

agripreneur

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INSPIRING AGRICULTURAL STORIES

QUALIFIED OR NOT, TSAKANI
MHLONGO PURSUED HER
PASSION FOR **FARMING**

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THE AGRIPRENEUR QUARTERLY:

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

PREFACE

Welcome to the thirty-first 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 #LoveRSAAgric

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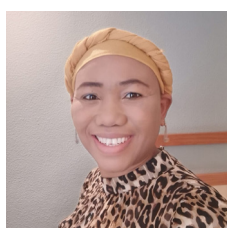
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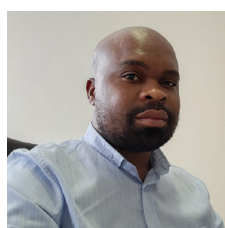
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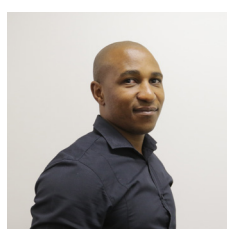
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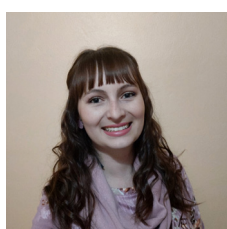
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Issue 30 of the Agripreneur provides a snapshot of a few headlines news in the agricultural sector between October and November 2022. These include a positive prospect for South Africa's export activity of stone fruit which is anticipated to improve from the 2021/22 marketing year. However, high input costs continue to put pressure on producers hence it is encouraged that efficiency and productivity needs to be re-examined across the entire value chain. Other highlights include a forecast of a good grain harvest for the 2023 marketing year in South Africa. On the flip side, the agriculture sector, particularly the fruit industry, was negatively affected by the Transnet strike that threatened the smooth export activity. Lastly, it emerged from the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) that there is still a long way to go to combat the effects of climate change on sustainable food production.

Issue 30 goes on to introduce the Marketing Forum, which monitors and seeks to drive the implementation of the Integrated Marketing Strategy (IMS). Provincial department of agriculture, commodity associations and the state-owned entities of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) meet to share progress, experiences, challenges, and solutions in the implementation of the IMS and they report progress to the Agriculture Economist Working Group (AEWG).

Furthermore, the publication continues to demonstrate that agriculture is attractive to the



Kayaletshu Sotsha

youth and people from various fields outside of agriculture, and advocates the need to provide support for such farmers. To demonstrate this, the Vhumatshelo, Dukathole, and Mshindi farms. The founder of the FairPlay movement Mr Francois Baird talks about the food inflation for 2023 and the worst outbreak of the bird flu in the United States' history.

In this issue, we also welcome Ms Christelle Van Zyl, who will contribute a series on agri-tourism. She will cover the basics of agri-tourism and then provide examples of how other farmers are implementing it.

Best wishes for the New Year

Enjoy the reading!

Kayaletshu Sotsha

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL MARKETING COUNCIL

AGRO-FOOD CHAIN UNIT

“Tracks and report food price trends in South Africa to advise the Minister on any possible action that could be taken when national and household food security is threatened”



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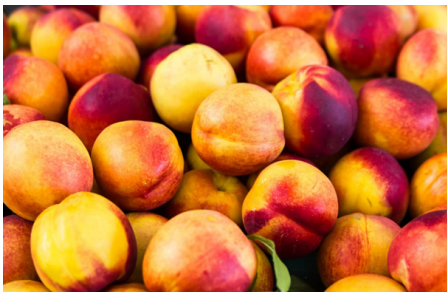
NAMC partnered with ARC, FABCO Primary Cooperative Limited (FABCO), and TIPS to conduct a feasibility study on cassava value chain.

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AGRI-HIGHLIGHTS:

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2022



* Photo: HORTGRO



* Photo: Farmers Weekly



* Photo: HORTGRO

South Africa looking forward to a much-improved stone fruit export season

South African stone fruit growers and exporters are anticipating a much-improved offering of South African stone fruit for 2022/23 after the disappointing 2021/22 season, in which despite a good crop, there were considerable trade and logistical challenges. Logistics bottlenecks have been addressed, so supply is expected to be much more stable, reliable, and on time. As a result, SA stone fruit will reach its intended destination in great condition as expected. The industry has also been focusing on quality, size, and improving the logistical chain over the winter period. A price/cost squeeze, as experienced globally, is continuing to pressurize production costs, resulting in a real urgency for the whole value chain to examine efficiencies, productivity, and cost reductions along the entire value chain.

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Another bumper grain harvest forecast for 2022/23

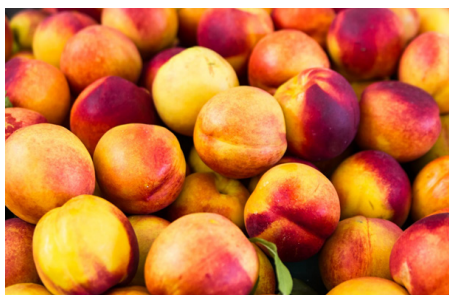
According to estimates provided by the National Crop Estimates Committee, commercial producers had expressed the intention to plant almost 2.6 million hectares of maize in 2023, a 1.2% decrease from the 2.62 million hectares planted the previous year. There are indications that farmers plan to plant just over 1.5 million hectares of white maize, 73 000 hectares (4.6%) less than previous season. For yellow maize, plantings were expected to reach 1.09 million hectares, or 41 000 hectares (3.9%) more than last year.

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Transnet strike: severe impact on fruit workers

Though the Transnet strike might be over, the fruit industry is not out of the woods yet. The effects will be felt throughout the value chain for a number of weeks to come, but mostly by the agri-workers on the ground. Fhumulani Ratshitanga, FruitSA's CEO, said the strike threatens the fruit industry. "Increasing freight costs further squeezed producers' profit margins, making us uncompetitive. Port issues have many other implications, including compromises on produce quality in cases of delays and the possibility of vessels bypassing our ports."

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* Photo: FW Archive

COP27: climate- proofing agriculture to enhance food security

Agricultural systems will have to change to adapt to climate change and improve food security. This was the message that emerged from delegates at the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, commonly referred to as COP27. The need to produce food sustainably has gone beyond being the right thing to do, to becoming a business imperative. Not only do innovations, such as renewable energy and water efficiency systems, save precious resources, they also reduce costs and increase farm profitability. A regenerative farmer producing layer hens, beef and pork near Stellenbosch, Angus McIntosh, said that switching to regenerative farming practices in South Africa would be possible without negatively affecting food security. The key would be to incentivise farmers to make this switch.

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* Photo: Pexels

Medium-term budget policy statement

This Medium-term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) presents a strategy to continue stabilizing public finances in a highly volatile global economy while also supporting economic growth. In the first half of 2022, the agriculture sector contracted by 13.3 percent compared with the first half of 2021. While a contraction is expected for 2022 overall, this represents a return to more normal output following two years of standout growth, rather than poor performance. Despite logistics constraints and disease-related trade bans, agriculture exports grew. Risks to the sector are primarily to the downside and include the uncertainty surrounding the Russia-Ukraine war, which has driven up input costs, particularly for fertilizers and animal feeds, and the strike at Transnet, which impacts exports of perishable goods..

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BRIEF INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE **MARKETING FORUM**

By: Mildred **Pheeha**

The Marketing Forum was established by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) through its Directorate Marketing as a sub-committee of the Agricultural Economics Working Group (AEWG). The establishment was through a decision taken at the AEWG sitting of 9-10th November 2011. The Forum is constituted by the Chairperson and the Secretariat. Mr Sitembele Kelembe is the Chairperson while Ms Mildred Pheeha is the Secretary, both from the Directorate of Marketing.

Membership consists of the Deputy Directors and Agricultural Economists from the nine provincial departments of agriculture responsible for marketing and agribusiness services, various commodity associations as well as other governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in the implementation of the Integrated Marketing Strategy (IMS).

The Forum further serves as a platform for the alignment of the work plans of provincial agricultural economists to implement the pillars of the IMS. It also serves as a platform for reporting and reviewing work progress during the implementation of the strategy.

The Forum meetings are held quarterly (4 meetings per annum), with the provinces rotating the hosting duties. Recently, in November 2022, the Forum meeting was held in the Mount Edgecombe area of the



** Mr Sitembele **Kelembe***

KwaZulu Natal (KZN) province, and it was the 33rd sitting since its inception. The hosting province shared their experience in implementing the IMS, published in 2012 and continues up to 2030. The provinces mainly provide the following marketing support services/programmes in collaboration with the commodity associations and the state-owned entities of DALRRD:

1. Marketing infrastructure
2. Agro-logistics
3. Marketing information

4. Marketing skills development
5. Market research and market intelligence
6. Market linkages/market access facilitation and product safety & quality standards compliance.

The KZN province also took the members of the Forum on a farm visit whereby we met with Ms Louise Allan, the co-owner of Rivervalley Farm CC situated at a farming community of New Hanover in the KwaZulu Natal midlands. Louise is a vegetables and herb farmer who produces vegetables on the 12-hectare property of which 7 hectares are under hail netting and 2 hectares are under fully automated greenhouse tunnels.

“We acknowledge the KwaZulu Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZNDARD) officials, Ms Thuledu Khumalo, Ms Londiwe Sibisi and Ms Lungelwa Zondi for helping us in facilitating the successful meeting”.

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QUALIFIED OR NOT, TSAKANI MHLONGO PURSUED HER PASSION FOR FARMING

By: Keolebogile Digoamaje

A second-generation crop and poultry farmer, Tsakani Mhlongo hails from Tzaneen, Limpopo province. She thrives on responsibility-driven challenges. She owns and utilizes 2 hectares of land for farming purposes and her project focuses on seasonal crops ranging from and not limited to okra, tomatoes, chillies, eggplant, potatoes, cabbage, and poultry (mainly broilers). SwaTsakani was founded and registered in June 2020.

Growing up on her parents' farm, she was always exposed to farming. Due to her gender, working on the farm or doing what was considered a male activity was not encouraged by her parents. Her late father realized after she got her tertiary qualifications that she had a passion for agriculture and had always followed him around. Consequently, he became more accepting of her path, especially since the farm had stopped operating due to him getting old.



Just before the pandemic, she sat down with her parents and requested the opportunity to rent out their farm so she could prove to them that she could do farming and demonstrate all she had learned from them over the years. It was at that time that SwaTsakani was founded, hoping to make her mark outside her parents' shadows.

It was the idea of leaving a legacy and knowing that her parents had given her a gift that she could not take for granted that motivated her to become a farmer. Moreover, the pandemic and rising cost of living have also put a greater emphasis on food security.

Despite not having a formal education in farming, Tsakani holds qualifications in Project Management obtained from Milpark Business School and Corporate Communication from the University of Johannesburg. Her farming knowledge is derived from watching her parents' way of life.

Her parents grew food from their own backyard and helped their community with what they grew. She is, however, continuing to learn from fellow farmers, educational platforms, and programmes to ensure her business is a success.

In addition to creating a generational legacy, providing food security, and encouraging healthy eating, her business is designed to carry on the family tradition. She targets bulk buyers seeking quality fresh produce and willing to pay for it.



Spinach harvest

Poultry section

Her current challenge is load shedding, especially in the poultry side of the business. This year alone, she lost a lot of chickens because of this, so she had to downscale from 1000 to 500 chickens. Feed prices have soared as well making it difficult to break the chain as customers also complain about price increases.

Furthermore, water shortages are a challenge, and boreholes alone cannot support the operation, resulting in a loss of crops. Despite the many challenges, Tsakani remains persistent.

She has not received any financial assistance so far to finance her project, so she has to work other jobs to make ends meet. The only farming techniques she can afford at the moment are traditional farming techniques as she is self-funded and everything else is very expensive. Currently, she is trying to do greenhouse farming and uses drip irrigation to conserve water while meeting the crops' individual needs.

Her farm helps to feed the community at large. In addition, community members are able to buy quality food at affordable



prices in their vicinity. Tsakani's farm has 4 permanent employees and 3 casual workers.

"There is a need for more young people to take advantage of the opportunities available in the agricultural sector. However, they must be aware that some industries are very capital-intensive and they must be prepared to work hard and invest their money. It is a long-term investment, not a get-rich-quick scheme. The rewards you will reap if you are passionate and resilient will far outweigh monetary value, so start today!" said Ms Mhlongo.



WE FEED THE NATION FOR A LIVING; WE ARE VHUMATSHELO CROP FARM

By: Khodani Madula

Ramuhala Lutendo McCrae is a National young farmer of the year 2017 award winner. He was born and raised at Tshikhwani Village, Ha-Sinthumule in Makhado Local Municipality of Vhembe District Municipality in the Limpopo province. He is also the founding member and Managing Director of Vhumatshelo Holdings and Projects which specializes in vegetable production and training.

Not only is he a farmer, but also a mentor and a role model to many young people. His farming business has been the beacon of the community's economic development through job creation for youth.

Lutendo has also been part of the delegates who represented South African youth in China for youth business initiatives in developing countries and also took part in the presidential youth delegation for the global youth chamber of commerce in the United States of America, Chicago.

He is a 34-year-old Plant Production graduate from the University of Venda. He did his practical work at Madzivhandila College of Agriculture where he was working closely with farmers.

In 2012, Lutendo mobilized unemployed youth to start their own farm in order to create jobs and reduce poverty in the community. He is the first farmer in the area to win the national award and the only one with hydroponic tunnels.

Vhumatshelo farm is a 5-hactare farm located in plot number 126 at Tshikhwani village. The land was acquired from the Sinthumule tribal council through a recommendation from the local headman.

He received support from Social Development for the fence in 2016. In 2017, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) provided support for the borehole. In 2019, the Makhado Department of Agriculture provided production inputs. The Makhado Municipality, through Local Economic Development, provided support for the office and the training centre in 2021.

With over 10 years of farming experience, Lutendo produces baby marrow, carrots, green peppers, sweet potatoes, potatoes, tomatoes, butternuts, and beetroots. The farm employs 3 permanent and 5 seasonal workers.





Lutendo has a contract with All Joy for tomatoes, and the Braambos air force base. In addition, he supplies the national fresh produce market. “We do source crops from other farmers to supplement the demand as we strongly believe in collaborations which is the reason why Tshilwavirusiku vegetable growers’ farmers secondary cooperative was born, which aims to unlock the market for farmers in Vhembe District through Agro-processing,” said Lutendo.

Over the past 5 years, the farm has hosted over 95 learnership students, and currently, there are 19 students who are placed on the farm through the Agri-SETA learnership programme. Over 35 students from the University of Venda have received experiential training on the farm.



“We pride ourselves on the state-of-the-art building at the farm which employs 35 local people and is going to be used as an office, for training, and as an agro-processing centre. This is in line with our objective as one of our mandates is to create employment opportunities and promote skills transformation” said Lutendo.

Lutendo advises fellow farmers as follows: “The day you plant a seed is not the day you harvest the fruits. Farming requires dedication and patience. In farming, there is no competition but collaboration. The aim is to win together as a team. As farmers, we need to learn from one another and inspire the next generation to take part in the agricultural sector to promote food security and create employment opportunities.”

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WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER: A STORY OF THE DUKATHOLE FARM

By: Fezeka **Matebeni** and Kayaletu **Sotsha**

Two young black women with an agricultural background decided to join hands and established the Dukathole Farm (PTY) Ltd. in 2014. They both studied agriculture - plant and animal production - and further acquired agriculture business knowledge through short courses.

Nkanyiso holds a National Diploma in Plant Production, which she obtained from Cedara College of Agriculture in 2010. In 2016, she obtained a B-Tech Degree in Agriculture Management from the University of South Africa (UNISA). Between (2012 – 2015), she took a Project Management course with Damelin and a New Venture Creation course with the Business World Academy.

Fanelesbonge Shangase Nothando holds a National Diploma in Animal Production, which she obtained from the Mangosuthu University of Technology in 2010. In 2013, she advanced her studies in Animal Production and obtained a B-Tech Degree from the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). Like her business partner, she took a New Venture Creation course in 2015. In addition, she completed a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) course in 2016.



** Ms Nkanyiso Katleho Ngubane*

The Dukathole farm aims to produce high-quality vegetables and become one of the leading suppliers of fresh produce locally, while also venturing into the export market. The two women (Nkanyiso and Nothando) also aim to promote development by creating employment opportunities and empowering women and youth through agricultural skills transfer.



** Ms Nothando Fanelesbonge Shangase*

With assistance from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (to be referred to as the department), the National Youth Development Agency, and the South African Breweries, among others, the farmers acquired hydroponic tunnels, a delivery truck, office equipment, and a mobile packhouse.



The farm operates on 3 hectares, with 0.59 hectares fitted with hydroponic tunnels and has a variety of fresh produce. Vegetables such as peppers, tomatoes, and cucumbers are grown under the tunnels. Other vegetables that are produced on the farm include cabbages, cauliflower and green beans.

The markets supplied include Freshly Picked (Pietermaritzburg), Savva's Mini Market (Kokstad), the municipal fresh produce market, Ilembe Enterprise, Save Hyper Supermarket (Pietermaritzburg) and Aheers Supermarket (Greytown).

The farm provides experiential training through the Agri-SETA internship programme.

Among other achievements, the farm employs 9 permanent workers and 15 seasonal workers. The farmers have obtained a GlobalGap certification and have recently entered into a 30-year lease agreement for a 50-hectare farm with the department.

The farmers are currently battling to afford the means to move the infrastructure (movable) to the new farm. However, the prospect for the future is brighter.

TSHANDUKO AGRO-INVESTMENT ARM

By: Khathutshelo **Rambau**

Tshanduko agro-investment farm is situated in the Limpopo settlement of Nzhelele at Mauluma Village. The farm is run by husband Kutelani Sitholimela and his wife Khavhatondwi Mathiloli. Kutelani was raised in a farming family and used this as a knowledge base to begin his farming venture.

Kutelani started farming in 2012 from his backyard, then in 2021 he bought land and leased other plots, and now he has 6 hectares that he uses. He began the business with his savings and added a loan to it to purchase some of the small-scale resources.

The farmers have 600 layers and produce about 16 200 eggs a month. They also produce cabbages and spinach and manage to harvest about 40 000 heads of cabbages and 80 000 bunches of spinach annually. In addition, they produce chillies, habanero peppers, maize, sweet potatoes, green peppers, and potatoes. With these activities, they have managed to employ 6 part-time and 4 permanent employees at the farm.

Potatoes harvest



They market their produce to neighbouring communities, daycare centres, retailers and local egg distributors. They started promoting their products on social media, particularly to the community, and their sales have since increased considerably.

Despite the progress made on market access, the business is under pressure due to high input costs (e.g., fuel, feed and fertilizers) and exacerbated by the energy crisis. Other challenges include access to water and getting the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) done.



Despite the progress made on market access, the business is under pressure due to high input costs and exacerbated by the energy crisis





** Mr Kutelani Sitholimela and Ms Khavhatondwi Mathiloli*

Their goals are to uplift and empower locals where possible as well as to create jobs. They are building a chicken house that is intended to increase the number of the layer chickens to 3 200. Kutelani expressed his gratitude to his wife who has been his pillar of strength during this journey as well as to his parents and in-laws.



** Cabbages ready for the market*

FOOD INFLATION WILL PEAK EARLY NEXT YEAR

By: Francois **Baird**

In the November edition of its Food Inflation Brief, the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) noted that, while world food prices have been declining for six months, South Africa surprised on the upside in October, rising slightly to 12% year on year.

Over the past few months, beef prices have stabilised, albeit at levels of around 12% above the previous year.

“Chicken prices have increased year-on-year by almost 10%, due to the weaker ZAR, higher production costs and the worst Avian Influenza outbreak to date in the Northern Hemisphere. The effect of tariffs, and increased processing, distribution, and sales costs should also not be discounted, with the significant rise in fuel prices and the high incidence of load shedding pushing consumer prices of food higher,” BFAP said.

“Our view is that food inflation will remain high over the next three months as the full effects of persistently increasing commodity prices and weaker exchange rates filter through to retail markets.

“We expect that food inflation could peak in the first quarter of 2023, after which the higher base effects apparent from March 2022 will result in smaller inflationary effects during the rest of 2023. “

It said two variables to be watched were global maize prices, which might drop, and the rand/ dollar exchange rate, which could strengthen to R16.50 in the first quarter of 2023.

IT IS NOT **EASY**, BUT IT IS **POSSIBLE**

By: Khodani **Madula**

Khubana is a 27-year-old farmer whose farm business is named Mshindi, a Kenyan term that means a winner. The farm is located at Mpandoni-tshaulu village in Vhembe District Municipality in the Limpopo Province. Mshindi farming focuses on producing good quality fresh produce mainly green peppers, mustard, cabbages, tomatoes, chillies, etc.

Khubana holds a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics obtained from the University of Venda, but she struggled to find a job in this field after graduating. Instead, she got a job in the retail industry, employed by Mr Price.

In 2021, she took a New Venture Creation course. She later entered a pitching competition wherein she won the amount of R20 000. She also benefited from the Presidential Empowerment Stimulus Initiative (PESI). The combination of these rewards and benefits laid a foundation for her to venture into farming. “Professor P.K. Chauke used to say to us if you are doing agriculture, you do not have to wait for someone to employ you – you can be your employer”, said Khubana.

The farm business began on 4 hectares which she got from her father. She is currently negotiating for a bigger land with the local tribal office. In addition to the knowledge and



* Khubana Masindi Philis (Photo: Supplied)



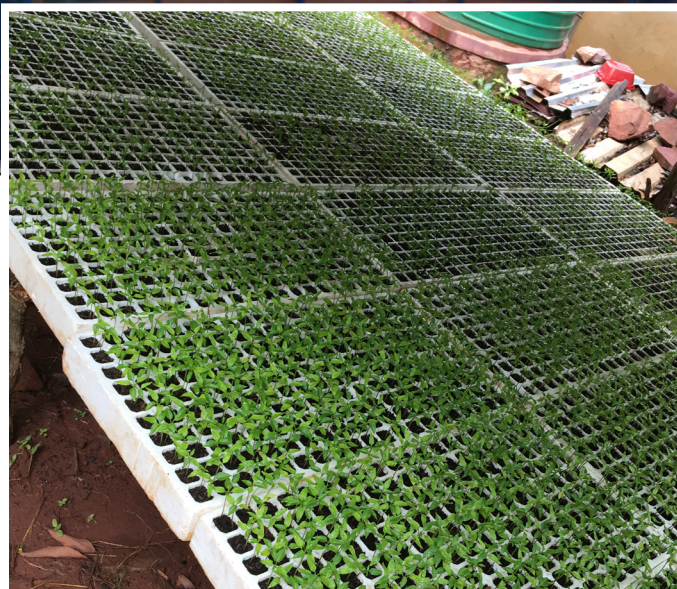
** Green Pepper harvest (Photo: Supplied)*

skills she learned from her parents, she has 2 years of farming experience she acquired from being part of the green valley cooperative. Khubana employs 1 permanent and 6 seasonal employees.

Market access remains a challenge. So far, the produce is sold to neighbouring households, hawkers, and supermarkets. She also leverages the networks she has with other farmers. She is a subcontractor under a well-known farmer in Limpopo by the name of Nethengwe Aubrey who supplies tomatoes to big food processing companies such as the Rhodes Food Group.

“Farming is not an easy thing. In addition to market access challenges, farmers face a lot of challenges such as climate change and uncontrolled weather conditions” says Khubana. She has recently lost her tomatoes due to rain.

She aims to reduce such effects in the future by learning how other farmers manage such situations. “I connect with other farmers on various platforms where share experiences and exchange information,” she says.



** Seed bedding (Photo: Supplied)*

“The Government also tries to assist us as farmers, though it might not reach us all. Extension officers assist us with information and advice on farm-related problems that one may be facing,” she added.

Khubana acknowledges that farming is challenging, but it is a way of life. Her advice is that if someone has some ideas about working the soil, they must start with what they have and re-invest while exploring other forms of support that are available within the sector. “In Tshivenda we say lupfumo lu mavuni, meaning the wealth is in the soil, so let us work the soil” she concluded.

BIRD FLU OUTBREAK

THE WORST IN US HISTORY

By: Francois Baird

This year's outbreak of avian influenza (bird flu) in the United States is the worst in the country's history, according to the US Department of Agriculture.



Official data showed bird flu had wiped out 50.54 million birds in the US this year, Reuters reported.

“The deaths of chickens, turkeys and other birds represent the worst animal health disaster in the US to date, topping the previous record of 50.5 million birds that died in an avian-flu outbreak in 2015.

“Birds often die after becoming infected. The entire flocks, which can number up to a million birds in egg-laying chicken farms, are also culled to control the spread of the disease after a single bird tests positive.”

The news agency said the loss of chicken flocks has sent prices for eggs and turkey meat to record highs in the US. Europe and Britain are also suffering their worse avian flu crisis, and some British supermarkets are rationing customers' egg purchases because of disrupted supplies.

The US outbreak, which began in February, has infected poultry and non-poultry flocks in 46 of the country's 50 states, according to USDA data. Wild birds such as ducks transmit the virus, known as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), through their droppings, feathers or direct contact with chickens.

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* Photo: Supplied

THE AGRI-TOURISM SERIES

By: Christelle van Zyl

Part 1: What is agri-tourism?

Agri-tourism is a popular practise around the world and has become a trending word in South Africa. What does it entail, and how do the farmer and local community benefit from it? Agri-tourism combines the agricultural and tourism industries by allowing a tourist to visit a working farm. For example, hunting, wine tasting,

farm accommodation, farmstalls, hiking trails, camping, fishing, and river rafting. While any farmer can develop an agri-tourism business, it still requires thorough planning and constant management.



Anything that encourages a tourist to visit your farm

About Ms. Christelle Charlien van Zyl

Van Zyl has been involved in agri-tourism research since 2017. She recently submitted her Ph.D. thesis at the NWU, focusing on creating a framework for developing agri-tourism as part of the agricultural industry. She has shared her research with both local and international audiences, participating in more than 5 international conferences in 2022. Her future research will focus on marketing agri-tourism products and services in South Africa.

Agri-tourism offers the following **advantages** for the farmer: it is an additional source of income (besides the agricultural business); it allows the farmer to diversify farming activities (the “don’t put all your eggs in one basket” effect); and it provides the farmer with the opportunity to utilise farm resources to their fullest (by utilising open or unused spaces). There are also several advantages to the local communities: it creates job opportunities and encourages tourists to visit the area, which may result in a positive economic contribution for the area. Unfortunately, agri-tourism also has **disadvantages** if it is not managed correctly: pollution (land, water, air, noise); tourism can be seasonal (e.g., picking fruit); and conflicts may occur between tourists, the farmer, and

the local community. All agri-tourism products and services can be divided into five categories (Bernardo, Valentin and Leatherman, 2004), namely outdoor recreation (e.g., petting zoos, abseiling, birdwatching), educational experiences (e.g., farm tourism, castings, cooking classes), entertainment (e.g., festivals, concerts), hospitality services (spa, restaurant), and on-farm direct sales (u-picking, auctions).

This agri-tourism **series** will focus on the farmer and discuss the following elements of agri-tourism: (1) farmers’ motives for engaging in agri-tourism; (2) important factors to consider within the agri-tourism business; (3) physical resources required to start an agri-tourism business; (4) government and non-government

organisations that can assist with agri-tourism development; and (5-9) guidelines for developing products and services within each of the five agri-tourism categories. Much of the content is based on research conducted by the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, and the TREES research unit between 2017 and 2022.

As the agricultural industry is always faced with both internal and external challenges, agri-tourism may offer a bit of relief to farmers and grow the local tourism industry. Since agri-tourism is such a wide field, farmers have the opportunity to be creative and think outside the box when developing their agri-tourism products and services.



* Photo: Supplied



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**](http://www.namc.co.za/about-smat)