

agripreneur

A smiling woman with dark skin and long, dark, curly hair, wearing a red and black plaid shirt under a black vest. She is standing outdoors in front of a corrugated metal structure. The magazine title 'agripreneur' is at the top, with 'agri' in green and 'preneur' in black. Below it is the issue information 'ISSUE 29 | JUNE 22'. The tagline 'INSPIRING AGRICULTURAL STORIES' is centered below the issue info. The main title 'CHICKEN FABULOSITY: RBKM CHICKENS' is in a large, bold, black font, partially overlaid by a semi-transparent grey box. Below the title, a short bio of Prudence Thulisile Mokwena is also within the grey box. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with a corrugated metal roof and some blurred structures in the distance.

ISSUE 29 | JUNE 22

INSPIRING AGRICULTURAL STORIES

CHICKEN FABULOSITY: RBKM CHICKENS

Meet Prudence Thulisile Mokwena, the founder and owner of RBKM Chickens. She is a finalist for the 10th Fabulous Woman Awards in 2022.

The Agriculture and Agroprocessing Master Plan is a product of negotiations between government, business, labour and civil society organisations in the agriculture and agro-processing sectors.



The NAMC is developing a portal to keep you informed about the activities of the AAMP

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THE AGRIPRENEUR QUARTERLY:

A PUBLICATION BY THE SMALLHOLDER MARKET ACCESS RESEARCH UNIT OF THE NAMC

PREFACE

Welcome to the twenty-ninth edition of the Agripreneur publication of the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). The NAMC seeks to create a platform where agripreneurs and farmers, mainly smallholders, can share their knowledge and skills, challenges, experiences, and insights through this publication. It is believed that this publication will assist smallholders in learning from one another, developing strategies, adopting models, and becoming part of the value chain through the marketing of commodities and products that meet market standards and are safe for consumption. The Agripreneur publication also serves to promote and profile aspects of South African agriculture as a brand. Each issue features good stories that will hopefully convince the reader to #LoveRSAAgriculture.

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NAMC partnered with ARC, FABCO Primary Cooperative Limited (FABCO), and TIPS to conduct a feasibility study on cassava value chain.

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The Minister and Social partners sign the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan

On 12 May 2022, the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza, together with social partners, signed the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan (AAMP).

In 2019, the Minister appointed the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), Bureau for Food and Agriculture Policy (BFAP), and Competition, Regulation and Economic Development (CCRED) to develop and coordinate the AAMP on behalf of the department and in consultation with different stakeholders such as business (commercial and emerging), labour and civil society.

“The Masterplan is lifting our gaze to imagine the agricultural sector we want in South Africa. We want a prosperous and inclusive agricultural sector that thrives on better utilization of its natural and human resources” said Minister Thoko Didiza at the launch of AAMP.

The strategic objectives of the AAMP are:

- (a) To promote the transformation of agricultural value chains and spatial production;
- (b) To increase food security and end hunger;
- (c) To create employment, and improve skills, working conditions, and decent pay;
- (d) To accelerate the opening of markets and access conditions;
- (e) To expand agricultural production and food processing to replace imports;
- (f) To create effective farmer support and agro-processing incentives;
- (g) To increase farming community safety and reduce stock theft; and
- (h) To create a capable state and enabling policy environment

The AAMP uses a Change Theory approach for district-based commodity value chains through eight production schemes: white meat, red meat, grains, oilseeds, fibre, vegetables, fruits & nuts (wines & juice), and industrial crops (cannabis & hemp).

This approach will create new farmers, agripreneurs, and a rural middle class to drive mass production, industrialization, and consumption while also addressing the challenge of economic inclusiveness and rural development, as prioritized by the National Development Plan (NDP). The AAMP is envisaged to maintain 865 000 and 263 000 primary and secondary agricultural jobs while creating 75 000 new “decent” jobs by 2030.

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Chicken Fabulosity: RBKM Chickens

By: Tshamano **Maluma**

I am extremely excited and deeply appreciate the Fabulous Woman Awards for recognizing and honouring South African women in farming like me

Prudence Thulisile Mokwena, 33 years old, was born and raised in Soshanguve, Gauteng. She holds a National Diploma in Bio Technology as well as BTech in Pharmaceutical Sciences and BTech in Business Administration from Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). Currently, she is pursuing a Master's degree in Management Science and Entrepreneurship from TUT. On the other hand, she is trying to balance her career as a senior microbiologist at a leading fast-moving consumer goods manufacturer with being a farmer.

Prudence and her husband founded a poultry business in 2016. They tried to build their business but failed the same year. Prudence took a break from the business to pursue her BTech in Business Administration whilst also researching about poultry farming.

A project at school inspired her to revive her family business after she read an article about the lack of South Africa's chicken production to meet local demand. The RBKM Chicken was officially registered in 2019 and began trading in 2020. The business was named after their children Relebogile, Bokamoso and Makwena.



** Prudence Thulisile Mokwena, owner and founder of RBKM Chickens*

"Firstly, I am grateful for identifying my purpose of serving people with chickens that are raised locally, something most people prefer and can afford. I am focusing my attention now on improving the scale of my production in the future" she said.

This year, Thulisile was nominated for the 10th annual Fabulous Woman Awards for 2022. Her achievement of making it to the finalist round in the Fabulous Girls of the Year category is admirable. The awards celebrate women and girls who have made a difference in their communities. The winners will be announced on Saturday, 6 August 2022.

"I am extremely excited and deeply appreciate the Fabulous Woman Awards for recognizing and honouring South African women in farming like me, as well as women in other fields who are making a difference in their communities by developing, advancing, and empowering others" said Prudence.

The business is devoted to broiler production and expanding the current production to 3000 chickens per cycle. On its 4.2 hectares of land, the RBKM Chicken has six chicken houses that can each house 200 chickens per cycle.

The RBKM chickens has been offered the chance to become a contract grower for broilers to be supplied to the Winterveld abattoir. The initiative is sponsored by the City of Tshwane.



** Picture of broiler chicken ready for the market*

"Covid-19 did not negatively affect our business since most people spent more time at home, and chicken demand increased as a result" said Prudence. The RBKM Chicken currently employs one employee on a permanent basis and two casual workers.

As a marketing strategy, Prudence and her partner used all forms of social media platforms and packaging of the product. Currently, they supply fresh chickens to local Chisa Nyama and a households in the surrounding areas. *"Our goal is to offer our customers healthy chicken at an affordable price" she added.*

The introduction of the Spice flavours has been a game changer for the business. Currently, there are three flavours: chicken special, braai spice and BBQ kings.

"The support we received for our new products is overwhelming" she added.

Prudence stated that the most challenging aspect is the price. Some customers like to compare prices, which leads her to underpricing her chicken in order to retain them.

The RBKM Chicken was funded by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and also got assistance from the government. Prudence has completed several short courses funded by the Provincial Department of Agriculture.

"I appreciate the guidance and support I receive from my mentor, Karabo Mohatla, who is an extension officer of the department" she said.

The National Agricultural Marketing Council TRAINS THE INDUSTRY'S FUTURE LEADERS

By: Phuti **Mntambo**

The National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) is an advisory body which is committed to the advancement of the agricultural sector. It offers internships and graduate placement opportunities for deserving young individuals to enhance their skills and experience and prepare them for a successful career within the industry. The programmes are designed to expose graduates to the working environment.



** Left to right: Khuthadzo Rufus **Ndou**, Thapelo Frank **Masekoameng**, Maubane Alfridah **Mashiane** and Vhukhudo Madeline **Mamphitha** (Photo by: Tshilidzi Netswinganani)*



I believe that agriculture cannot be sustainable if we do not involve the youth, so succession planning is important

For many years, the NAMC has been partnering with Mphaila Irrigation Scheme, located in ha-Mphaila, Nzhelele, Limpopo. With the employment of around 420 seasonal workers during peak periods and 70 permanent workers, the scheme has a great impact on the surrounding communities. In addition, the community is able to buy fresh vegetables at an affordable price from the scheme throughout the year, while some non-profit organizations receive donations.



A photo of Mphaila Irrigation scheme
(Photo by: Tshilidzi Netswinganani)

From time to time, the NAMC places Agri-SETA sponsored interns in the irrigation scheme under the mentorship of Mr T. Tshithivhe, the extension officer for the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. He is passionate about youth development work and also enjoys training them. *“I believe that agriculture cannot be sustainable if we do not involve the youth, so succession planning is important”* said Mr Tshithivhe.

The NAMC visited the scheme during monitoring and evaluation to assess the performance of the interns. Considering the current economic condition and high unemployment rate, Vhukhudo Madeline Mamphitha thanked the NAMC for the opportunity and the stipend that he was receiving. *“I greatly benefited from the stipend because it made my family more financially stable. Now that the contract is ending, I will not sit at home and wait for another opportunity. I want to put the skills I learned into practice when at home.”* said Vhukhudo.

Rufus Khuthadzo Ndou appreciated the opportunity to be part of the 2021-22 outgoing interns group. *“We have gained a lot of experience from this internship”* he said.



** Mr T. Tshithivhe, extension officer for Limpopo Department of Agriculture (Photo by: T. Netswinganani)*

On the other hand, Maubane Alfridah Mashiane, outgoing intern is grateful of the skills she acquired. *“Throughout the past year, I have gained valuable insight into the agricultural industry and this internship has definitely increased my interest in pursuing a career in agriculture”* – she said.

NAMC wishes all the outgoing interns the best in their future endeavors.

Young Farmers Agriculture Pty Ltd aims to grow the *family legacy*

By: Fezeka **Matebeni**

Kagisho Lekoa Murwa is a 34-year-old farmer who hails from Ga-Mphahlele in the Limpopo province. He was passionate about pursuing Crop Science as a career path, a passion born from growing up in a farming family and being involved in farming activities from a young age. His grandfather from the maternal side used to grow maize. Kagisho holds a postgraduate degree in Crop Science and has received various technical training in farm management.

Determined to follow in his grandfather's footsteps, Kagisho is the Founder & CEO of Young Farmers Agric Business Pty Ltd, a company that is registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) since 2016. He is a beneficiary of the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) with a 30-year lease for 201 hectares in portion 4 of the Kameelzynkraal farm situated about 45 kilometres from Pretoria. He cherishes the fact that the area receives 450 millimetres and 600 millimeters of rainfall in winter and summer respectively.



While the soil on his farm is suitable for both agronomic and horticultural crops and consists of sweet veld grazing pasture for livestock. There is also a stream of water that could support irrigation and other water needs on the farm should he manages to secure water-use rights. He cherishes these because he recognizes the risks associated with farming and the need therefore to diversify the activities.



* Kagisho showing the Round bales Livestock feed

He is doing mixed farming with maize, cattle (Ayrshire bulls and Brahman heifers), sheep, and goats. Currently, the farm has a 15-cattle herd (a number that changes from time to time) and 100 small stocks. *“The farm is still very underdeveloped. We are still working on dividing it into grassing camps for rotation purposes”,* he said.



* Underdeveloped sheep and goats' kraals in Murwa's farm

The stocking rate is 4 hectares per Large Stock Unit. The cattle are fed winter block and concentrate feed when necessary. There are no breeding cows, as such Kagisho only buys and resells his stock in the interim – the main market being auctions and individual buyers.

Kagisho's primary goal is to farm with broilers. The farm has passed an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and it is aiming to produce 320 000 chickens per cycle. The challenge so far is raising capital. He has received and appreciates the support of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform & Rural Development (DALRRD) through Covid relief and additional support from the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) for infrastructure. The Gauteng Economic Propeller also assisted with a grant. Kagisho further appreciates the mentorship support provided by Mr. Sadiki Rudzani, a commercial farmer in Thabazimbi.

Although the farm has received support from the government, there are numerous challenges still that need to be addressed for the farm to reach its potential. One of them is the dependence on auctions that often do not offer good prices. Kagisho hopes to widen the marketing channels in the future. He also highlights that the nature of the lease agreement he has with the state makes it difficult to attract private finance, let alone the Development Finance Institutions (DFIs).



* Kagisho showing the goat breeds on his farm



I want to walk in my grandfather's shoes by assisting other emerging farmers. I would also love to get my children to carry it (farming) over. It's actually a tradition in our family - Kagisho

"There is not enough support from the government to make sure that as emerging farmers we can be commercial and independent one day. Infrastructure is also a huge challenge in the farm, animal handling facility, storage facility, and board fence are not in place" he said.

However, the farm possesses a lot of potential given desirable features of the farm, and support from the government and the mentor. More than 50% of arable land is not utilized yet. Part of the future plan is to grow essential oils and vegetables in a hydroponic system.

Above all, Kagisho would like to grow and be able to assist other farmers as his grandfather has done to groom him. *"I want to walk in my grandfather's shoes by assisting other emerging farmers. I would also love to get my children to carry it (farming) over. It's actually a tradition in our family"* he said. He is now a member of the South African Poultry Association (SAPA) and is looking forward to facing and embracing all the challenges that come his way.

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I do not have a mentor, I gather all the information from the internet.

Farming is my wisest pursuit

By: Khodani Madula

Mmeet Ncumisa Mkabile, a 28-year-old farmer born and bred in Cofimvaba in the Eastern Cape, but living in Cape Town. She studied National Diploma in Travel and Tourism Operations at Boston City Campus and Business College. She is the Founder and Director of Dawana fresh produce, an agricultural enterprise producing spinach, green pepper, broilers, and eggs. The enterprise was founded and registered in 2020, during the peak of the pandemic. *“Venturing into farming was my wisest pursuit,”* she said.

Ncumisa had a catering business that was halted by the Covid-19 pandemic, but because being an entrepreneur was in her blood, she quickly came up with the idea of venturing into farming to sustain herself and also generate income. She had no information and knowledge about farming but she went for it anyway. She started by buying live chickens and selling them to members of her community. She noticed that there was demand and she decided to go bigger. The rest is history.



* Ncumisa with broiler chickens



* Ncumisa with green pepper

Ncumisa is running her production on a 3 600 square meter plot, which she is leasing since 2020. On a weekly basis, she picks 1 000 bunches of Spinach and sells 600 eggs. She also produces 200 broiler chickens per cycle. The chicken manure extracted from the chicken houses is used on crops as fertilizers.

With the funds received from sunlight, the enterprise was a success and currently employs 7 people.

"I do not have a mentor; I gather all the information from the internet," she said. Ncumisa is open to any training that would empower her to develop. She also highlighted some of the challenges she is facing in her production including limited access to land, and not having an irrigation system, which are currently the main hindrances to growth.

Ncumisa has achieved a lot since she started being an agripreneur. She is the Standard Bank Farming Influencer, a multi-award winner, blue Ribbon Ambassador, Barone Ambassador as well as Sunlight Ambassador. Her recent award is *"realize a dream 2022"*, which offered her an opportunity to supply Pick'n Pay with her produce.

She further encourages the government and other poultry stakeholders to give financial assistance as well as enough information and support to smallholder farmers for the growth of our economy.

"Start small with what you have and grow gradually. Do not wait on the government to fund you, but give the government something to work with." This is the message Ncumisa is giving to upcoming farmers.



MEET YOUNG FEMALE AGRIpreneurs

By: Khathutshelo Rambau

Zwonaka Mashamba and Ndzhilama Malamulele are founders of the Sithlaha Farming located in Vhembe, Limpopo. Zwonaka holds a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics, while Ndzhilama has an Honours Degree in Soil Science. Their venture began in 2021 on a hectare of land and was funded from savings.

They plant cabbages, green paper, and tomatoes and also do broiler production. In the 2021/22 season, they managed to produce over 1 000 heads of cabbage, and 450 crates of tomatoes, and are growing 200 broiler chickens per cycle.

The main market so far is the households in the surrounding communities. The goal is to extend into the formal market. Zwonaka and Ndzhilama indicated that all the proceeds from sales are re-invested into the business to improve and expand the current activity. They are also trying to get access to an additional piece of land to enable the expansion.

Despite the small scale of the farming activity, the venture has created full-time employment for one person from the local village. They have one full-time employee and one part-time employee.

The journey has not been easy. They said *“due to high agricultural input prices such as fuel, seedlings, and feed, it is difficult for us smallholder farmers to generate adequate profit. Nonetheless, we are determined to work hard and do what we can to grow the business from the little that we are getting”*.



* Zwonaka with cabbages (A) and broilers chicken (B)

They are crediting their achievement so far to their mentor and are hopeful for a brighter future for their business venture.

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Against the odds

By: Khodani **Madula**

Masimbonge is a 24-year-old agripreneur from Cala in the Eastern Cape province. He is running an initiative called Sahaba Projects which is formally known as Indyebo Agricultural Co-operative. He studied mechanical engineering and he is currently doing his final year in agricultural management at Nelson Mandela University.

He is involved in mixed farming on a 200-hectare piece of land located in Cala, with 20 hectares being utilized for the production of crops and the rest for livestock.

Masimbonge completed his mechanical engineering degree in 2019 and started to look for employment with no luck. He opted to venture into farming and started a small broiler production in the backyard.



** Masimbonge showing some of his vegetables*

The venture began with 100 broilers in the backyard, selling them to the local consumers. Then he managed to get into an agreement of leasing the land, which then later he managed to buy and own.

“I had nothing when I started. I knocked at every government department and received no help, but passion pulled me through,” he recalls. So far, the business has been financed from savings generated from selling fat cakes at school.

Since the farming business began, it employs 3 permanent and 4 casual employees.

It produces cabbages, potatoes, peppers, lettuce, spinach, etc. He is also involved in poultry and piggery. All these products are sold at a local Spar, Boxer, and USave retailers. “We do source vegetables from other farmers to supply our market and also help them to move their products through our market channels. We are now looking to adopt 20 farmers in the Eastern Cape province,” said Vuma.

He further suggests that the government must actually fund people who really want to do farming and not just numbers. He observed that the government would rather fund 40 people with no farming experience than fund individuals who have proven themselves that they can run a farming enterprise.

He encourages young people to try and do something of their own and to believe in themselves. “Most places that are supposed to help you (banks and government funding institutions) might close the door on you but keep going with the little you have,” he said.



Is Agritourism the Future for Farmers?

By: Keolebogile Digoamaje

There are plenty of growth opportunity in agriculture. Agritourism is one of them and can benefit farmers through the use of their farm resources to their greatest potential. It is a significant method for farmers to expand their businesses and secure their farms for the future.

"In South Africa, the first method of agri-tourism included visits to game farms/ranches in the early 1950s. This was followed by visits to ostrich farms in the Oudtshoorn region for ostrich racing and riding, which became quite a popular activity in the 1960s. The next type of agri-tourism (and possibly one of South Africa's most popular agri-tourism products) was wine tourism, which involved tourists visiting wine estates for wine tasting; this originated in the early 1970s)" (Van Zyl: 2019).

The development of agricultural technology innovation can add to rural economic development and furthermore to agri-tourism. Farmers have the chance to use external sources of innovation by joining forces with other organisations. Examples of areas in which innovation can be applied in the agri-tourism sector are adventure, education, and artistic farms.

According to a research by Christelle Charlien van Zyl, Agri-tourism presents a number of opportunities, more importantly however; it is to grow farming operations to include more events and provide tourists/visitors with information regarding the agricultural sector and farm-life. This is another way of using the agricultural land that is not in use.

Agri-tourism also has advantages to the nearby communities, like job creation which can in turn result in economic development in such communities; the improvement of local amenities; and services, diversification of the local economy as more people visit the area.

"Diversification is one of the greatest ways to manage risk. Agritourism empowers farmers to use a farm to its fullest potential. It's also a critical way to connect farmers with the public. This counts more than ever in a time where consumers want to know where produce comes from – they're seeking to see the faces behind the farms. Agritourism is a way to give them a meaningful glimpse into this world." said Hanlie Kroese from Segment Solutions Santam Agri.

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FABCO Reigniting Cassava Production in South Africa

By: Stephen Monamodi

The National Agricultural Marketing Council's liaison with industry, commodity associations, and smallholder farming groups, has catalyzed the eccentric meaning of "market access".

Enjoined by the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act (MAP Act), the latest market access mission took the team to the centre of Farmers Business Cooperative Limited (FABCO) lair – Tzaneen. *"The aim was to create awareness among the various stakeholders in Tzaneen about the 3-year socioeconomic cassava project"* confirmed Markets and Economic Research Centre Senior Manager Dr Ndiadivha Tempia.

In close concert with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), the NAMC held a Cassava Inception Workshop with members of FABCO to not only create awareness about the project but to call on farmers as well as other value chain actors to participate in the cassava project.



We grew up with this plant, and as years progressed it laid in obscurity. But a trade visit to Mozambique reignited cassava production talk. We were served a cassava meal and everything just seemingly turned nostalgic

Cassava is an industrial and highly versatile crop used in several products including bio-ethanol, flour, paper, textiles, food additives, and animal feed. Altogether, this crop grows for 18 months, tolerates drought, and grows on soils with nutrient capacity. It is the highest producer of carbohydrates among staple crops.

"We grew up with this plant, and as years progressed it laid in obscurity. But a trade visit to Mozambique reignited cassava production talk. We were served a cassava meal and everything just seemingly turned nostalgic" said FABCO Chairperson Changa Mathebula.

FABCO is a hybrid primary agricultural cooperative owned by 400 farmers with its majority of farmers based in Mopani District and few Gauteng.

"We enrobed the help of the ARC once we set foot back in South Africa only to find the premier science institute already was advanced in cassava (research) and had a nursery in Limpopo" Changa added.



Microbiologist at ARC, Dr Michael Bairu, said that the ARC in the recent past has been steering efforts to develop research projects and facilitate dialogue on the crop.

Bairu added that *"there is still limited knowledge about the cassava value chain and the derived products and this project could be a catalyst in South Africa."*

Obakeng Maema, TIA Portfolio Manager in Agri-Biotech Sector, said his organization's focus on the project is to initiate the commercialization of the cassava programme with the development of a cassava nursery.

"This initiative is driven through the Agricultural Bio-economy Innovation Partnership Programme (ABIPP) in order to quantify and validate market opportunities for cassava and its derivatives locally and internationally," said Obakeng.





Are *innovation hubs* a way of introducing emerging farmers to Agri-tech science?

By: Stephen **Monamodi**

All over the world, emerging farmers are coming to terms with the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) through agricultural concepts such as the Internet of Things (IoT), smart irrigation systems, precision agriculture, drone technology etc. Clubbed together, these applications could be viewed as smart agriculture/farming.

Using a universal definition, smart farming typically involves “the integration of information and communication technology for better utilization of resources from sowing, irrigation, fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide application, and finally harvesting.”

These applications according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) are projected to increase farmers agricultural production by an estimated 70% come 2050. In America for example, close to 250 000 small farms spanning 1 200 million hectares are using the IoT solutions as a new technique to realise increased agricultural productivity.

Asian and European countries are closely in pursuit, integrating and migrating their smallholder farmers to smart agriculture technologies.

Interestingly, a quick assessment across several case studies indicates that smart agriculture as a managed process involves government, academia and the private sector.

Scandinavian countries, under the Scandinavian Regional Cluster (RC), developed agricultural Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) in partnership with a leading agri-food research institute and also, by a company specialised in agriculture research and innovation.

“It works to strengthen the Nordic network of agricultural DIHs by assisting relevant stakeholders in defining efficient roles in the region, and by developing a tailor-made set of services in order to promote the digitalisation of farms. The goal of this RC is to establish and expand the Scandinavian ecosystem, help develop digital solutions and adapt these to the regional environmental circumstances, and ultimately to share this know-how with other regions all over Europe.”

As a way of introducing farmers to digital smart agriculture practices, the DIH’s Research and Development (R&D) took to firstly understand the farmers’ environment, ensuring the provision of suitable digital solutions.

Deducing from this work, it is apparent that the Scandinavian Regional Cluster managed the process of introducing farmers to these new ICT concepts in a coordinated but one central location DIHs by providing training, and in the process capacitating farmers with the skill to implement or use digital smart farming applications.

Is cascading the idea down to South Africa a palatable set? Yes, it could if South Africa’s premier institutes are given the much-needed spotlight. South Africa’s premier science institutes like the TIA, Gauteng Innovation Hub, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and the ARC are already involved in agricultural science and technology breakthroughs.

Notably, the work done by the South African Sugarcane Research Institute (SASRI) embodied the Scandinavian model, focusing on four multidisciplinary programmes. These include variety improvement, crop protection, crop performance, and management as well as the design and optimization of the system. Research is translated into IsiZulu through various forms of communication such as videos, pamphlets, and radio podcasts.

Overall, South Africa could transition emerging farmers to digital smart farming practices. But the immediate consideration is rather how to harness these innovations and make them accessible at one central hub supported by the various communication methods as applied by SASRI.



The NAMC was established in terms of the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act No. 47 of 1996, as amended by Act No. 59 of 1997 and Act No. 52 of 2001. We are a statutory body reporting to the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. The work of the NAMC is aligned to the four strategic objectives as set out in Section 2 of the MAP Act, 1996 namely:



The increasing of market access for all market participants



The promotion of the efficiency of the marketing of agricultural products



The optimisation of export earnings from agricultural products



The enhancement of the viability of the agricultural sector.

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What is SMAT?

Smallholder Market Access Tracker (SMAT) is a tool that has been developed by the NAMC, with the help of a reference group, to measure the progress in the achievement of the market access goal for smallholder farmers in South Africa.

Why do we need SMAT?

Despite a number of interventions that seek to enhance market access (both locally and abroad) for farmers in the country, smallholder farmers still face barriers to entry into the mainstream marketing channels. Furthermore, there is no tool used currently to track market access for this group of farmers, hence there is a need for the SMAT tool.

Who is going to use SMAT?

The SMAT seeks to provide information to assist with policy debate and the formulation of more effective programmes towards achievement of market access. As such, the SMAT could be used (largely) by policymakers.

www.namc.co.za/about-smat