor akavimbika, abalimi / amacontractor athembekileyo.



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