

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT - 1 SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 31 AUGUST 2022
PRESENTED BY MRS TUTTI RUDMAN AT THE 60TH ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL CONSUMER UNION
28 SEPTEMBER 2022

I am pleased to submit the Chairman’s report of the South African National Consumer Union for the period of 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022 to all our Associate, Affiliates, and Private Members

BACKGROUND

SANCU is a voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental organisation. SANCU aims to educate consumers on their rights and promote consumer awareness.

SANCU strives to be known and recognised as a credible and effective organisation that advises, informs, and educates consumers, promotes consumer rights, and represents the consumers on different Boards and committees.

Our motto is: “Promoting Responsible Consumerism”

AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Affiliate members play an important role in our organisation. The affiliates are all NGOs and NPOs. Thank you for attending the General Meetings. Affiliate members on EXCO are all voluntary. A special thank you, Irene Keet for driving all the way from Mpumalanga to attend the EXCO meetings every month.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Associate members are the members that keep SANCU’s office functioning and successful. SANCU is extremely thankful for your support. Thank you for also attending our General Meetings on a regular base.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Honorary membership of SANCU has been bestowed on Mrs Irene Keet. Irene is the past Chairman of the Carpe Diem region and served four years as vice-president of the WAU in Mpumalanga during which time she attended SANCU’s General Meetings. Irene has now

been a member of EXCO for the last five years and attends all meetings. Her inputs at meetings are well thought through and much appreciated.

CONSUMER CUP

The SANCU Consumer Cup is awarded to an individual or organisation for their campaigning on behalf of consumers and the work they do with consumers. Last year the Consumer cup was not awarded to anyone as SANCU did not have an Annual General Meeting in 2020.

EXECUTIVE MEETING

The SANCU executive meets monthly. These meetings are still held at the Chairman's house. Members report back on meetings attended. These reports are also discussed. Decisions on press releases, levies and statutory measures are made at these meetings.

GENERAL MEETING

General Meetings are usually held bi-monthly. We are very lucky to attract excellent speakers who address the meeting on different relevant and interesting topics. This is done at no cost to SANCU, and for this we are very thankful. We get very good feedback from our Affiliate and Associate members after the meetings, and this is also a compliment to the speakers. Reports from the NCRS, SABS, Department of Health and Department of Agriculture are tabled and sent as attachments with the minutes.

The first General Meeting held in 2022 was on 30 March where Chantel Arendse the Plant Biotechnology Lead at PlantLife South Africa addressed the meeting on Genetically Modified Food. This was followed by the 267th General Meeting held on 27 July 2022. At this meeting Dr Carmen Muller from Potatoes SA spoke on Classification of potatoes for optimal consumer satisfaction. SANCU is extremely grateful to our Guest Speakers for the time and effort they put into these very informative presentations.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting is held in September each year. Recommendations are tabled, discussed, and if accepted, forwarded to the relevant businesses or institutions. We seldom get direct responses to recommendations, but we notice their impact. Appointments are made for deliveries of goods, parcels and services

SANCO ExCo members represent consumers on several boards and committees. Meetings of the following were attended during the year.

AGRICULTURE

- Oil Seeds Advisory Committee
- Potato Industry Forum
- Cotton SA
- Red Meat industry Forum
- Maize Forum
- Dairy Standards Agency
- Wheat Forum
- South African Winter Grain Industry Trust (SAWCIT)
- South African Grain Information Trust (SAGIS)
- South African Meat Industry Company (SAMIC)
- Oil and Protein Development Trust

FINANCE

- Credit Ombud - R2.25 million claims has been reclaimed for consumers.

FOOD/NUTRITION

- Food Advisory Consumer Service (FACS)

SA BUREAU OF STANDARDS

- TC 007 Consumer Standards
- TC 22/SC2 Child Restraints
- TC 70 Legal Metrology
- TC 70/SC4 Legal Metrology: Sale of Goods
- SABS Commercial: Impartiality Committee
- TC 1088 GMOs
- TC 1028 Pesticides
- Cannabis Standard (New TC)

NATIONAL REGULATOR FOR COMPULSORY SPECIFICATIONS (NRCS)

CONSUMER GOODS AND SERVICES OMBUD

Comments

2022 has been a year of recovery – some industries slower than others. Covid stopped many industries and the war in Ukraine has stopped the recovery of many of our industries, also a stay on exports from Asian countries of grains has impacted our economy.

The consumers in South Africa have suffered badly in the last three years with job loss due to closing and/or downsizing of companies and the slow recovery of tourism, restaurant and entertainment industries and problems in the logistic industry due to high fuel costs and security of moving products. This downturn in consumer confidence and the economy has

been due largely to the very high price increases across the board from bonds, fuel, right down to household basics.

The agricultural industry had faced a multitude of problems:

- Drought and flooding.
- War in Ukraine which has meant an increase in cost of fertilizers and sunflower oil.
- Foot and Mouth Disease, which halted our export of meat and animals although, fortunately, the outbreak has been brought under control. Recovery will take a few years due to overseas and across boarder limits being placed on our movement and export of animals.
- Restrictions placed on our vegetables and meat by Botswana and Namibia.
- Movement of products has come under tremendous strain due to civil unrest and problems with rail and road.

The good news is that our grain industries are showing the promise of good harvest which will mean some relief for our consumers. Foot and Mouth outbreak has been brought under control. Emerging farms programs are showing more success. The tourism industry is predicting a good summer season due to the value for money products that can be found in South Africa.

Unfortunately, the continuing loadshedding, cost of fuel and weak Rand is hindering any quick return to a pre-covid level of business in many industries. Small businesses are at the greatest risk in this tie. Foreign investors are certainly put off by lack of service delivery, loadshedding and civil unrest and this impacts directly on our economy.

Consumers are just making ends meet, there is very little over for anything beyond the essentials. This means less protein being bought in households and a drop in maintenance of properties, insurance, medical aid, clothing, and purchasing of cars as people are hoping they can do without or survive with the bare minimum for a little longer.

SANCU with the rest of South Africa is hoping for a year of recovery and for government and industry to work together to solve some of the country's major problems.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

SANCU is fortunate to have a good relationship with many journalists who contact us for comments as they know we always have well-researched and objective information or comments.

OFFICE REPORTS

The Executive Officer, Mrs Mildred Spies provides extensive reports on activities and finances at every EXCO meeting.

For the period 10 February to 31 August 2022 Milly received a total of 23 enquiries/complaints, of which 17 were resolved, 5 ignored because they were addressed to multiple recipients and one complaint is still pending.

CONSUMER INFORMATION

SANCU's members are regularly sent interesting consumer information from our office in the form of newsletters, consumer alerts, food price statistics, articles on plant-based food and beverages, etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CONCLUSION

Considering that my Executive Committee are all volunteers and travel long distances to attend meetings with no remuneration, I have nothing but praise and a big thank you for all the hours spent on SANCU matters.

To my 1st Vice, Jennifer Tselentis, and 2nd Vice, Petro du Plessis, thank you for always being there when I need you.

Mildred Spies, Executive Officer appointed in March 2022, you are my right hand in the office. I thank you for the professional and efficient way you manage the office. You go the extra mile for SANCU by even working outside your office hours. This is really appreciated.

Dr Clif Johnston, thank you for continuing to assist the office after stepping down from EXCO during the year for personal reasons.

To SABS thank you for the office space and facilities you supply cost-free to SANCU.

To all Affiliates and Associates, thank you for your ongoing support. Without you SANCU would not be here.

I herewith present my report for adoption.

Dated this 28th day of September 2022