

agripreneur

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INSPIRING AGRICULTURAL STORIES



WENDY PETERSEN, STEERING
BLACK **WINE** BRANDS

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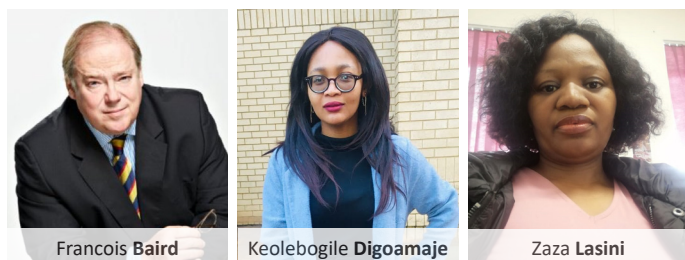
THE AGRIPRENEUR QUARTERLY:

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

PREFACE

Welcome to the 30th (thirtieth) edition of the Agripreneur publication of the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). The NAMC seeks to create a platform where agripreneurs and farmers, particularly smallholder farmers, share their knowledge and skills, expertise including challenges, experiences, and insights. The AgriPreneur as a publication, assists smallholder farmers with market access information, learning from other farmers, aptly aid to develop strategies and adopting models. Fundamentally, the publication is about expressing the value chain through the marketing of commodities and products that meet market standards and are safe for consumption. Altogether, the Agripreneur publication o 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 #LoveRSAAgric.

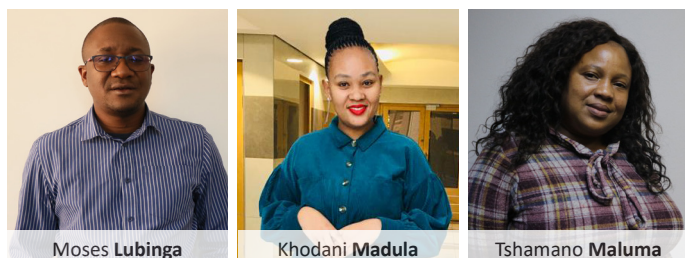
CONTRIBUTORS:



Francois Baird

Keolebogile Digoamaje

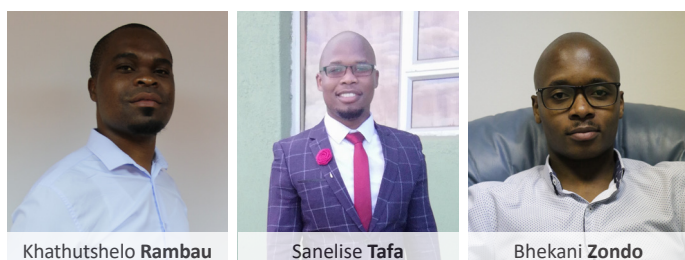
Zaza Lasini



Moses Lubinga

Khodani Madula

Tshamano Maluma



Khathutshelo Rambau

Sanelise Tafa

Bhekani Zondo

CREDITS

Manager:
Elvis Nakana

PRODUCTION TEAM

Editor in chief:
Kayaletu Sotsha

Managing Editor:
Stephen Monamodi

Designer:
Daniel Rambau

RESOURCES

Cover Story Images:
WINEARC

Images:

NAMC
Pexel
Pixabay
Supplied

CONTACT US

Physical Address:
536 Francis Baard Street, Meintjiesplein Building,
Block A, 4th Floor, Arcadia, 0007

Tel:
(012) 341 1115

Email:
info@namc.co.za

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EDITOR'S NOTE

To start off, the Agripreneur Issue 30 provides a snapshot of the headline news in the agricultural sector between July and September 2022. These include the imposition of new phytosanitary measures by the European Union on South African citrus exports; the lifting of China's ban on South African wool exports; the lifting of the ban on livestock movement as well as the non-renewal of poultry imports tariffs.

It also covers an interview between the Managing Director of the Agripreneur, Stephen Monamodi, and the Executive Manager of the South African Wine Industry Transformation Unit (SAWITU) Wendy Petersen to unpack the existence of SAWITU and its achievements.

In addition, the report encourages partnerships by showcasing a market access programme led by the Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Institute in partnership with the Wholesale & Retail SETA as well as Boxer Retail Stores. The programme offers training and market access to smallholder farmers in the Eastern Cape province. So far 33 farmers have benefited from the programme and the impact of it will be unpacked in the subsequent publications. Also covered is the Phaphamang Environmental Organisation, which employs 32 full-time workers and 100 part-time workers.

Furthermore, the publication continues to demonstrate that agriculture is attractive to the youth and people from various fields outside of agriculture. What is required is support provided to those who venture into agriculture to attract young agripreneurs thereby improving the succession prospects in the sector.



Kayaletu Sotsha

To demonstrate this, the publication covers a story of the Ulusoy Africa Poultry which is managed by Allen Magumbi who is an Engineer by profession. It also covers the story of Hlobisile Bathabile Yende, a 27-year-old woman who studied Criminology up to a Master's level. A 25-year-old female, Muelelwa Mashau with an Advanced Diploma in Crop Science is also covered. Lastly, 44-year-old Sibongile Mtsabe is involved in the agro-processing of Cassava.

The founder of the FairPlay movement Mr Francois Baird talks about the dispute that South Africa has with its neighbouring countries over “unfair” trade bans. This follows after Botswana and Namibia banned South African exports of vegetables.

Finally, the Agripreneur continues to recognize and promote the participation of women and youth in the agricultural sector. Tshamano Maluma and Keolebogile Digoamaje shine a spotlight on the 25-year-old Khodani Madule, an intern at the NAMC and an agripreneur who founded the MUCO Farming Enterprise. The story of the MUCO farming enterprise was featured in Agripreneur Issue 26. Khodani’s journey in the agriculture sector

gained momentum when she got involved in the NAMC’s Y-Agriculture programme while she was in High School in 2015.

May our farmers continue to be resilient and the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan succeed in its goal of increasing competitiveness, resilience, and equitable and inclusive growth in the agriculture and agro-processing sectors of the South African economy.

Enjoy the reading!

Kayaletshu Sotsha



DID YOU KNOW?

The NAMC annually hosts a corporate governance training for trustees representing the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development in the various trusts. Altogether there are 12 Industry, in which the Minister is represented by Ministerial Trustees. These are people nominated to serve on the Trusts with the NAMC making final recommendations to the Minister for appointments. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the NAMC to ensure the Ministerial Trustees are capacitated and trained on corporate governance and management.

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

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AGRI-HIGHLIGHTS:

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2022



* Photo: Mzansi Agri-talk



* Photo: Cape Wools SA

RSA reaches agreement with EU to clear Citrus blocked in the EU Ports

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) confirmed that it had managed to negotiate a settlement that will see the clearing of citrus containers stuck in ports of entry in the European Union (EU). The EU brought together new measures to standardise the risk associated with False Codling Moth (FCM) on citrus fruit emanating from South Africa. The measures were published on 21 June 2022 and were set to come into force by 24 June 2022, implying that consignments arriving in Europe from 14 July onwards needed to comply with the new measures and that consignments which had left South Africa on 24 June 2022 should have been certified on the new measures. As such, such consignments were rejected in the EU ports.

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Promoting local consumption – a viable alternative for South African fruit exporters

South African fruit exporters have held their own in efforts to oppose the strict requirements placed on the export market, where the country is a globally respected actor. Fresh fruit accounts for approximately 50% of South Africa's agricultural exports. According to Fruit South Africa, 59% of locally produced fruit is exported; 28% is used for processing, and 12% is sold locally. This distribution of sales is aligned to and supportive of a foreign currency generation strategy, despite the numerous export barriers they face. However, efforts directed at addressing these export market requirements and factors increase costs, resulting in lowered profits and higher product losses for local exporters.

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Lifting of China's ban on SA wool brings welcome relief to the local industry

Agri SA and the National Wool Growers' Association of South Africa (NWGA) are pleased to learn that the South African government has secured the agreement for the government of China to lift the ban on South African wool exports. The ban jeopardised more than 35,000 jobs and an additional 4,500 seasonal jobs. With more than 70–80% of South Africa's clip being exported to China annually, the impact of the ban could have been overwhelming. These organisations extend their deepest gratitude to the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza, and the Minister for Trade, Industry and Competition, Ebrahim Patel, as well as to the Director Generals of these departments for their work in securing this relief.

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* Photo: FW Archive

Mixed results expected for SA's agricultural exports in 2022

South Africa's agricultural exports saw a 12% increase during the second quarter of the year, representing an increase of about R51 billion quarter-on-quarter, according to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). Wandile Sihlobo, the chief economist at Agbiz, attributed the growth to the sizeable agricultural output volume in the 2021/22 production season, and general solid global demand, even at higher maize prices. Sihlobo said he expected agricultural exports to soften in the third and fourth quarters, resulting in total exports for the year being slightly lower than last year, yet in a positive balance. This was primarily because the 2021/22 maize harvest was expected to be 8% lower, at 15 million tons, than the previous season, together with the negative impact of the EU's new plant safety regulations on citrus exports, and the impact of the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) on meat and wool exports.

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* Photo: Supplied to Farmers Weekly

Cattle industry welcomes lifting of the ban on livestock movement

Industry leaders have welcomed the decision of the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza, to lift the countrywide ban on the movement of cattle that was introduced to contain the spread of the FMD. The Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) expressed gratitude for the decision and thanked Didiza for taking role players' pleas about the economic impact of the ban on the beef industry into consideration in her decision-making process, according to Gerhard Schutte, CEO of the RPO. To limit the spread of the disease as far as possible, she repealed the control measures relating to FMD as prescribed in the Government Notice No. 2075 of 10 May and Government Notice No. 2391 of 18 August, and allowed movement under certain conditions in all areas of the country, except in the new disease management areas in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Free State.

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* Photo: Mzansi Agri-talk

Non-renewal of poultry tariffs threatens jobs, growth, and consumers

Beyond load shedding, access to clean water, and the rising cost of fuel and feed, South Africa's poultry industry is facing one of its biggest threats yet: the non-renewal of import tariffs, says the South African Poultry Association (SAPA). SAPA added that, since signing the Poultry Sector Master Plan in 2019 (and despite the severe market restraints and economic contractions imposed by Covid-19), the poultry sector has added 1 465 new jobs, with an additional 800 in the pipeline as investments come online in 2024. Moreover, the growth of the poultry industry has had a significant impact on the broader value chain, with the Animal Feed Manufacturing Association (AFMA) reporting the addition of over 2 000 new jobs in the agricultural sector throughout the poultry value chain.

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RAISING
BLACK-OWNED
WINE BRANDS
AND SPIRITS



At the helm of the South African Wine Industry Transformation Unit (SAWITU) for four years is the vivacious Wendy Petersen (WP). A marketing and strategy specialist by profession, she is charged with leading SAWITU, ensuring black-owned wine enterprises receive mentoring support, funding, marketing, promotional and technical support. She is no novice scholar in the wine industry, packing 29 years' worth of experience in the various levels of primary and secondary wine value chains. In her illustrious career, Wendy has worked for companies such as Distell, KWV, and DGB. Stephen Monamodi (SM), Managing Editor of Agripreneur, recently set down with her.

SM: Welcome to the Agripreneur Ms Petersen

WP: Thanks for welcoming and profiling SAWITU

SM: First things first, what is SAWITU?

WP: The South African Wine Industry Transformation Unit (WITU) is a non-profit company incorporated under the first schedule of the companies act of the Republic of South Africa. WITU was incorporated on the 17th of October 2016 by its founding members, the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), Vinpro, and the South African Liquor Brand Owners Association (SALBA). SAWITU is an organization that assists black-owned businesses and farms to actively participate in the wine value chain.

SM: The wine industry is arguably difficult to enter, according to you, what are the typical constraints?

WP: The wine industry is a very capital-intensive industry. It requires a lot of capital investment to own and develop a farm and brand. With this said, you must also have a natural flair and passion for agriculture and the wine industry. On the brand ownership side, it is very easy to bottle wine and get your label on the bottle. The most difficult part is to ensure that your product reaches consumers through sales, and listings with retailers. Market

access comes at a very high cost and being an entrepreneur, you do not necessarily have funds to support the marketing and activations for your product.

SM: A lot of people wish to enter the wine industry, any advice on this aspect?

WP: My advice is that one must start by conducting thorough research and acquiring knowledge of the wine industry. Also have a mentor who will be able to guide you, provide honest advice, and not necessarily have a financial interest in your business. The mentor should be allowed to be frank with you and you must be open to listening to advice and criticism without taking it personally. If you could have a standard income while persuading your dream, then do this. You do not need financial pressures on your business venture as this will create additional stress. I would also advise that make sure that you understand what services and support the industry offers. Build strong stakeholder relations to gain assistance and support for your business. Lastly, leave any ego and arrogance at the door. You are here to learn and embrace every opportunity that is made available.



We changed the narrative of transformation.

SM: You talk of assisting black-owned businesses and farms, please elaborate on this.

WP: The South African wine industry is still very much white-dominated, our organization actively drives the increase of black people in the wine industry, especially women, youth in entrepreneurship level, at the management level in wine cellars, wine businesses, and industry organizations through industry programmes for human development. The organization also promotes ethical practices within its community of stakeholders (including workers) through the implementation of well-integrated ethical trade programmes throughout the wine industry.

SM: Transformation is an antithesis in agriculture, as SAWITU, what has been done?

WP: When I started in my position as the wine industry transformation Manager, it was seen as a daunting role, with lots of challenges with people fearing the narrative of transformation in the light of this ruthless active activism. We changed the narrative of transformation. Today, when we speak about transformation; a) we highlight its socio-economic change for the wine industry; b) hold social dialogues and engage in awkward discussions; and c) uncomplicating matters by way of embracing everybody and

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Wine Arc situated in Stellenbosch,
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being inclusive. The subject of the transformation narrative could change for the better.

The organization is now six years old and we are starting to see the fruits of the correct processes being implemented. Businesses are starting to take investment seriously in terms of creating a return on investment and making sure that their strategies are implemented. The focus has changed from increasing the quantity of support to the quality of the support and aligning this to clear deliverables and targets that lead to business growth. This has led to progressive development that is focused and driven.

SM: Studies show that there has been uptake on 'modern women' consuming wine, coupled with a large representation of female wine brands on your structure. To what do you attribute this too?

WP: In the last few years, we have seen more women from various professional careers and businesses ordering wines. Exploring and embracing wine as a preferred drink hails from the millennial generation and being exposed to alternative drinks and lifestyles call for SAWITU to market the black wine brands aggressively. Township markets are also showing signs of interest. This is a niche and exciting market for us to take advantage of.

SM: You speak of targeting township markets, progress so far?

WP: Wine volume growth in the domestic market is most likely from engaging and recruiting new consumers into wine consumption. These new consumers will come from other alcoholic categories for example beer and ready-to-drink (RTD) to wine consumption. A big opportunity exists not for the township to adapt to the traditional wine consumption and lifestyle but from embracing wine into the township life. This can be achieved by introducing wine with traditional township food, music, culture, and art. This brings a new dimension to the consumption and experience of wine. For wine to be accepted as a preferred drink in townships, consumers must feel that they are gaining knowledge, and understanding about wine. In this

way, the wine will be accepted and understood. The transfer of skill and knowledge about wine should be a key motivating factor, and in this way, we believe the wine industry will gain loyal consumers. This goes hand in hand with the awareness of responsible consumption of wine.

SM: Leading SAWITU is not easy, takes us through your typical week.

WP: My week normally starts with planning for the next week on a Saturday afternoon or Sunday afternoon. Yes, I know working over the weekend is not normal. Typically, on a Monday I would have an operation meeting with the operations team both at the SAWITU and the Wine Arc to share ideas, experiences, and challenges as well as to discuss solutions, new ways of doing things, and motivating and encouraging our staff. I believe that the staff is the backbone of success in an organization. I have a great team which is why this is important. I want them to be happy in their jobs and feel that this is where they belong. No one week is ever the same and can consist of preparation for board meetings, and remuneration committee meetings. Drafting of policies, procedures, programmes, and additional raising of funding are also high priorities.

SM: You must be involved in a lot of stakeholder engagements; how do you balance the various interests?

WP: I spend a lot of time on stakeholder engagements and project meetings, ensuring that my inputs, insights, and

recommendations are received and that our collective expertise is used to better opportunities for our beneficiaries. Supporting, developing, providing guidance, and being a soundboard to entrepreneurs, small businesses, and farms forms part of the greatest fulfilment in my position. Engaging with our black-owned brands and farms forms a big part of my day-to-day operations. I believe you need to engage one-on-one to understand the world of an entrepreneur and a farmer. Regular engagements and visits do occur to ensure that I and my team can provide optimal support, assistance, and solutions to the challenges faced by our beneficiaries. To be in the space where things happen and where the magic occurs is always the highlight of my week. Sometimes the transformation is as simplistic as “showing up and being there”.

SM: Stakeholder engagements such as the EU-SA Wine partnership, how did that come about?

WP: The European Commission (“the EC”) and the government of South Africa (“the government”) have entered into a financing agreement in terms of which the EC will allocate 15 million Euros to the South African government for support to the Wines and Spirits Industry, specifically dedicated towards transformation. The funds originate from the SA-EU bilateral agreement on trade in Wines and Spirits, particularly under negotiations on Geographical Indicators (GIs). Upon negotiations, the two countries reached an agreement that the EU should redress the use of some of its

wine GIs such as Port and Sherry for an amount of €15 million. Historically, the two countries have a strong relationship dating back centuries. The key objective of this partnership is to promote and provide support for transformation initiatives, addressing socio-economic challenges, and improving skills development and training to improve South Africa’s market competitiveness.

SM: Interesting, I am still missing the benefits of black-owned brands.

WP: The EU’s interest and strategic partnership with South Africa are also aligned with South Africa being the central trading partner to the greater African continent. This will improve market access, agricultural opportunities, agro-processing, talent sharing, and commercial opportunities. The EU-SA partnership will provide the much-needed infrastructure development, acquisition of manufacturing assets, market access, and distribution support. The partnership between the EU and SA will be a long-term mutually beneficial relationship that will aid transformation and assistance to the black beneficiaries in the wine industry on various levels. This is an exciting partnership that will benefit the SA wine industry tremendously.

SM: Lately, SAWITU has taken its black wine members to African countries, what is the focus for SAWITU here?

WP: The African market possesses the largest growth opportunity for both South Africa and African



countries in mutually beneficial trade opportunities in terms of wine and products from Africa for example chocolates, coffee, etc. In the last few years, there has been a lot of investment in educating, attracting, and recruiting consumers in this market. It is only natural for black-owned wine brands and winemakers to strategically position themselves in these markets. Although there are great opportunities, there is still a great deal of work that needs to be concluded in terms of logistic challenges, price points, positioning, and payment agreements that need to be addressed.

SM: We visited a few of your member wineries and similar stories of production expansion range across. How can government increase its funding participation for those looking to expand?



WP: For the government, other funders, and development agencies to see a return on funding investment it is important that we all move and align our support and efforts in the same direction. Only by doing this effectively will we see the nail of transformation moving and see the change we all aspire to. We cannot afford to work in silos. Government can increase its funding by looking at state-

owned land and resources and applying this to where the need is to drive transformation. The government also has the potential to drive transformation through preferential agreements that benefit black-owned enterprises. Trade agreements and procurement policies are another way of creating benefits. Market access for black-owned brands is a major challenge, particularly in the domestic market.



Wine ARC also hosts various events

SM: As you highlighted, the rising middle class is becoming more knowledgeable about wines, what marketing initiatives are you currently embarking on?

WP: In November 2021, we launched the Wine Arc in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA). The Wine Arc provides market access for black-owned brands in the local and international markets. It is a vehicle to grow a strong business platform for individual brands, give them greater access to markets and e-commerce facilities, and reach consumers in an attractive lifestyle setting. It

is also a creative innovation hub for entrepreneurs and young winemakers to grow and become more sustainable. We wanted it to differentiate black-owned brands in the wine industry, unite them as a collective and enable them to build their legacy based on their culture and background.

SM: In conclusion, what does the domestic route market plan for black-owned wine brands look like?

WP: To penetrate the local market has always been a very challenging process. In the next two years, we will have a focused approach when we engage with the various channels and product

offerings. This will be supported by the required marketing and promotional support to ensure that the brands do have a chance of succeeding in these channels.

SM: Thanks for gracing us with your presence and your time today

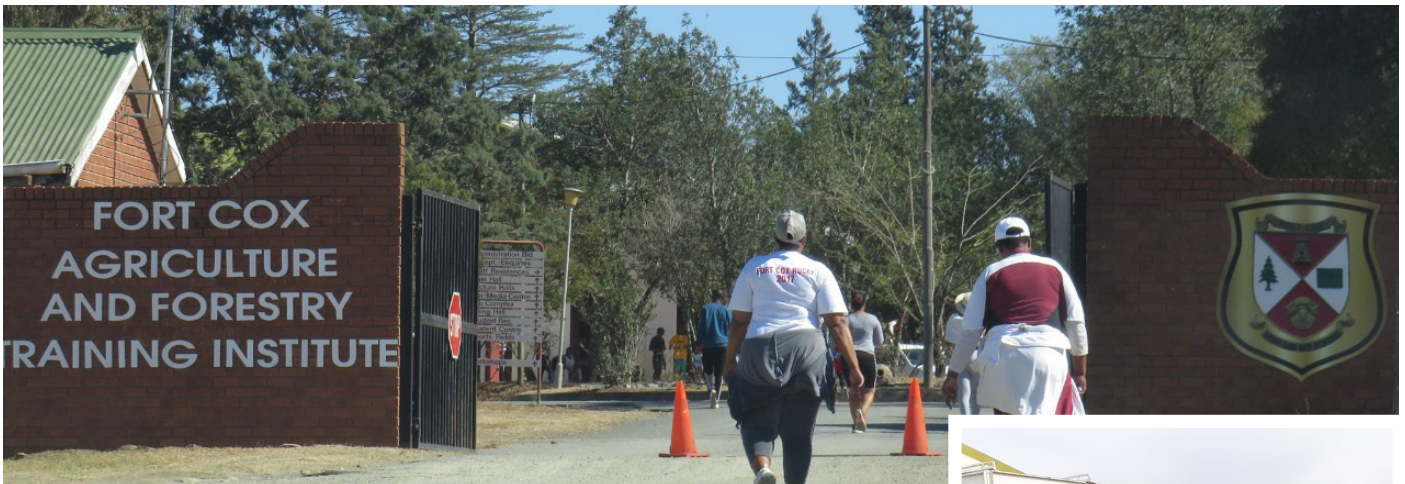
WP: Thank you for promoting SAWITU.

If you are interested to find out more about wine transformation, you can directly contact Wendy at 27 21 276 3210 or send her an email at: wendy@witu.co.za or visit the WITU website at: www.witu.co.za

MARKET ACCESS FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

By: Sanelise Tafa and Zaza Lasini

The Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Institute (FCAFTI) has partnered with the Wholesale & Retail SETA (W&RSETA) and Boxer Retail Stores to improve market access for smallholder farmers in the Eastern Cape.



In this partnership, Boxer buys vegetables from smallholder farmers and the W&RSETA sponsors training for the selected farmers, while the FCAFTI recruits and assists with proposals for farmers who are interested in becoming part of this initiative.

So far, 33 farmers, with a total of 123 hectares, have been approved and undergone training. These farmers mainly produce cabbage, spinach, butternut, potatoes, and peppers. Other farmers are planning to install greenhouse tunnels to produce tomatoes.

The reason FCAFTI decided to join the initiative was to help farmers who have been approaching them to be assisted with gaining market access.



A multi-stakeholder approach to improve market access for smallholder farmers in the Eastern Cape

Boxer is willing to contribute further by facilitating healthy and safe food production. A gap in the use of fertiliser and soil preparation was identified during the training and experts on the topic were involved.

Furthermore, the plan is to establish a packhouse, to which farmers will deliver their output, and from where Boxer will collect the products. This plan is driven by a lack of access roads, which makes it challenging to take the produce from the farms and get it to the market.



In addition, the distance to the market has been considered and a one-stop-shop such as a packhouse would minimise the effort of collecting the produce from farm to farm. However, the packhouse will require more than the 33 farmers who are currently partaking in the programme to use it.

Hence, more farmers and other stakeholders such as the NAMC are encouraged to come on board.

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ULUSOY AFRICA POULTRY

By: Keolebogile Digoamaje

Allen Magumbi was born and raised in Venda in the Limpopo province. He studied Engineering and later decided to change his career path and ventured into farming. He is the Managing Director of Ulusoy Africa Poultry which is based in Hartebees and Randfontein. The farming takes place in Hartebees and processing takes place in Randfontein. The farm business has other branches in Krugersdorp, Rustenburg, and Boshhoek.

The Hartbees farm is on 6 hectares of land, with 19 chicken houses and a total capacity of 560 000 chickens per cycle. In Randfontein, there is a licenced abattoir that slaughters 2000 chickens per day.

The main objectives of Ulusoy Africa Poultry are to contribute to food production and to reduce of youth unemployment. Most employees on the farm are young people.



When there is load shedding, we use generators which cost us roughly between R80 000 and R120 000 in a space of two weeks.



The farm supplies Kroon's Gourmet Chickens as the main market. Other markets include its chicken factory shop and the Shisanyamas in Randfontein. Ulusoy Africa Poultry received financial assistance from the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), which added to its savings. The funding from SEFA was quite significant in starting the farm business.

The biggest challenge for the farm currently is load shedding. "When there is load shedding, we use generators which cost us roughly between R80 000 and R120 000 in a space of two weeks. This impacts the profitability of the business," said Allen. Other challenges include high feed costs and competing chicken imports.

"If South Africa could stop importing chicken, farmers could be able to expand and create many job opportunities as more chicken houses will be built", said Allen.

The farm is operating in an automated method where the chicken houses are climatized and the feeder lines and water lines run automatically. The employees only monitor the daily running of the chicken houses to make sure that there is enough water, feed, and ventilation.

Ulusoy plays a very important role in the community of Skeerpoort and surrounding areas in terms of employment and empowerment. It has 46 employees who are from around the community, 10 of whom are permanent and the others are temporary. Allen added that the security company they hire is from a local community. Local companies are also used for the transportation of manure and branding of the uniforms.

The farm further supplies the community squatter camp with food and shelter, and provides them with blankets in winter.

Steven, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Ulusoy Africa Poultry, added "I would like to train young people to become chicken farmers because unemployment is a big challenge in the country and they are not afforded opportunities in terms of funding because they do not have the necessary skills". Steven believes that skills transfer is another way of contributing to reducing youth unemployment and poverty by enabling the youth to do something for themselves.



Mr Steven Reynders

FARMING IS A WAY OF LIFE

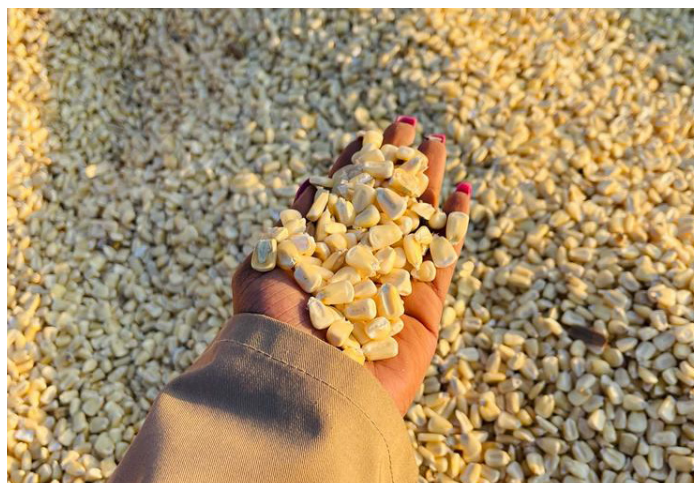
By: Khodani **Madula**

Meet Ms Hlobisile Bathabile Yende, a 27-year-old old farmer residing in Diepkloof, Soweto. Hlobisile and her father run a family farm of 1064 hectares, situated in Heidelberg.

She completed her Bachelor of Social Sciences in Criminology and Psychology and went on further to do her honours in Criminology. She is currently studying for her Master's degree in Philosophy of Arts majoring in Criminology, which she is scheduled to complete early next year (2023). She also obtained her Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the Gordon Institute of Business Science in 2021. She plans to enrol for an agricultural-related degree soon in her quest to better her knowledge of agriculture. Currently, she is employed as an Account Manager at a well-known ticketing company.

Hlobisile's father started the farm business in 2010. He grew up in Piet Retief in Mpumalanga where he was groomed by his father, who was a pastor and a farmer. He started with livestock (cattle) and later included maize production.





Plenty of maize the Yende's recently harvested, maize was ploughed just under 56 ha

Hlobisile and her father Mr Charles Yende at their farm

Hlobisile joined her father in the farming business after she realised the business was being run informally and was missing out on many opportunities. She then became involved by getting all the paperwork in order and doing research on how they could apply for funding and improve farm activity. Their funding applications have not been successful yet. The farm business currently receives support from other off-farm sources of income.

The farm was obtained from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DALRRD) under a lease agreement.

"I do not have much formal farming experience but rather teachings from my father, getting involved in agricultural groups and the knowledge acquired through the internet", says Hlobisile.

The farm currently has cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens, and 56 hectares are under maize production. The farm has created 22 employment opportunities, some full-time and others part-time.



The main market for livestock comprises the residents in Ratanda, Soweto and Piet Retief. One of the challenges is to expand their reach into markets, both livestock, and maize. Access to machinery and implements is another challenge because of financial difficulties. As such, they tend to buy used machinery, which often need frequent repairs.

Despite the difficulties, Hlobisile believes that farming is a way of life and that a great deal of patience and hard work is required. Among other things, the ability to create employment opportunities and a source of livelihood for others is fulfilling.

SA IN DISPUTE WITH NEIGHBOURS OVER “**UNFAIR**” TRADE BANS

By: Francois Baird

While the European Union’s (EU) poultry dispute went to arbitration, a resolution is still being sought to a dispute between South Africa and two of its neighbours that have banned vegetable imports. South African vegetable producers are urging the government to act against “unfair” bans on their products imposed by neighbours, Botswana and Namibia. The bans included South African exports of tomatoes, potatoes, beetroot, cabbages, peppers, and other fresh produce.



Christo van der Rheede, executive director of Agri SA, told Farmer’s Weekly that the bans were imposed purely to protect local production in the two countries, and were therefore in contravention of the Southern African Customs Union agreement.

Farmers had complained to the departments of trade and industry, and agriculture, but no action has been taken, according to Clive Garret, marketing manager at the ZZ2 farming group. “Failure to protect our markets will not only affect foreign income and farmer revenues but also job security In South Africa,” Garret said.

Namibia and Botswana had a competitive advantage because of far lower labour costs than South Africa, and imposed the bans while exporting their products to South Africa at the expense of South African producers. About 13% of the tomatoes sold in South Africa came from Namibia.

Willie Jacobs, CEO of Potatoes South Africa, said Namibian stipulations were adjusted almost every week and communicated via the country’s website. This made it difficult for South African potato farmers to plan, frustrating the potential for increased potato production. Jacobs called for discussions to resolve the issue.

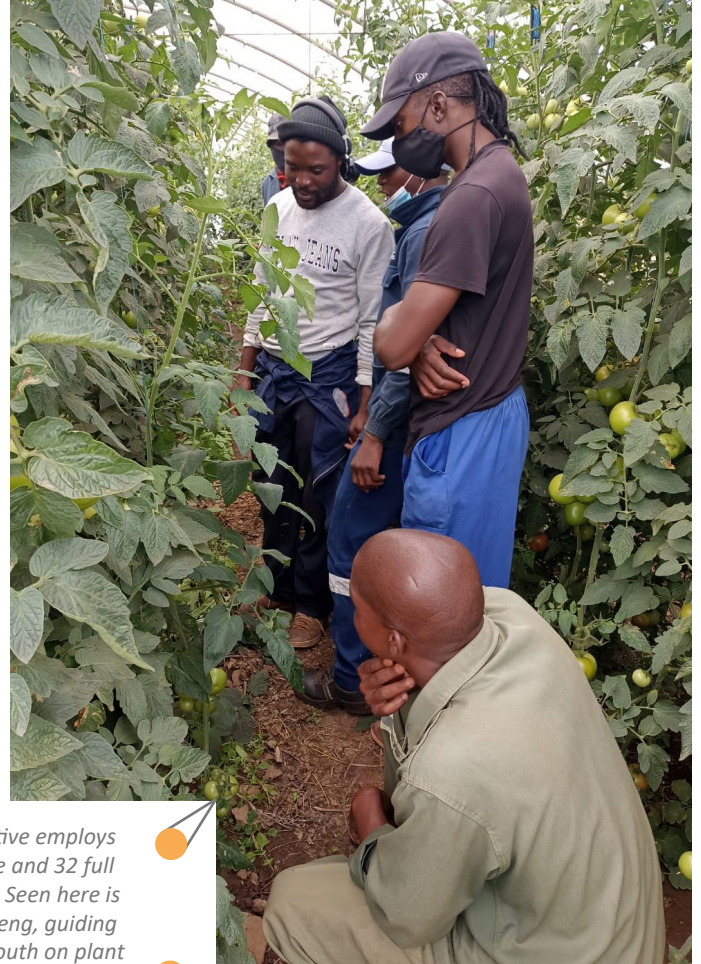
OUR ECONOMISTS HAVE BEEN AT THE CENTRE OF OFFERING INSIGHTS INTO CURRENT **AGRICULTURAL** DISCOURSE



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PHAPHAMANG ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATION



The Cooperative employs 100 part time and 32 full time workers. Seen here is Pheko Mafokeng, guiding some of the youth on plant production.



“OUR BUSINESS CREATES EMPLOYMENT, TRANSFERS SKILLS, AND PROVIDES INCOME TO OUR COMMUNITIES”

By: Khathutshelo **Rambau**

Phaphamang Environmental Organisation is an environmental and food security organisation dealing with the production of fruits and vegetables, cattle, pigs, and broilers. It also provides awareness and training on environmental health and production. It was founded in 1998 to ensure food security and environmental sustainability.

Pheko is the Operations Director. He holds qualifications in Project Management and Plant Production and has received a Young Farmer Award. The organisation began operating on leased government properties and schools. It also has access to a 2,5-hectare plot located in De Deur's, Plot 86.

The organisation employs 100 part-time and 32 full-time workers.

The majority of the infrastructure and resources are purchased with profits, while some are donated by partners. The strategic partners guarantee the funding and ongoing implementation of all projects and programmes.

Some fruits and vegetables are processed into tomato jam, chakalaka, and fruit jam. The organisation typically harvests between 15 and 30 tons of produce, such as tomatoes and peppers, and about 100 tons of fruit from their orchard.

Both formal and informal markets are served, with a focus on the informal market for both processed and raw goods, and on the formal market for raw vegetables.

“We are happy with the arrangements in the informal market. The formal market tends to dictate prices and their prices are unsatisfactory”, believes Pheko.

Since they require electricity to process products and pump water, their biggest problem is finding a reliable energy source. Furthermore, because of the seasonality of their products, they lay off the majority of their staff during the winter and dry seasons.

The vision of the Organisation is to be a leader in the production of quality products in the Gauteng province.

TURNING PASSION INTO REALITY

By: Khodani Madula

Muelelwa is a 25-year-old female graduate who hails from Hamulima Pfananani in the Limpopo province. She attended Vhaluvhu Secondary School and later enrolled at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), where she obtained her Diploma in Crop Production in 2019, and an advanced Diploma in Crop Science in 2021.

Muelelwa grew up in a rural village where subsistence farming is highly practised, and that planted a seed in her heart that she would one day want to venture into farming. Today, Muelelwa is the Founder and the Managing Director of Mashau Farms, a 1,5-hectare farm located in Hamulima Pfananani. She is involved full-time in the farm business.

The farm was founded in October 2021 and commenced production in January 2022. She started by planting vegetables such as serrano chilies, spinach and cabbages, and she is currently in the process of producing tomatoes and butternuts and getting into piggery farming.

Ms Muelelwa Mashau
at the retail store she
supplies with vegetables

Muelelwa praises her family for their financial support to help her to get things going. “My passion for farming and my supportive family motivated me to start farming. I would not be where I am without the support of my family. The farm would also not be in the position it is in today if it was not for the love, dedication, and passion I give to it every single day”, says Muelelwa.

Currently, the farm has 3 part-time employees.




I would not be where I am without the support of my family. The farm would also not be in the position it is in today if it was not for the love, dedication, and passion I give to it every single day






Having an agricultural-related degree was a win for her. All the experience and knowledge she acquired during her studies helped her in farm production. She did her hands-on training at Jomajoco farm, where production was done under hydroponics. This experience too is crucial for her farming business.

Her main market is the Tshwane Fresh Produce Market in Pretoria. She also supplies street vendors with spinach and cabbages, as well as Boxer Store at Elim Mall. Her serrano chilies are supplied to those who make sauce and spices in the Limpopo province.

 *An aerial view of the Mashau Farms*



“The government must try and help the upcoming farmers with necessary support such as farming equipment because farming is hard on its own and it gets harder when you do not have the necessary basic equipment to farm”, pleads Muelelwa.

 *Chillies getting ready for the market*





MS SIBONGILE MTSABE: A FEMALE CASSAVA AGRO-PROCESSOR

By: Bhekani Zondo & Moses Lubinga

Sibongile Mtsabe is a 44-year-old female agro-processor, based at Illovu Township along the south coast part of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province. She holds a Bachelor of Technology in Marketing, obtained from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, a National Certificate in Multimedia, and an NQF Level 4 Certificate in Project Management. She has also been privileged to obtain knowledge and training in crop production, poultry and fish farming, and agro-processing through the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) skills development and training initiative.

She is the owner and director of Sibocali Traders cc, an agro-processing firm manufacturing several processed indigenous agricultural products, among which are low GI gluten-free cassava flour, fermented cassava instant porridge, and crispy cassava chips.

Her company has been registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) since the year 2009, but



A primary motivation for me is to create jobs and produce healthy food to solve food insecurity.

official operations started in the year 2015. Sibongile says that she started Sibocali Traders because of her desire to help to create jobs and use the production of healthy foods to solve nutrition-related challenges in the country, and thus make both an economic and a social impact.

Sibocali Traders cc currently employs seven contract workers. “I started from my kitchen, and then to the mini factory. It has been not easy to get equipment, but through the help of the YGAP South Africa Accelerator Program, we got some equipment and we grew gracefully” says Ms Mtsabe.

The YGAP South Africa Accelerator Program helps to develop impactful ventures by the youth. The program helps beneficiaries to refine and validate their business models,




 *Ms Sibongile Mtsabe preparing a low GI gluten-free cassava product*

move towards achieving financial sustainability, and build on their ability to create change in their communities. Participants of this program are given an opportunity to expand their network by joining a cohort(s) of like-minded entrepreneurs, and receive technical support and advice from a team of local experts.

One of Sibongile's proudest moments as a business owner was when she came up as the first runner-up at the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Female Entrepreneur Awards, in the year 2019, as well as when she won the Most Bankable Business in a competition held by the EThekweni Maritime Cluster in 2021.



 *Fermented cassava instant porridge product*

Sibongile is also a cassava farmer, planting cassava on a small plot of less than a hectare. She mentioned that most of the cassava tubers that she uses in her mini-processing factory are sourced from local farmers who are based at Ndwedwe under the Ilembe local municipality in KZN.

Through the ongoing socio-economic cassava value-chain project led by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), Ms Mtsabe was linked with a cluster of cassava growers based at Empangeni under uMhlathuze Local Municipality in KZN. As a result, she expects to start sourcing fresh cassava tubers in large quantities from this cluster of farmers, with more than 10 hectares under cassava production. Before this initiative, Sibongile would run short of fresh cassava tubers to process in her facility.

Given that she has received some equipment through YGAP to operate more efficiently in the processing of cassava and other indigenous crops, she is optimistic that she will increase the volume of fresh cassava tubers sourced from local farmers to approximately three (3) tons. She aims at producing over 200 kg of cassava flour and instant porridge, and over 300 kg of cassava chips, among other cassava-based products.

The Sibocali Traders currently sells its products to local community dwellers, as well as through its online shop/platform. Sibongile also indicated that negotiations are underway with major retailers to secure big markets for her products. With Sibocali Traders still operating at a small scale, Sibongile and her team have expressed a need for them to secure more amounts of industrial equipment to boost their production capacity, while also trying to gain access to other markets within and beyond Africa.

Dreams do come true

By: Tshamano **Maluma** & Keolebogile **Digoamaje**

Youth development is a priority for the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). The future of agriculture rests with the youth. It is for this purpose that the Youth in Agriculture (Y-Agriculture) programme was developed to promote professional careers in agriculture and as part of the NAMC's commitment to supporting agricultural creativity in order to enhance the viability of the agricultural sector, among other objectives.

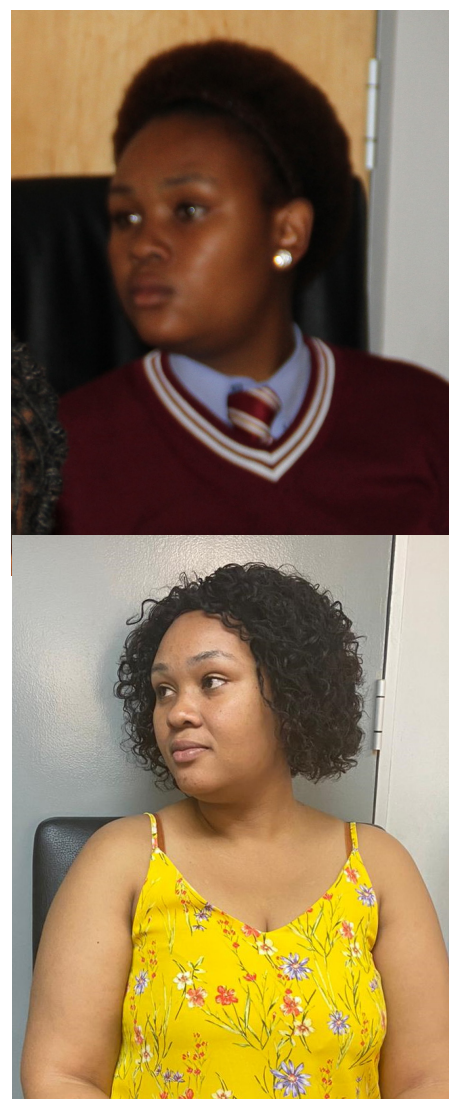
Since 2014 the NAMC through Y-Agriculture collaborated with various agricultural industries conducting career awareness and providing bursaries and placement to learners and graduates.

Dimani High School was one of the beneficiaries of Y-Agriculture, with various learners from Dimani benefitting from this programme. Meet twenty-five (25) year-old Khodani Madula, one of the learners who went through the Y-Agriculture Programme.

She hails from Rathidili village in Thohoyandou, Limpopo. She became aware of the agricultural economist profession while on a school visit to the NAMC in 2015, as part of the Y-Agriculture career guidance.

"The NAMC and its partners would visit our school to demonstrate planting, especially potatoes. In addition, they supported our visit to the NAMC during which we were introduced to agricultural economics in detail" says Khodani. It was the knowledge gained from this experience that led Khodani to enrol at the University of Venda for a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics.

In the course of her studies, the NAMC has been responsible for her tuition fees and study materials. In 2016, the NAMC invited her to the launch of the Y-Agriculture programme in Pretoria, where she became more inspired. The event motivated her to work harder and ignited a greater passion for her to start a side business in agriculture.



In 2018, she participated in the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)'s student competition for students in entrepreneurship, where she received a cash prize as the second-place winner. She then registered her MUCO Farming Enterprise and built some infrastructure from the prize money.

Khodani graduated in 2021 and is now pursuing a Master's degree in the same field. "In pursuit of an understanding of the connection between the economy and the agricultural sector, my interest in agricultural economics grew," she said.



◀ Learners from Dimani High School visiting the NAMC

She recently bagged an opportunity to study for a Master's degree in Applied Economics at the University of Bath in England, United Kingdom. "I believe that combining the two Master's degrees will enable me to forecast and make predictions about future opportunities regarding efficient production within the agricultural sector," she added.

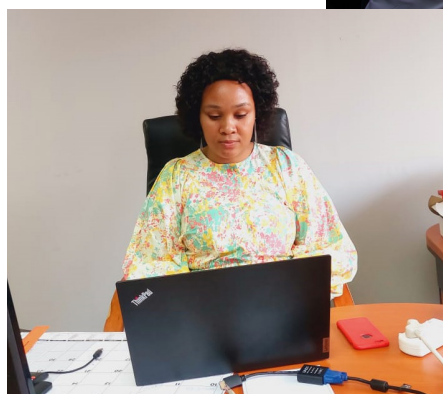
◀ Khodani Madula (in a pink top) during the Y-Agriculture launch



◀ Khodani Madula in her office at the NAMC

Furthermore, Khodani now works at the NAMC as an intern under the Markets and Economic Research Centre (MERC) Division, focusing on Smallholder Market Access research. Joining the NAMC has always been one of Khodani's goals.

"I know the NAMC as an organization that grooms youth to the best of their abilities. I drew motivation from my mentor Dr Ndumiso Mazibuko, who has been my mentor since 2016 till present" she said.



The knowledge and skills she acquired, amongst others, since joining the NAMC include conducting economic research for the development of smallholder farmers in the agricultural sector and writing and publishing articles on smallholder development.

"Working at this organization which I have always dreamt of joining is an incredible experience. For me, this is an answered prayer, a dream that comes true. The NAMC contributed greatly to the person I am today, and my first working experience here fulfils my heart in an unimaginable way. The expectations I had were exceeded. The team I work with empowers me to be the best I can be. They give me the chance to contribute my knowledge and try to expose me to a lot of opportunities to expand my capabilities." Khodani said.



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