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Women in
agriculture: the
story of
Cebile Buthelezi

Emerging farmers in
Eksteenskuil heading for the
main stream

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Participation of smallholder
farmers in Agro-Processing
Industries of Gauteng
Province

CONTENTS



Women in agriculture: the story of Cebile Buthelezi



Assessment of the Participation of smallholder farmers in Agro-Processing Industries of Gauteng Province



Emerging farmers in Eksteenskui heading for the main stream



Youth enhancement in farming: Mashamba TVET College

PREFACE

This is the ninth edition of the Agripreneur publication from the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). Through this publication, the NAMC seeks to create a platform where farmers, particularly smallholders share their knowledge and skills, challenges, experiences, and insights with each other. It is believed that this publication will assist smallholders to learn from each other, develop strategies, adopt models, and become part of the value chain by marketing commodities that meet quality standards and are safe for consumption.

Presented in Agripreneur 9 are the following topics:

- (1) Women in agriculture: the story of Cebile Buthelezi
- (2) Assessment of the Participation of smallholder farmers in Agro-Processing Industries of Gauteng Province
- (3) Emerging farmers in Eksteenskui heading for the main stream
- (4) Youth enhancement in farming: Mashamba TVET College

List of contributors:

Victor **Mmbengwa**

Thulisile **Khoza**

Lucius **Phaleng**

Elekanyani **Nekhavambe**

Kayaletu **Sotsha**

Michelle **Schwartz**

Edited by: Kayaletu **Sotsha**

Design by Sylvester **Moatshe**

For more information on the Agripreneur Publication, contact Prof. Victor Mmbengwa, Manager: Smallholder Market Access Research at NAMC. Contact information: VMmbengwa@namc.co.za



Women in agriculture: the story of Cebile Buthelezi

By Kayaletu **Sotsha**

1. Background

Very often you will come across statements such as “Agriculture is the backbone of rural livelihoods, particularly in developing countries” in agriculture literature. In addition, there is a general notion that when given power, equal rights and access to resources (such as land) and opportunities, women could reduce food insecurity. This notion arises from the acknowledgement that women are the backbone of development of rural economies and they are more involved in agricultural activities compared to men. Furthermore, women guarantee livelihoods in rural areas. In other words, it is believed that their greater effort in agricultural activities helps to guarantee self-sustenance as men often cover other needs such as health care, school fees, clothing and other essential stuff based on their financial capacity. This system can be attributed to the colonial system that created homelands and forced black people to supply labour in the mining and commercial agriculture sectors. Very often, men from homelands had to go and look for job opportunities, leaving women to be caregivers at home. As a result, women dominate subsistence agriculture in the rural areas and this

agriculture is viewed as the main alternative for rural women but it comes with better access to land and other resources such as capital. On the contrary, the smallholder and commercial agriculture sectors are dominated by men. This implies that there are imbalances in resources rights and ownership, where women do not have access and control over resources.



*Ms Cebile **Buthelezi** on her farm*

This is a story of Cebile Buthelezi, a 34-year-old woman from Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province. Cebile grew up in a farming family in the KZN Province. She says she did not like doing farm activities when she was young because it felt like an abuse, having to wake up

around three or four o'clock in the morning. However, she grew to love farming as she learnt from her parents, as a result, she went to an agricultural school, the Owen Sithole College, to study animal production and home economics from 2008 to 2010. At the time she decided to go to school, she applied for farm land at the local Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). She was called for an interview in September 2011 and got the farm in June 2012. Now she owns 1053 hectares (ha) farm in Louwsburg, which is situated in the Abaqulusi Local Municipality in the Zululand District Municipality. However, 350 ha of her land were cut out for three households (farm workers) that worked for the previous owner and lived on the farm. She still relies on these families as her employees because they have not been able to utilize their own 350 ha piece of land due to financial constraints. Therefore, the skills from the previous farm activities are not lost.

3. Farming enterprises

3.1. Cattle production



Cattle on the farm

Cebile started operating the farm in 2012, doing small vegetable plots due to financial constraints. Fortunately, she received the Recap grant for beef cattle in 2014. She also used the support to acquire assets such as tractor, irrigation system and fencing. She started with 50 cattle

and her herd currently stands at 70 cattle. The markets for cattle are abattoirs in Vryheid and the informal market consisting of people from neighbouring communities. The sales do not exceed ten cattle per annum and are often aimed to generate extra income to complement vegetables production. Like many farmers in the country, she suffered a loss of stock during the severe drought that hit the country recently to which she lost ten cattle. In addition, she lost six cattle between 2014 and 2017 due to theft. Her land for cattle is divided into 3 camps, one big camp of 300 ha and two small camps. Sometimes, she purchases the feed to supplement the grazing camps, particularly in winter. Her stock is currently serviced by 5 bulls for breeding. She manages the breeding such that the mating takes place around December for births to take place around September. This is a strategy to ensure that calves come after winter as she does not have enough cash to purchase sufficient quantities of feed. When asked about her plans for cattle breeding, she says her passion is not on cattle but she was obliged to start with this enterprise as recap was specific to it. Therefore, she has no plan to increase her herd at the moment.

3.2. Vegetables production



Cabbages

Although she received support for cattle, her passion is in vegetables production. As a result, she still continues with her vegetables and even going stronger. In addition,

to selling cattle to support vegetables production, she also leased 30 ha of her land to Just Veggies in an attempt to increase her financial muscle. Not only she used this opportunity to raise cash, but she also took part in Just Veggies' skills development programmes to build capacity in vegetables production. She focuses on Spinach (2 ha), Cabbage (6 ha), Broccoli, Butternut and Onions (1 ha) – the total area for vegetables is 10 ha. She indicates that there is capacity for growth because she currently has 60 ha that could be under irrigation. She currently sells her vegetables to retailers (Boxer Super Store and Spar) and Hawkers in Vryheid as well as the individuals in the neighbouring communities. However, there are no contract agreements with the two retail outlets and she feels this as a challenge as there are no guarantees of selling her produce and therefore the prices are not fixed. She further indicates that her plans for vegetables are to focus more on potatoes and sweet potatoes, and hopefully affiliate to Potatoes South Africa. She is currently seeking information from the industry in this regard.

4. Contribution to the local economy

She currently employs seven permanent workers and 20 – 25 seasonal workers. In addition, she receives

students who come to do practical, from Owen Sithole (3), Mangosuthu College (2) and Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) (1) over a three year period. However, there are no proper arrangements and incentives for these relationships, as a result, the students do not get any income during their stay on the farm as she could only provide accommodation on the farm.

5. Achievements

In 2016, Cebile was a runner-up at the Commercial Entrepreneur Award that was held in Pietermaritzburg.

6. Training Acquired

She received training on fire fighting – this was organized by the local DRDLR. This year (2017), she attended the Making Markets Matter (MMM) Workshop in the Western Cape – this was organized by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) in collaboration with MMM Inc. She indicated that she gained a lot of knowledge and reaped several benefits from this workshop. These include:

- Marketing



Transport collecting the produce from the Lofika Farm

Transport collecting the produce from the Lofika Farm

- Financial management, including budgeting and re-investment in the farm business to enhance growth
- Networking with other farmers from other Provinces of South Africa. Here she highlights the engagement she had with the overall winner of the Female Farmer of the year Award of 2016, Ms Venecia Janse of the Western Cape. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries took an initiative to honour and appreciate the contribution of women to agricultural production in the country, through a Female Entrepreneur Award (FEA). This initiative dates back some seventeen years and aims to encourage and increase the participation of women, youth and people with disabilities in the agriculture sector. What happens is that each year each Province nominates candidates for FEA and picks the winner. Then an overall winner is picked from the Provincial winners. In 2015, Ms Julia Shungube from Mpumalanga received this Award. Cebile is happy to have interacted with such farmers and she is still keeping in touch with them on agriculture-related matters.



Cebile **Buthelezi** during the Making Markets Matter Workshop of 2017

7. Support

She receives support from the local DRDLR and the Department of Agriculture. The latter assists with soil samples, soil demarcation and markets for surplus, where necessary. She also receives support from her parents, who she assists on their farm from time to time in their farming activities. Her brothers also come to work on the farm during school holidays and she pays them and supports them with their school needs.

8. Challenges

- Not having contracts with the markets. This brings a lot of uncertainty with regards to price and quantities to be taken by the market because there are many suppliers
- Lack of a cold storage truck to supply a market in Johannesburg
- Finance to expand vegetables production
- Low respect from the community and workers. She feels that being a female and young, people often take advantage and take her for granted
- Packing machines to use in the packing shed
- Switching from livestock to vegetable production which she prefers
- Vandalization of the fence
- Stealing of vegetables
- Veld fires during winter
- Trespassing – livestock from neighbouring communities come and graze on her farm

9. Advice to other women and youth

- They should not let access to land be an issue in the short term – do with what you have and develop it over time
- No need to jump at commercial level – transition can be slow
- Agriculture is life and offers opportunities
- Change of mindset – learn to do things for yourself



Assessment of the participation of smallholder farmers in agro-processing industries of Gauteng Province

By Prof Victor Mmbengwa and Thulisile Khoza

Agro-processing is referred to as the activities that change the form of agriculture, forestry and fisheries products into various forms to facilitate easier handling, increase shelf-life and market access (DAFF, 2016). Previous studies advocated that there are numerous benefits that smallholder farmers can gain when participating in the agro-processing sector (Aphane 2011 and Alene et al., 2008). According to these authors, some of the benefits are associated with the potential to improve the cash-flow of these farmers and thus, enhancing their farming sustainability. It is generally known that most of the agro-processing firms are based in Gauteng Province within South Africa. Therefore, it could be assumed that limited smallholder farmers in Gauteng province have a better chance of benefiting and participating in the agro-processing sector.

Current literature shows that smallholder farmers were historically marginalized (Mmbengwa, 2011) and since 1994 smallholder farmers have been receiving support from government with little focus on linking them to sustainable value chain (Chauke & Anim 2013). This is an indication that there is more compelling scientific rationale to conduct the research that seeks to find out the extent of smallholder farmers' participation in agro-processing industries. This could be useful not only to inform government policies, strategies, farmer support but also to access the progress of agrarian development and societal transformation.

Considering the importance of agro-processing as means

to improve market access for smallholder farmers, as well as the lack of evidence to show the participation of smallholder farmers in agro-processing industries of Gauteng Province, the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) came up with a research initiative as they saw a need for the assessment of the participation of smallholder farmers in agro-processing Industries of Gauteng Province.

GDARD then appointed the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) to implement this research initiative. The MoU was signed in January 2016 between these two organisations, there after they embarked on the research journey. The aim of the assessment was to find out the level of participation by smallholder farmers in the agro-processing sector in Gauteng Province with the primary objective being to ensure meaningful economic participation by smallholder farmers.



Project manager (Juliet Rakuambo) addressing extension officers on the agro-processing project at the extension workshop

Cross-sectional data was collected from different stakeholders (i.e. Farmers, Extension officers, Retailers, Informal markets, Students, Researchers and Technicians) in all regions of Gauteng Province. The data was analyzed for descriptive and inferential outcomes using factors, reliability and stepwise linear regression analyses.

Smallholder farmers filling in the survey questionnaire
The results indicate that there is insignificant number of farmers participating in agro-processing in Gauteng Province. Therefore, they do not contribute or benefit from associative agro-processing. Hence, there is a need to foster participation of these farmers in agro-processing/value chain. The results of the study also revealed that smallholder farming experience and locality have significant influence in all levels of participation in the smallholder agro-processing sector. Therefore, it could be concluded that for GDARD to initiate and improve the smallholder farming agro-processing participation,



smallholder farmers need to cluster in terms of experience and their locality.

Future research on the impact of tools in improving the extension services with view to improve smallholder farmers' participation in the agro-processing industries is required. Future research on the evaluation of the government interventions, models and investments in order to track the progress and success of the transformation in this sector would be handy. Commodity approach in evaluating the levels of participation may indicate the sectors that are improving in meeting the expectations of Gauteng Provincial government in terms of improving the participation of these farmers in this sector. Furthermore, research on the relationship between various levels of participation in this sector and the impact of such participation in reducing poverty, unemployment and youth participation may be beneficial in future. Lastly, the assessment of the Gauteng agro-processing strategy and its influence to the smallholder farmers and agricultural value chain in Gauteng will potentially be one of the best researches in future.

Extension workers filling in the survey questionnaire

This research initiative was a 12 months project and had ended in January 2017. Dissemination sessions (talk back-shows) were conducted with Phalaphala FM radio station in an effort to share the importance as well as the benefits of agro-processing. Professor Mmbengwa from the NAMC participated in these sessions. He also contributed an article published in Univen Alumni newspaper. Moreover, the results of the study were disseminated through domestic conferences (GDARD 4th extension conference) and international conferences (International Conference of Sustainable Development, 4th Annual international conference on business, law and economics). Journal articles were also produced with the aim of publishing them to accredited journals recognised by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

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Emerging farmers in Eksteenskuil heading for the main stream

By Michelle Schwartz

The small-farmers' community in Eksteenskuil has grown in recent developments through State funded projects, and is gradually becoming a benchmark community to keep an eye on. Since 2009, wine and raisin grapes have been established, with the

most recent development of more than 220 hectares of raisin grapes on 55 farms that was established through the Eksteenskuil Raisin Incubator Project. This project was started in 2013, with the



Fruit drying structure

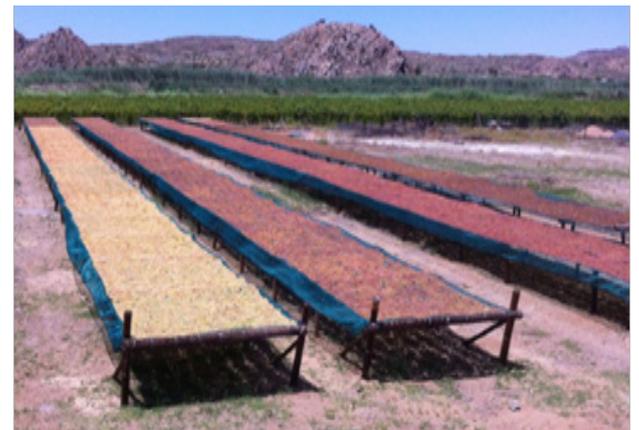
During 2015, a NAMC/DFTS study tour was conducted to the Western Cape where a few emerging farmers were exposed to the other scope of agriculture (i.e. research, plant breeding, wide area pest control, drying facility and factory). It was at a fully accredited drying facility that another methodology of drying structures inspired some farmers to establish these drying structures in Eksteenskuil as well. While Otto Spangenberg

and Donovan Smith were part of the tour group, it was Gerrie Louw, Vincent Schwartz (and Donovan Smith) who caught on the inspiration from Otto and developed these structures on their plots. Though this is not a new invention to farmers in the Northern Cape, it certainly is new to emerging farmers. The drying structures have proved successful, especially during the rainy days. Though the grapes take longer to dry, the quality of raisins are better.

¹The tour comprised of visits to ARC campuses, SAPO Trust, Fruit Fly Africa and Montagu Dried Fruit and Nuts Drying facility and factory



Inspiration from Montagu Dried Fruits & Nuts drying structures



Pioneer structure built by Vincent Schwartz

Challenge

Within the context of raisin grapes, these drying structures are in the process of obtaining accreditation from the controlling body of the food safety quality control board -PPECB. These structures are a 'fresh' idea to many farmers, and the approval by the PPECB of such structures, and the disapproval of some others, may be what is needed to thrust farmers to make use of such drying methods.

The challenge however, remains that these are costly structures – Total costs amount to an average of R140.00 per running metre of structure at 2.4 metres width. The majority of farmers are faced with either or both of the two challenges: Cannot afford to build drying facilities according to specifications, and/ or there is no land to erect a drying facility or structures on. The average farmer has a plot of land that is an average of 3 hectares. Fortunately, this challenge can be addressed by establishing a communal drying facility.



Youth Enhancement in farming: Mashamba TVET College

Promoting Corporate Agriculture Careers



By Elekanyani Nekhavhambe and Lucius Phaleng

On 29 March 2017, the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) visited the Mashamba Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College as part of Y-Agriculture model.

The Y-Agriculture model was developed in 2016 by the NAMC to enhance the agriculture sector's career offerings and promote skills development. The purpose of the programme is to address various challenges faced by today's youth within the agricultural sector. The specific program objectives are relating to:

- Bridge the gap between knowledge acquired from educational institutions and the corporate work environment;
- Provide a well-designed, thoughtful career guidance and mentorship where critical and scarce skills in the sector are highlighted; and
- Provide information on available bursaries and career opportunities that exist in the agricultural sector.

This idea emanated from the belief that schools, colleges and universities could play an important role in providing fundamental knowledge and skills to learners which could be later implemented in the labour market. Mashamba TVET College is one of the Vhembe TVET Colleges in the Limpopo Province. This college offers primary agriculture (National Certificate Vocational Programme) and land farming management (Nated courses, Report 191), amongst other courses. Currently, more or less 1200 students are registered for primary agriculture and farming management. This college is also on a mission to commercialize the experimental farm and also to introduce horticulture as an additional agricultural module.

The reason behind NAMC's visit was career development and to identify opportunities to promote youth participation within the agriculture sector. Against this background, the NAMC collaborated with the Mashamba TVET College to profile farming activities, where students are involved.



Nguni cattle

The college is having one experimental farm that is used mainly for the training of students and also to perform hands on practicals. The experimental farm comprises of both livestock and crop production. There are approximately 30 Nguni cattle in the farm and 15 goats and sheep.

Approximately 20 hectares of the farm is suitable for crops. Mr. Maumela “campus manager” highlighted that they are aiming to commercialize the farm in order to stimulate the practical conditions, and to produce quality products that will be acceptable in the local markets.

Furthermore, the farm has two complete greenhouse infrastructure built for vegetables production such as spinach, cabbages, beans, etc. In addition, the farm has a piggery house with six sows and one boar. There is also a broiler house which may accommodate about 2400 broilers.



Mrs Mudau sampling maize, which was planted last year (2016).

The picture above shows one of the lecturers sampling yellow maize, which was planted by agricultural students in the college. This may be the indication that this experimental farm could enhance the success of youth involvement in farming, not only in academic but also in practical production activities.



Mr. Phaleng and Mrs. Mudau

The above picture shows Mrs. Mudau discussing some of the challenges the farm faces. One of the main challenges is that there is unfavourable infrastructure to protect livestock from wild animals. This often hinders the growth and development of the farm. Other challenges include the lack of pipe line or drip irrigation infrastructure; lack of field workers to assist the students during their practicals; and lack of access to relevant information by students with regard to bursaries and graduate placement after their studies.

Experimental farm viewing

The engagements with the College management and students are still ongoing. Interestingly, the College aims to expand its farming activities and produce well-equipped agricultural graduates. In this regard, the college is willing to collaborate with the NAMC, government entities and private stakeholders to enhance youth participation in agriculture.

Conclusion

The Mashamba TVET College, one of the Vhembe TVET Colleges is a good example of College institutions that could be used as a strategic tool to enhance involvement of youth in farming activities. This may be the best platform to engage and encourage youth to participate in agricultural businesses or to enhance their agriprenuership skills. Moreover, the issue of infrastructure needs to be addressed to ensure suitable functioning of farming activities.

For more information regarding farming activities in the Mashamba TVET College Mashamba, contact Mr Madzhuta T.W on 0636270076 or Mr Madzivhandila T. on 082 482 0042

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