

## National Foods shines at ZITF

National Foods Holdings Limited posted a strong showing at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF), securing multiple accolades that underscore its growing footprint in Zimbabwe's food security and manufacturing sectors.

The company was awarded second place for Overall Supreme Design and Customer Experience at the 2026 edition of the trade fair, one of the event's most competitive categories, reflecting excellence in brand presentation, consumer engagement, and exhibition innovation.

It also clinched first place in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sectoral exhibition, reinforcing its dominance in a segment critical to Zimbabwe's food value chain. In addition, the firm earned second place in the Stockfeeds sectoral category, highlighting its expanding influence in the livestock and agricultural inputs market.

The awards come as National Foods continues to invest heavily in capacity expansion and product diversification, a strategy analysts say has positioned the group as a key player in advancing national food security.

Recent public reports indicate that the company has been upgrading milling infrastructure, expanding stockfeed production, and enhancing supply chain efficiencies to meet rising domestic demand. These investments have enabled it to maintain consistent product availability across key staples such as maize meal, flour, and animal feeds, even amid economic volatility.

Company officials said recognition at ZITF serves as both validation of ongoing efforts and motivation to scale operations further.

The accolades align with broader national objectives to boost local production and reduce reliance on imports, particularly in essential food commodities.

ZITF remains Zimbabwe's premier trade showcase, drawing exhibitors from across sectors including manufacturing, agriculture, and services. Awards presented at the fair are widely regarded as benchmarks of industrial competitiveness and innovation.

National Foods' strong performance this year builds on a track record of success at the exhibition, where it has consistently ranked among the top performers. Industry observers note that its emphasis on modernising production facilities and improving customer experience has helped differentiate the brand in a crowded market.

The company's stockfeeds division, which also received recognition, has become increasingly important as Zimbabwe seeks to strengthen its livestock sector.

By supplying high-quality feed products, National Foods is contributing to improved productivity in poultry, dairy, and beef production.

Meanwhile, its FMCG segment continues to benefit from strong brand equity and widespread distribution networks, enabling the company to reach both urban and rural consumers.

The latest ZITF honours signal not only corporate success but also the broader resilience of Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector, which has shown signs of recovery through sustained investment and innovation.

With capacity expansion projects ongoing and demand for food products rising, National Foods appears poised to consolidate its leadership position while contributing to the country's long-term economic and agricultural development goals.



## National News

# 'Ignorance keeps locals out of capital markets'

Almot Maqolo  
Staff Writer

ON A busy weekday morning in the central business district, office workers scroll through their phones between meetings, while just a few kilometres away in Mbare, traders exchange cash rapidly in one of the country's most vibrant informal markets.

Both groups are active in Zimbabwe's economy, yet neither is significantly present in the capital markets.

Market participants say that the gap reflects a lack of investor education that cuts across income levels, professions and geography.

"Market education, investor awareness, it's quite key," Chengezdzai Depository Company chief executive Prosper Mutorogodo said.

"But then what I want to point out is that it is not just perhaps the men in the rural areas who are not aware of our capital markets. Those people who are actually sitting in offices, most of them do not have a Chengezdzai Securities Depository account."

That observation challenges a long-held assumption that financial exclusion was largely a rural or low-income issue.

According to Mutorogodo, even formally employed Zimbabweans, those with stable incomes and access to banking, were not participating.

"So, it actually needs to start from amongst ourselves, educating each other so that we educate the educator for people to start investing."

"You heard of the number of 30 000 to 50 000 accounts for the entire capital markets," Mutorogodo said.

"You see, it means that there is a lot of work that needs to be done in terms of investor education so that perhaps we go over the 100 000 mark initially, even approach a million in terms of those accounts."

For market operators, participation is not just a measure of inclusion, it is essential for growth.

"At the end of the day, it is those people with accounts that then participate, that then buy and sell, which is good for the entire capital market," he said.

"That is where you now see the activity, the volumes and the values picking up because we have more people participating."

Others in the industry argue that retail investors, ordinary individuals rather than institutions, represent a largely untapped opportunity.

"The retail market is an untapped goldmine," Investiq Oak Wealth managing director Coreen Madanha said.

"Most of the time, we are happy with institutions trading, and we applaud them, but the retailers are the real people. They are the ones who actually make the decisions in the institutions."

For Madanha, expanding participation starts with a basic understanding.

"So, I believe we need to do more in the space of education. Let's start from the grassroots. The general person should be able to understand what a share is and what the benefits are," she said.



She pointed to Mbare as an example of economic activity that remains disconnected from formal investment channels.

"If we go to Mbare in Harare today, the amount of money that is rotating or revolving around that economy is huge," Madanha said.

"Let's tap and make sure that we speak to the retailers about what the market is. Let's make them understand."

This comes as technology has begun to lower barriers. Platforms such as ZSE Direct, VFEX Direct and C-Trade allow individuals to trade shares using mobile devices.

Madhanha, however, noted that more innovation was needed to meet people where they are.

She also stressed the importance of reinvestment and collective savings.

"When they get their dividends, instead of them getting their money in their bank account, they are able to reinvest those dividends," Madanha said.

"They can decide: this is my money that is at Copserve, this is my money that is at First Transfer Secretaries, I want to reinvest it, and the money goes back."

She said informal savings groups known locally as Mukando could also play a role in bridging the gap.

"We have got so many women and other groups who are doing Mukando. Those people bring together a lot of money. We should go and speak to them a bit more," she said.

Zimbabwe Capital Markets corporate affairs executive Primrose Kurima said beyond access and technology, financial literacy remains a central concern.

"Capital markets, like when we get to have investors coming through, investing in the capital markets, it actually gets to do wealth creation," Kurima said.

She said awareness campaigns were increasingly focusing on showing people how investing can generate income over time.

"So, this is the time that we are now putting it out there so that a lot of people get to know about it, get to make money in ways that they did not know about, that someone can actually make money whilst they are sleeping," Kurima said.

A lack of knowledge, she added, often leads to poor financial decisions.

"The thing about investment is that a lot of people do not know about it because they lack financial literacy," she said.

"A lot of people are making a lot of mistakes by borrowing to grow. At the end of the day, people are in financial debt, they

have not financially planned, and they lack financial inclusion."

Retail investors themselves said they were willing but needed better access to information.

"So, what I think is mainly information dissemination in the markets," retail investor Howard Maburu said.

"We actually have people that I think are eager to find ways to invest their money; they are eager to look for ways to secure their future."

"What is lacking is a gap that needs to be filled, and it can only be filled with information."

Maburu indicated that emerging technologies could help close that gap.

"With the upcoming artificial intelligence and fintechs at play right now, I think it is actually an opportunity for innovators out there, for people wanting to take different solutions that can naturally aggregate information and use it to disseminate information to people," Maburu said.

Youths also called for engagement on platforms they already use.

"I think what we need to focus on is creating more platforms where youth can engage with this information. There have been issues raised on the accessibility of information," another retail investor Daniel Zinyama said.

"These are stakeholders within the capital markets who should be able to engage with more youth. Coming to our platforms, where the people are, which are the social media platforms, the engagement platforms, the spaces where we meet and socialise."

For many, the long-term goal goes beyond increasing account numbers or trading volumes, it is about reshaping how Zimbabweans think about money, from consumption to investment.

"They are not just investing for pleasure, for consumption; they are investing for their future. So, I believe generations can be built and we can be a better Zimbabwe if people are aware, if people are equipped and if people are comfortable with what they are trading," Madanha added.

This also comes as the Securities and Exchange Commission of Zimbabwe was also deepening capital-market awareness through an outreach programme designed to empower students and teachers across the country with essential knowledge about investment alternatives.

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