

agripreneur

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INSPIRING AGRICULTURAL STORIES

**CYNTHIA'S LOVE AND
PASSION FOR CROPS**

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THE AGRIPRENEUR QUARTERLY:

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

PREFACE

Welcome to the thirty-fourth 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.

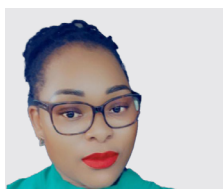
CONTRIBUTORS:



Francois Baird



Lindie Du Plessis



Nonhlanhla Gwamanda



Moses Lubinga



Bernard Manganyi



Kgantsho Marole



Naledi Radebe



Khathutshelo Rambau



Phelelani Sibiya



Sanelise Tafa



Christelle Van Zyl

CREDITS

Acting Manager:

Corné Dempers

PRODUCTION TEAM

Editor in chief:

Kayaletu Sotsha

Designer:

Daniel Rambau

RESOURCES

Cover Story Images:

Supplied

Images:

NAMC

Pexel

Pixabay

Supplied

CONTACT US

Physical Address:

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

Tel:

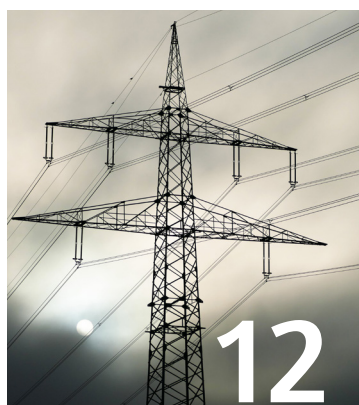
(012) 341 1115

Email:

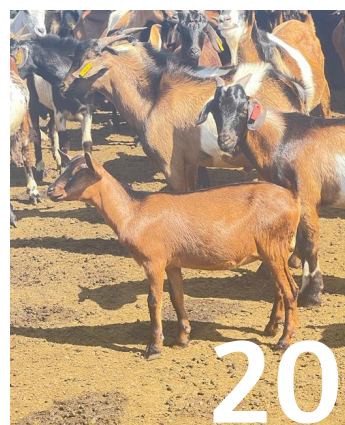
info@namc.co.za

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Issue 34 covers some developments in South Africa's agriculture sector and its interaction with the globe in a period between July and September of 2023. These include the BRICS Summit, marked by the signing of an agreement with China for the export of avocados by South Africa to China, among other things. Wandile Sihlobo launched his book titled "A country of two agricultures". In this book, he focuses on the progress made in growing the South African agriculture sector since 1994 and draws some lessons from which to continue building going forward. There is advocacy for a conducive and tailored financial support to "black" farmers, which is based on public private partnerships and create an enabling environment for smallholder farmers. Others include a look in South Africa's citrus exports to the European Union, anti-dumping duties on poultry products, Statistics South Africa's reports on employment and the Gross Domestic Production, underlying factors for growth of the agriculture sector's Gross Value Added as well as addressing the expectations over a possible listeriosis outbreak.

The agri-tourism series continues with focus on the physical resources that are needed for the agri-tourism business. Here, the article indicates that there are over forty different activities and attractions that farmers can develop on their farms. It goes on to differentiate between activities and attractions that require structures/buildings and those that do not, emphasizing that the potential for agri-tourism is based on the natural resources the farm has and the new developments should largely be informed by the target market.

Issue 34 also covers the critical linkages between uninterrupted access to electricity and maintaining food security in both the African and South African context, highlighting that electricity shortage tends to influence production costs, hence driving the price of food higher. The effect of the bird flu on egg shortage and prices is also covered.

Developmental initiatives such as capacity building and market access linkages are also covered. The NAMC, through its market facilitation programme, linked a group of 22 farmers uMkhanyakude District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal with the market. This is a remarkable achievement given that communal goat farmers often lack access to reliable markets. As a result, they tend to keep their goats until reach a stage where their meat quality deteriorates to levels where they are not able to meet formal market requirements. Another initiative is the Mbizana Rural Enterprise Development (RED) Hub which was established by the Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency (ECRDA) as one of the five RED hubs established already by the agency. The aim is to create a platform for economic activity in rural areas, increase rural incomes through increased primary production, processing capacity, and market linkages. The Fort Cox Agricultural and Forestry Training Institute established a center for entrepreneurship, incubation, and rural development (CEIRD) to improve local economic activity, while equipping graduates with entrepreneurial skills.

The young agripreneurs continue to showcase their skills, determination and love for agriculture and agro-processing and making it work as their source of livelihood, including



Kayaletu Sotsha

neighbouring households and communities. This begins with a story of a Cassava agro-processor who was awarded as the Limpopo's best young agro-processor by the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Next is the story of a 23-year-old farmer who grew her broiler farm from 100 birds per cycle to 1 500. She is in the process of scaling down to 500 broiler birds per cycle and adding layer stock. She fears the effect of the bird flu on her endeavours, in addition to a long struggle to cope with high input costs and loadshedding. Last, but not least, is the story of a young graduate who completed her internship and decided to go back home to explore her passion for farming, while fulfilling her idea of being her own boss. She currently obtains a yield of between 50 to 60 tons of potatoes per hectare.

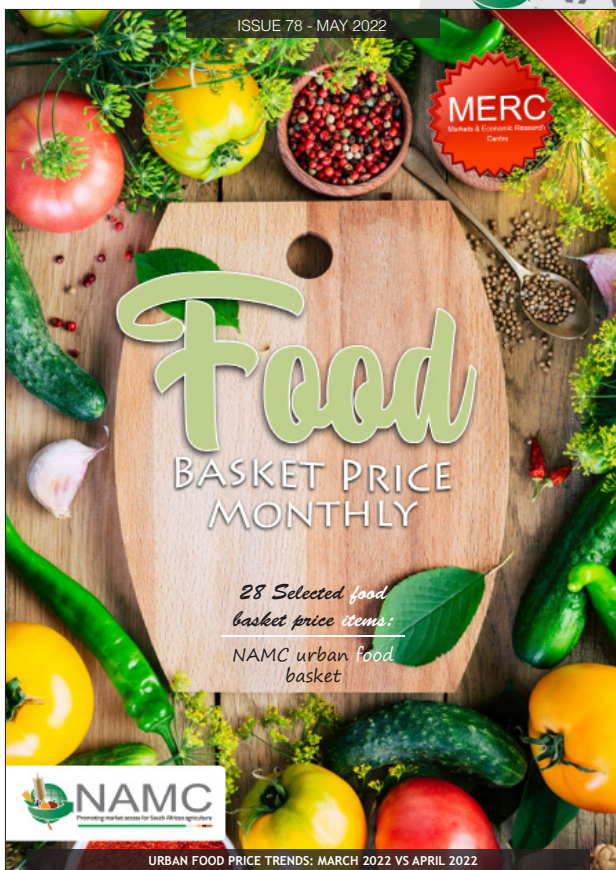
Enjoy the reading!

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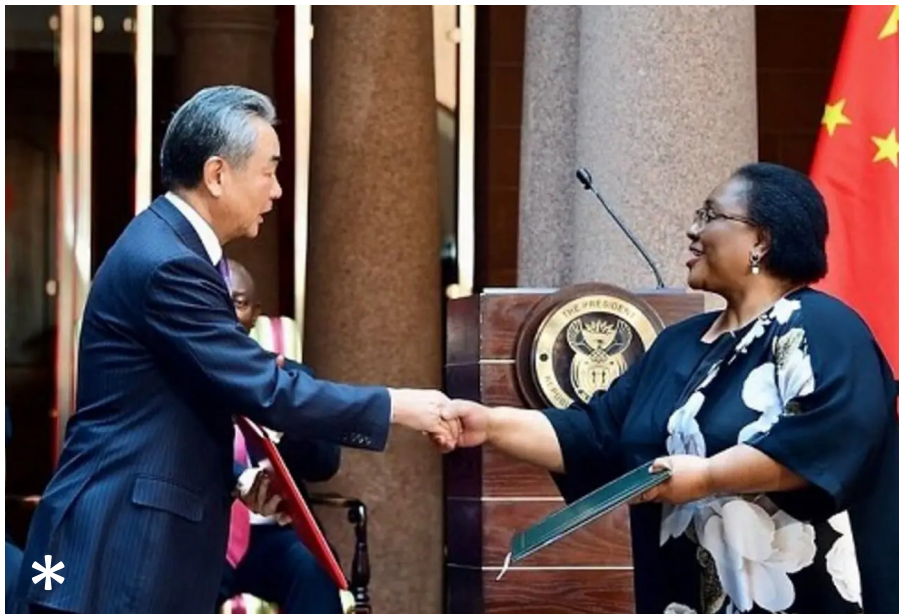
NAMC partnered with ARC, FABCO Primary Cooperative Limited (FABCO), and TIPS to conduct a feasibility study on cassava value chain.

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AGRI-HIGHLIGHTS:

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2023



TRADE AGREEMENT

Minister of Agriculture signs an agreement for export of Avocado to China

On the 22nd of August 2023, the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Ms Thoko Didiza signed an agreement with Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Wang Yi (on behalf of Chinese Agriculture Minister Tang Ranjian) for the export of avocado to the People's Republic of China. During this time, she highlighted that gaining access to China is a vital step in driving an export-led growth in South African Avocado industry and that China is likely to become one of the world's major consumers of avocados and thus offers an immense opportunity to expand avocado production in South Africa.

Source: dalrrd.gov.za

* Photo: foodbusinessafrica.com

BRICS

BRICS Ministers of Agriculture signed a declaration of the 13th meeting in Limpopo

Minister of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development Ms Thoko Didiza has welcomed the signing of the Joint Declaration of the 13th Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Agriculture at the conclusion of a 4-day gathering of the BRICS Ministers of Agriculture in Mookgopong in the Limpopo. The Declaration outlines areas of collaboration, cooperation, and agreement on various interventions among BRICS member countries on agriculture. These include, reducing the impact of climate change on agriculture and food production; ensuring access to food for the most vulnerable population; agriculture trade and investment; enhancing agricultural technology cooperation and innovation and strengthening exchange of

agricultural information.

Source: dalrrd.gov.za

BOOK LAUNCH

Wandile Sihlobo book Launch

Wandile Sihlobo, Chief Economist of the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz) and the author of "Finding Common Ground: Land, Equality and Agriculture" has released a new groundbreaking book called "A Country of Two Agricultures". The author describes the book to say "the book deals with the issue of where our agriculture is today compared to 1994 because people tend to say, 'everything is going backwards', but the sector has more than doubled. It also looks to history to ask what lessons we can learn about the progress we made in the past, and that we can do going forward."

Source:

thesouthernafricantimes.com

EXPORT

Citrus EU export: South African citrus exports to the EU drop by 20%

According to the Citrus Growers Association (CGA) Updated European Union pest control regulations are expected to cut South African citrus exports by 20% in 2023. The association says that oranges would be the most affected crop.

Source: freshfruitportal.com

ANTI-DUMPING DUTIES

The (negligible) effect of anti-dumping duties on poultry price

August 2023 marked the deadline imposed by Trade, Industry and Competition Minister Ebrahim Patel to implement long awaited anti-dumping duties on Brazil, Denmark, Ireland, Poland, and Spain. The International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC) investigated producers in these markets and concluded that dumping is taking place, and it's causing material harm to the South African poultry industry. ITAC recommended a set of compensatory tariffs – anti-dumping duties – to offset the harm being done.

Source: sapoultry.co.za

GDP

Statistics SA release Gross Domestic Product performance 2023 Quarter 2

The agriculture, forestry and fishing industry grew by 4.2% in the second quarter of 2023, contributing 0.1 of a percentage point to GDP growth. This was primarily due to increased economic activities reported for field crops and horticulture products.

Source: statssa.gov.za

OUTBREAK

Alarm bells over possible listeriosis outbreak

Following the discovery of high levels of listeria pathogens in abattoirs and retailers in at least three provinces, scientists are

urging consumers to cook beef until it is well done. *"I'm confident that with these results already, the Department of Agriculture and the red meat industry are implementing measures to ensure that abattoirs properly clean the facilities and monitor to ensure they reduce the risk"* UP researcher Rebone Moerane said. Moerane is confident producers and government are already remedying the situation.

Source: enca.com

EMPLOYMENT

Employment

In the second quarter of 2023, about 894 000 people were employed in South Africa's primary agriculture, up 1% q/q and 2% y/y. This is the highest farm employment level since the last quarter of 2016 and is well above the long-term agricultural employment of 780 000.

Source: wandilesihlobo.com

FARMER SUPPORT

Black farmers languish as finance interventions fail them

The article criticises the lack of suitable financing options for smallholder farmers in SA who want to transform the agriculture sector. It says that smallholder farmers often face high costs and short repayment periods when they invest in on-farm infrastructure and equipment. It also says that government funding schemes are not enough to meet the needs of farmers, as they are limited in scale and scope. The article urges the new agriculture master plan to provide more

patient finance, such as longer repayment periods, lower interest rates, and flexible repayment options. It also suggests that the government should collaborate with other stakeholders, such as banks, cooperatives, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), to create a more enabling environment for smallholder farmers.

Source: businesslive.co.za

AGRICULTURAL GVA

This is why South Africa's agricultural sector has rebounded

The article reports on the growth of the country's agricultural gross value added in the second quarter of 2023, after a sharp contraction in the first quarter. The article attributes the improvement to the robust production conditions for various field crops and horticulture, which were delayed by the late start of the 2022/23 season and the base effects. It also mentions the interventions to ease the load-shedding burden on farmers, such as load-curtailement, diesel rebate and alternative energy sources. A solid performance is expected to show in the coming quarters, boosting the annual growth figure to around 3%. The article also highlights the challenges and risks facing the sector, such as geopolitical tension, deteriorating infrastructure, inefficient ports, and rail networks, weakening municipalities, crime, energy supply and El Niño. It suggests that the government and the private sector should work together to address these issues and support investment and long-term growth in the industry.

Source: mg.co.za

PART 3: THE PHYSICAL RESOURCES NEED FOR AN **AGRI-TOURISM** BUSINESS

By: Christelle **Van Zyl** & Lindie **Du Plessis**

There are over forty different agri-tourism activities and attractions that farmers can develop on their farm. The question in this article is: What (if any) physical resources do farmers need to develop these activities and attractions on their farm? There are two options. Either the farmers do require some form of structure/building, or the farmer does not require any structure/building.*

Examples of agri-tourism activities/attractions that do not require a structure/building:

- » **Fishing** – the farmer just needs a natural pond and the tourist can bring their own fishing gear.
- » **Picnicking** – the farmer needs an open field/grass and the tourist can bring their own picnic setup (e.g., blanket, food, etc.).
- » **Hiking trails** – the farmer must have a designated trail (clear a path), but no buildings are required.
- » **Cycling** – again the farmer must have a designated trail (clear a path), but no buildings are required.
- » **Bird watching** – if there is a natural bird population, the farmer does not need to invest in any structures. However, the farmer may choose to build a bird-hide.
- » **Hunting** – if the wildlife is already on the farm (with correct enclosures, permits, etc.), tourists can bring their own hunting equipment.



**NB: This only refers to physical structures, and not infrastructures such as roads, water systems, signage, fences, etc.*

Examples of agri-tourism activities/attractions that do require a structure/building:

- » **Museum** – a building is required to house the exhibitions.
- » **Accommodation** – a structure or house is required for a guesthouse, B&B, hotel, etc. When focusing on camping or caravan stands, an ablution block may be necessary or even a kitchen.
- » **Restaurant** – a building is required for the restaurant to include the kitchen, seating area, bathrooms, etc.
- » **Spa** – generally a building is required for privacy for the spa treatments. However, it is possible to offer several spa services without a building (e.g., just have a massage table in an open field with a view, if there is enough privacy).

» **Farm stall** – while this may be a table next to the road, weather conditions and safety are risks that would encourage a farmer to have a structure or building to house their products that is protected from both weather and burglars.

Based on a 2022 study conducted in the Western Cape province, many farmers used a combination of renovating/restoring old farm buildings for their agri-tourism activities/attractions and building new structures or expanding existing buildings. For examples, after renovating old buildings into accommodation, the farmer builds a few more accommodation units on the farm. Other farmers choose only to renovate the buildings already found on the farm and utilise the resources they have to their

disposal. This generally referred to old farm houses or barns that were restored and used for tourism purposes. Finally, only a few farmers choose to build new structures for their tourism businesses. This was either because they have no structures on the farm, or they had a financial source to invest in this development.

Very important – look at what you have on your farm. This includes natural resources, structures, and infrastructures, and identify the potential for agri-tourism activities and attractions based on what your farm has. It is important to ensure that you have the right agri-tourism products in mind (based on that your target market wants) before investing large amounts of time and money into new developments.



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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WHY ELECTRICITY ACCESS IS CRITICAL FOR **FOOD SECURITY**

By: Francois **Baird**

This article underscores the vital connection between energy and food security in Africa, emphasising how the lack of reliable electricity can adversely impact economies, social stability, and efforts to reduce hunger and poverty.

The recent coup in Gabon was symptomatic of the instability that affects resource-rich countries where populations lack access to energy, jobs and are at increased risk of food insecurity.

Africa desperately needs more widespread electricity access. Economies stagnate without a stable electricity supply as businesses struggle to create jobs, exacerbating poverty. As a result, hunger, poverty, food insecurity and social instability are likely to worsen.

Electricity is indispensable to modern agriculture, enabling crop irrigation, round-the-clock operations such as poultry production, food processing and packaging. It is also essential for retailers reliant on extensive refrigeration. Without electricity, food perishes rapidly.

While South Africa had faced electricity problems, the situation was far more severe in many other African nations.

Africa has the world's fastest-growing population – its 1.4 billion people are projected to increase to 1.7 billion by 2030.

However, electricity access is declining. The International Energy Agency (IEA) directly linked this to rising poverty and worsening food security.

Unreliable electricity supplies were contributing to a sharp upsurge in extreme poverty across sub-Saharan Africa, with food crisis-affected populations quadrupling in some areas, according to a report by the IEA.

Africa must achieve stable food production to tackle poverty and malnutrition, necessitating a consistent and dependable electricity supply.

Several factors influence electricity availability, including stable governance, a thriving private sector creating jobs to alleviate poverty and hunger, and robust institutions curbing corruption. Therefore, resolving electricity challenges in countries requires concurrent reforms in governance.

The most conducive conditions to establish and maintain a reliable energy supply for industries will be present in nations with market solutions, private sector involvement, and rule-of-law frameworks empowered against corruption.

Africa has abundant energy resources, and it is paramount for governments to ensure their efficient use. Attainment of food security is contingent upon this.

Power cuts are keeping food prices high

According to the Competition Commission's September report, South Africa's high food price inflation is mainly attributed to persistent electricity supply disruptions, or load-shedding, which impacts essential food items.

South Africa's Competition Commission has continued examining the country's high food price inflation and identified the primary driver as load-shedding – the daily power cuts that have plagued homes and businesses this year.

The commission is monitoring value chains and pricing of four "essential foods" – sunflower



** Pumping milk from a cow using a milking parlour (electrical pump machine)*

oil, bread, maize meal, and individually quick frozen (IQF) chicken pieces.

The commission's September report analyses why South Africa's food price inflation is twice as high as general consumer price inflation and specifically why food prices have not reduced more rapidly as input costs decrease. It refers to the "rocket and feather" effect – prices tend to rise sharply when input costs increase but fall slowly when input costs decrease. The short answer is load-shedding.

The commission stated that the cumulative cost throughout the food chain of adapting to load-shedding "is likely keeping food prices higher than what food input costs would imply".

Unlike its flawed August report, the commission appropriately considered the considerable cost burden of electricity disruptions and other infrastructure failures on producers and retailers.

It noted that chicken retail prices had not increased as quickly as producer prices, so retailers faced pressure. It also noted the hundreds of millions of rands producers and retailers spend on diesel generation due to South Africa's daily power cuts.

The Daily Maverick reported that in response to the Competition Commission's report, the Consumer Goods Council noted that food prices were high and would be forced even higher because of the impact of load-shedding and other factors beyond the control of producers or retailers.

Costs associated with load-shedding continue escalating as the energy crisis worsens. So far, food manufacturers and retailers have made tremendous efforts to absorb the costs without passing them on to consumers.

"However, there is a limit to how long businesses can sustain absorbing these costs without raising prices to ensure viability", the Council said.

MEET RONALD NETSHIONGOLWE - INNOVATIVE CASSAVA PROCESSOR

By: Bernard **Manganyi** & Moses **Lubinga**

Meet Ronald Netshiongolwe — an award-winning, innovative cassava processor based in Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province. He is recognised as Limpopo's best young agro-processor by the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.



Ronald has a background in mechanical engineering and experience gained in the aviation industry. However, personal inspiration drove him into the world of cassava processing. His journey began with a desire to provide diabetic-friendly dietary options for his beloved grandmother.

Equipped with skills from the aviation industry, he embarked on a mission to search for plant-based dietary products that could help relieve diabetic symptoms. In this quest, he turned his attention to cassava, a versatile crop with immense potential. Subsequently, he founded Mukapuza's (Pty) Ltd in August 2020 with a passion for contributing towards eradicating food insecurity by manufacturing highly nutritious food for communities in need.

In 2021, Mukapuza's innovative plant-based products garnered public attention, generating

buzz across social media, especially on Twitter. This success opened doors to a business partnership with Pheladi Chiloane (another agricultural entrepreneur), marking a pivotal moment in his entrepreneurial journey.

Ronald's enterprise is affiliated with the Innovation Hub based in Pretoria, which provides invaluable support. His prospects look promising as he will soon relocate to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) facility, where he will have access to advanced processing equipment and infrastructure.

Ronald's commitment extends beyond processing cassava, given that he empowers local farmers by teaching them the intricacies of cassava processing. This empowerment instils a sense of responsibility and encourages farmers to invest more effort in ensuring high-quality post-harvest handling.



** Mr Ronald Netshiongolwe*

Despite low sales currently, Ronald's business model involves purchasing fresh cassava tubers from a group of farmers in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province. This cooperative approach fosters commitment and incentivises increased cassava production.

The current focus is on selling cassava starch to manufacturers who use it as a thickening agent in several products, including chilli sauces and other processed foodstuffs. His market presence covers Gauteng and Limpopo provinces, with Gauteng holding a significant market share of the sales.

Looking ahead, he envisions diversifying his product range, which includes dehydrated tubers, starch, and flour. However, given the potential competition with wheat products, he wanted to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the cassava flour market.

Moreover, his entrepreneurial spirit continues beyond cassava products. He is also researching biodegradable plastics made from cassava starch, thus demonstrating his commitment to positively impacting the environment.

Amid his forward-thinking business initiatives, Ronald faces challenges that hinder his enterprise growth. Logistics remain a significant obstacle, as reliance on courier services is very expensive due to a lack of economies of scale among cassava farmers. Expansion and increased support from local farmers could alleviate this challenge.

Furthermore, Ronald lacks official accreditation for the use of cassava flour and starch. Obtaining this certification could enhance the legitimacy of his products, open doors for market expansion, and boost consumer confidence. Conclusively, Ronald's story reminds us that entrepreneurship is not just about business—it is about passion, perseverance, and the profound impact one can have in a community.

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A TALE OF TURNING **DREAMS** INTO REALITY

By: Naledi **Radebe** & Khathutshelo **Rambau**

“Look for opportunities rather than waiting for them to come knocking,” says 23-year-old Ramokone Sannah Kwakwa. Ramokone studied public affairs at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and is currently enrolled at the Gordon Institute of Business Sciences (GIBS).

She established a poultry farm called “The New Dawn” in Mmotong, Seshego. Farming began in her backyard, and Ramokone has since acquired one hectare of land from the Moletjie Traditional Council to expand her production.



** Ms Ramokone Sannah Kwakwa*

The farm initiative began in 2020 with 100 broiler chickens, growing to 1 500 and has since been scaled down to 500 and added layer production. Ramokone has persevered despite facing numerous challenges, such as high input costs, load-shedding and the threat of avian influenza.

She has received assistance in the form of advisory and training from the National Youth Development Academy (NYDA) and Polokwane municipality.

Ramokone supplies the informal market, such as resellers, households within her community, and a Shisanyama and uses social media platforms to market her produce. She employs four part-time workers.



** Broiler ready for the market*

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BIRD FLU

LEADING TO EGG SHORTAGES AND PRICE RISES

By: Francois Baird

Bird flu outbreaks are causing egg shortages and higher prices in South Africa, potentially impacting poultry meat prices in the coming weeks.

Avian influenza (bird flu) is exacerbating retail price increases of South African chicken and eggs. Bird flu outbreaks on layer farms have already resulted in egg shortages in some areas, with prices rising. Broiler producers have been less significantly impacted thus far, and there have not been any shortages. However, according to poultry veterinarian Dr Shan Bisschop, this could change within the next month or so.

In an interview with AgriOrbit, Dr Bisschop stated that a new bird flu strain, H7N6, was spreading rapidly and more lethal than prior strains. While consumers have noted declines in egg availability, Bisschop indicated that poultry meat consumers will begin seeing impacts of this new strain *“within four to six weeks”*.

Dr Abongile Balarane, CEO of the layer division of the SA Poultry Association (SAPA), told the publication that the country had lost approximately 25% of its typical flock of around 27 million birds. He noted that the industry did not yet know what to expect from the new H7 strain. *“Remember this is a new strain in South Africa and we are all currently learning about it. Usually, H5N1 strains begin to disappear as warmer weather approaches, but we remain uncertain about what will happen with H7,”* Dr Balarane said.



** Eggs (Photo: pixabay.com)*

Izaak Breitenbach, head of SAPA's broiler division, stated that while South Africa's commercial poultry sector's biosecurity was of a high standard, avian influenza was highly infectious. *“The virus can enter a cage via a single dust particle, so it spreads incredibly easily. Even if poultry houses stand 100 metres apart, that proximity allows the virus to jump between structures”*.

Breitenbach added that wild birds roosting on poultry house roofs presented their greatest challenge. *“If that bird loses just one feather, it could potentially float into the poultry house and cause disease transmission”*.

Breitenbach said there would be no chicken meat shortage, as the local industry could supply most demand. However, he anticipated import volumes might increase should shortfalls arise.



UMKHANYAKUDE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY GOAT FARMERS DISCOVER THE BENEFITS OF LIVESTOCK MARKETING

By: Nonhlanhla **Gwamanda**

The goat market is expected to grow as worldwide consumer demands continue to change, with goat meat (chevon) having lower fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol content but a higher polyunsaturated fatty acid content. Changing consumption trends worldwide offer poor rural goat farmers the potential to scale up production and enhance their capability to enter formal markets.

South Africa is a relatively small goat-producing country globally. The Eastern Cape has the highest number of goats (38%), followed by Limpopo with 18% and KwaZulu-Natal with the lowest at 13%. These three provinces are regarded as the largest goat producers in the country, with approximately 70% of the total production.

In South Africa, commercial farmers specialise in Boer and Angora goats. At the same time, smallholder producers farm indigenous goats within their communal systems mainly for household consumption. Indigenous goats represent approximately 65% of goats in the country, according to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD).

Livestock, including goats, forms part of the livelihood portfolios of many of the world's rural smallholder farmers. However, as is typical, the lack of reliable markets is one of their main constraints. As a result, they end up keeping livestock until meat quality deteriorates or the animals die.

Additionally, due to a lack of expertise, these farmers produce livestock using traditional/indigenous methods, often failing to comply with market food safety standards, preventing their market participation.

For many smallholder farmers globally, livestock such as cattle, goats and sheep essentially serve as “four-legged bank accounts”, allowing hundreds of millions of ‘unbanked’ poor to save, build assets and insure themselves against shocks like crop failures, accidents and illnesses.

South Africa is no exception. A case in point is the small town of Jozini, which falls under the uMkhanyakude District Municipality in Northern KwaZulu-Natal. It is one of the towns under the Jozini Local Municipality, the most populated within uMkhanyakude, with around 198 215 people.

Jozini Local Municipality is predominantly rural, with 89% of the population residing in rural areas under different traditional authorities. Its rural nature makes it well-suited to agriculture. One agricultural economic opportunity in the area is commercialising many residents' assets, notably goats. Through its market



** An uMkhanyakude rural buck*

facilitation programme, the NAMC collaborated with the Jozini Local DALRRD office to facilitate market access for 22 goat farmers in Jozini, Mkhuze and surrounding areas.

A group of predominantly male and elderly farmers specialise in producing indigenous, cross-bred Boer goats and various field crops and vegetables. They collectively have 2 800 goats, with each farmer owning 35 to 400 goats. The identified market was the KwaZulu-Natal Qhakaza Goats Association, which buys, slaughters, processes and sells goat meat under the Incoso Goat Meat brand at various retailers nationwide.

The KwaZulu-Natal Qhakaza Goats Association also provides farmer animal health and management training to improve herds and ensure goats meet market requirements, representing progress towards

improving the Jozini farmers' ability to make a livelihood from farming.

With relatively low goat meat supplies nationally and prospects of growing demand due to changing consumer lifestyles, areas like Jozini could experience significant goat production growth if the proper support is provided.

The farmers indicated a lack of access to land and market information. The Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP) encourages government and private sector commitment through structured partnerships to more deliberately address farmers' needs, such as those in Jozini. Through such assistance, smallholder farmers countrywide can realise livestock marketing benefits and move beyond viewing goats as merely “four-legged bank accounts”.



LOVE AND PASSION FOR CROPS: A YOUNG FEMALE FARMER FROM GEMARKE VILLAGE

By: Khathutshelo **Rambau**

Mosibudi Trading Enterprise is in Gemark Village, Polokwane, under the Blouberg Municipality. The farm primarily cultivates potatoes in rotation with spinach, mustard, cabbage, and butternut.

Matome is a director of Mosibudi Trading Enterprise. She holds a Diploma in Ornamental Horticulture from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and was awarded Best Young Female Farmer, which she attributes to the hard work of her brother, parents, and five part-time youth workers from the village who greatly contribute to operations.

She completed a horticultural internship in 2016 and returned home to pursue her passions for farming and self-employment. Average potato yields on the farm reach 50-60 tonnes per hectare. Matome views her produce as high quality due to meticulous soil preparation and crop care.

The farm has been part of Potatoes South Africa's small grower programme since 2021. Matome has received crucial support from various partners. The local Department of Agriculture supplied vouchers for production inputs. Potatoes South Africa funded critical agricultural needs such as seeds, pesticides and fertilisers. Further assistance from De Beers Mine included fencing, electricity, a borehole, centre pivot irrigation, spraying equipment, fertiliser spreaders and storage containers.

Despite her achievements, Matome faces challenges, including lack of a tractor and implements, load-shedding interrupting watering schedules, and limited access to markets like FreshMark and Woolworths.

Social media has provided Matome an effective avenue for promoting her produce while enhancing visibility to potential funding opportunities



** Ms Mokgobu Matome Cynthia at a transformation symposium*



** Packaged potato harvest*



THE MBIZANA RURAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (RED) HUB

By: Phelelani Sibiya

The Mbizana Rural Enterprise Development (RED) Hub under the Sivuka Sonke Bizana secondary cooperative is one of five RED hubs established by the Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency (ECRDA) in 2015. It is another of ECRDA's RED hubs meant to create a platform for economic activity in rural areas. The RED hubs aim to increase rural incomes through increased primary production, processing capacity, and market linkages. Government provides funding for economic infrastructure and mechanisation, with matching contributions from private partners.

The RED Hub has an executive board comprising seven non-executive, independent directors elected among farmers over three years. It is supported by a representative from the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR), local municipality and ECRDA as the implementing agent.

Four board sub-committees are set up to ensure representation from all primary cooperatives dealing directly with operational issues in mechanisation, milling, sales, marketing, finance and human resources.

Operations

The Mizana RED hub is meant to be financially supported through sales from milling, packaging, and mechanisation services as primary revenue sources. It earns income and benefits from mechanisation contracting, milled and processed product sales, and equipment rentals to trading partners operating from the site. Transportation and delivery contracting also contribute to the hub's income generation.

From 2016 to 2022, the hub earned much of its income from milling and mechanisation. However, this income declined from R11 million in 2018 to R1.67 million in 2022.

Challenges faced by the Mbizana RED hub include:

- » high production costs due to electricity, salaries, and inputs like fertilisers and chemicals;
- » occasional lack of governance capacities and technical expertise;
- » low primary production volumes to feed mills;
- » delays cementing partnerships with private traders;
- » continuous decrease in government funding, and
- » ageing, high-maintenance mechanisation equipment.



** Some featured hub assets*

Despite these challenges, the RED hub completed the potato warehouse construction in 2023, accompanied by acquiring a new potato washer machine. Additionally, five tractors and implements were purchased with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). Other partners include seed companies like PANNAR, which recently donated 110 bags of white maize seeds.

On 16 August 2023, milling operations resumed after more than six months of non-operation. ECRDA is hopeful that existing partnerships will solidify, and new ones develop to sustain the Mbizana RED hub.



** Hub's products, processed and packaged*



** A hub's truck in action*

THE **FORT COX COLLEGE** CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INCUBATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (CEIRD)

By: Sanelise Tafa

On 1 June 2023, Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Training Institute (FCAFTI) initiated an Entrepreneurship Incubation Programme (EIP), an initiative envisaged by the newly appointed principal and chief executive officer of FCAFTI. Twenty graduate interns signalled interest in participating. Of these, fifteen receive stipends from the AgriSETA and five from the Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR).

The FCAFTI registered the non-profit “Centre for Entrepreneurship, Incubation and Rural Development (CEIRD)” to oversee implementation. CEIRD received a revolving R1 million fund from the institute to launch operations.

The twenty graduate interns have formed two groups currently in the registration process to be established as cooperatives. A project manager was appointed to direct current and future centre activities. Participants developed a business plan proposing mixed farming - mainly poultry (layers and broilers) and vegetable production. The FCAFTI allocated two hectares for vegetable cultivation.

Layers have been purchased. Participants began egg sales to staff and surrounding communities.

Broiler production will soon commence as day-old chick and feed procurement processes are underway. Initial 1 000-bird cycles are expected to increase following additional market penetration.

On the fields, an irrigation system has been acquired. It is currently being installed by EIP graduate interns, after which vegetable production will commence.

Notably, DRDAR and other agriculture stakeholders previously emphasised entrepreneurship through farm exposure programs but excluded decision-making involvement. FCAFTI employed a distinct approach, empowering participants as owners under mentorship. This pilot phase aims to learn and advance while engaging partners for CEIRD collaboration.



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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