

agripreneur

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PREFACE

Welcome to the 42nd edition of the Agripreneur, a publication produced by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) to create a platform where agripreneurs and farmers, primarily smallholders, can share their knowledge, skills, challenges, experiences and insights. This publication is intended to assist smallholders to learn from other agripreneurs, develop strategies, adopt models and become part of the value chain by marketing commodities and products that meet market standards and are safe for consumption. The Agripreneur also promotes and profiles aspects of South African agriculture as a brand. Each edition features compelling stories that aim to persuade readers to #LoveRSAAgric.

IN THIS 42ND EDITION OF AGRIPRENEUR, WE HAVE FEATURED THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

1. Editor's note
2. Agri-highlights
3. Agri-tourism for Kids
4. The Rise of a Young Cabbage Farmer in the Eastern Cape
5. A Young Farmer's Mission is to Feed and Empower His Community.
6. Reality of Climate Change on Citrus Production: A Story of a Smallholder Farmer in the North West Province

CONTRIBUTORS:



CREDITS

Manager: Smallholder Market Access Unit
Kayaletu Sotsha

PRODUCTION TEAM

Editor in Chief:
Matume Maila

Compiled by:
Matume Maila

Graphic Designer:
Rodney Khoza

RESOURCES

Cover Story Images:
Supplied

Images:
NAMC
Freepik
Unsplash

CONTACT US

Physical Address:
Hillcrest Office Park, 177 Dyer Road,
Barbet Place, Ground Floor, Hillcrest,
Pretoria.

Tel:
(012) 341 1115

Email:
info@namc.co.za

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Matume Maila

Ladies and gentlemen, I am excited to present to you the latest edition of the Agripreneur, our quarterly publication. The Agripreneur Issue 42 features farmer profiles, success stories, challenges, experiences, guidance, and development projects for the smallholder sector.

In this Issue, we covered agricultural trends from July to September 2025. One of the edition's highlights is the resilience of South African agricultural exports

to the United States of America during the second quarter of 2025. South Africa's exports have not only remained competitive but have also increased in the second quarter of 2025 to US\$161 million, up by 26% from the same period in 2024.

Issue 42 also provides a snapshot of the successful 62nd annual Agricultural Economists Association of South Africa (AEASA) Conference hosted from the 29th of September to 1st of October 2025 at Irene, Pretoria. Furthermore, the issue provided insights regarding fruit flies, which are still one of the most damaging pests endangering Africa's agriculture, trade, and food security.

In addition, this Issue features the signing of a landmark Memorandum of Intent (MoI) between South Africa and Brazil along with the MoI signed by Minister John Steenhuisen, and the Japanese Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to strengthen the economic relations between South Africa and Japan.

This edition incorporates insights into the Agri-tourism for kids. It includes a profile of a young cabbage farmer from the Eastern Cape, and a young graduate farmer from the Limpopo province. It ends by sharing the impact of climate change on smallholder farmers, with an example of a smallholder citrus producer from the North West province.

Enjoy the reading!

Matume Maila



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“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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AGRI-HIGHLIGHTS:

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025

THE 2025 ANNUAL AEASA CONFERENCE



hosting workshops on market concentration and competition law in agriculture.

Dr. Sifiso Ntombela, the former President of AEASA, delivered the presidential speech, setting the tone for the conference and challenging delegates to begin conceptualizing research and mobilizing resources to support policymakers. During his presidential address, Dr. Ntombela raised concerns about South Africa's dual agricultural system, pointing out that the current regulatory framework does not encourage smallholder farmers to prosper in the modern agriculture sector.

The Agricultural Economists Association of South Africa hosted its 62nd annual conference from September 29 to October 1, 2025, at River Meadows Manor at Irene, Pretoria, under the theme "Market concentration and competition law in agriculture: Experience and lessons".

AEASA's 62nd annual conference was well attended by members (from the public and private sectors, academia, State-Owned Entities, etc.) and invited guests. The conference

included approximately 60 groundbreaking research output accepted as contributed papers for oral presentation and 18 poster exhibitions. The participants got an opportunity to interact with the authors and provide useful feedback to improve the research for publication and informing policy makers.

The 2025 AEASA conference began on a high note, with the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), and the University of Limpopo (UL)

The 62nd annual conference of AEASA was also an elective conference at which new association leadership was elected, with Prof Jan Hlongwane emerging as the new President and Prof Granny Senyolo joining as an additional member of AEASA executive.

The three-day conference closed with a highly informative plenary discussion on the G20 agriculture sherpa track.

For more on AEASA conference click [here](#).

SOUTH AFRICAN FARMERS SEE STRONG US EXPORTS PERFORMANCE IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2025

The South African agricultural sector has demonstrated remarkable growth and resilience in the face of significant global trade headwinds, Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen notes as recent data shows South Africa's exports have not only remained competitive, but have increased in the second quarter of 2025 to US\$161 million, up by 26% from the same period in 2024.

"However, it is important to examine this performance with a forward-looking perspective. The recent imposition of a 30% tariff on our exports by the United States (of America) has brought to light the urgent need

to diversify our export markets- and enhance our competitiveness to mitigate the economic impact of losing preferential trade." Minister Steenhuisen says the results of the second quarter of 2025 also highlight how urgent it is to resolve the ongoing tariff talks with the USA. "Our capacity to gain steady, long-term access to this important market continues to be a top priority," he added.

The figures speak for themselves. In the first quarter of 2025, South African agricultural exports to the USA were US\$118 million, up by 19% year-on-year. "This growth is not merely a statistical anomaly, but a reflection of a bountiful harvest, a surge in high-quality produce, and the efficient

operation of our ports. The products leading this charge include a variety of fruits such as citrus, grapes, apples and pears, as well as nuts and wine." "As we continue to engage in diplomatic negotiations and work towards a more favourable trade agreement, the focus remains on ensuring that our farmers and exporters can continue to thrive in the global marketplace, securing the future of our agricultural sector," Minister Steenhuisen emphasised.

The detailed announcement by the government is available [here](#).



SOUTH AFRICA AND JAPAN UNITE FOR AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY



In a significant step towards strengthening economic relations, the South African Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, and the Japanese Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries signed a Memorandum of Intent (MoI) to enhance cooperation in agriculture.

The signing ceremony took place at the Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West, on the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting of the G20 Agriculture Working Group (AWG).

The MoI serves as a foundational agreement, outlining the commitment of both governments to cooperate in agricultural development, trade, and sustainability. It reflects the shared understanding that a vibrant and progressive agricultural sector is vital for food security and economic prosperity in both nations.

Minister Steenhuisen hailed the signing as a milestone. "This Memorandum of Intent is more than just a document; it is a commitment to jointly solving common problems and meeting

shared challenges. It will enable us to tap into Japan's technology and markets while positioning South African agricultural products more competitively. Importantly, we must always view these efforts through the lens of what benefits our farmers, especially smallholders, and strengthens the food security of our people." The MoI identifies several key areas of cooperation tailored to the specific needs of both countries.

For more information click [here](#).

SMALL PEST, BIG THREAT!



Fruit flies remain one of the most destructive pests threatening Africa's agriculture, trade, and food security.

At the #APPWorkshop in Durban, Mr Ntuweleni Singo, from the Directorate: Plant Health-Early Warning System, shares insights on how this tiny invader causes massive damage and why stronger surveillance is critical to protecting our food and farmers.

South Africa is currently performing fruit fly surveillance to establish the scope of the fruit fly challenge and where

more effort may be invested in terms of managing, controlling, and suppressing the widespread of the pest, which has caused economic damage.

Mr Singo urged farmers, in a video made at the APP workshop, to be on the lookout for early signs of unusual pests in their areas. He recommended farmers to notify the extension officers in their areas as soon as possible to ensure that samples are obtained to assess the sorts of pests and the treatments required for the pests under consideration.

Mr Singo advises aspiring smallholders that "it is very much

important that you always do scouting". He emphasized the necessity for smallholder farmers to check in on their farms on a regular basis and observe any suspicious pests that may be there.

Furthermore, he stated that if farmers wait to notify the appropriate authorities about the fruit fly in their area, the pest is more likely to spread and cause more damage. However, early warning and alarm will help to control the pest with fewer resources.

To watch Mr. Singo's video, click [here](#).

SEEDS OF CHANGE: SOUTH AFRICA AND BRAZIL PARTNER FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE



Minister Steenhuisen, and Brazil's Vice Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Mr Luiz De Alcantara Rua, signed a landmark Mol, ushering in a new era of agricultural cooperation between the two nations.

Similar to the Mol with Japan, the signing ceremony took place on the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting of the G20 AWG.

Minister Steenhuisen welcomed the agreement with enthusiasm. "This agreement represents more than just a formal partnership; it is a testament

John to our shared vision for a food-secure future. By combining our respective strengths, we can unlock new opportunities, advance technological innovation, and build a more resilient agricultural sector that benefits all our citizens," he said.

He explained that the Mol is a non-binding agreement that lays the foundation for enhanced cooperation to promote sustainable agricultural production and strengthen food security in both nations. "The Mol establishes an agenda of mutual advantage and common development in priority areas such as the exchange of information and expertise, technical tours,

training programmes, and joint conferences. Under this partnership, we will share best practices in sustainable agriculture, livestock farming systems, and quality assurance, ensuring both consumer safety and product integrity," Minister Steenhuisen added.

The agreement also provides for strategic trade facilitation, including trade missions and exhibitions, aimed at generating new market opportunities for agricultural products from both countries.

For more on the signing ceremony click [here](#).

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AGRI-TOURISM FOR KIDS

Christelle Van Zyl



Agri-tourism is not just for adults but can be a meaningful and fun activity for kids. By highlighting the educational, recreational, and cultural value of these experiences, you can attract families looking for something more than just a day out.

Why is agri-tourism important for kids?

Many urban kids have never visited a farm before and do not fully understand where their food comes from or how farm

life works. Agri-tourism allows them to experience this firsthand. It offers a chance to learn about responsibilities, sustainability, animal care, and even food production. These real-life skills cannot come from a textbook. A farm experience also contributes to kids' physical and mental health. Time outdoors, hands-on activities, and connecting with nature can reduce screen time, lower stress, and even improve concentration. These experiences can also support school learning, linking to subjects such as life skills, natural science, and geography.

What can you offer on your farm?

There is a wide variety of agri-tourism activities for kids. It is important to offer activities that align with your farm's image and operations. Here are some ideas:

1. A petting zoo and feeding station: Goats, chickens, ducks, rabbits, etc. any safe, friendly animals that kids can interact with.
2. U-picking operations: Let kids harvest strawberries, cherries, pumpkins, etc.

3. A farmer experience: Teach kids basic farming activities such as milking a cow, collecting eggs, or planting seeds.
4. Horse or pony rides: With the right animals and safety measures, this is always a hit.
5. Educational tours: Explain a dairy farm, organic vegetable garden tour, beekeeping, vineyard or orchard, etc.
6. Workshops: Host simple activities like cheese workshops, how to make butter, composting, seed starting and planting, farm to table cooking, water conservation, etc.

Create a safe, inclusive space: Agri-tourism can become an outdoor classroom for kids. However, there are several health and safety aspect to consider before opening your farm to kids. Create a child-friendly environment, with clear

signage, secure fences, proper supervision, etc. Train your staff in basic child first aid and be mindful of allergies, animals, and water hazards. Also make your space inclusive, for example, by including wheel-chair-accessible paths or sensory-friendly activities for kids with special needs.

How to package your offerings:

There are various ways to market your kid-friendly activities. You could:

- Offer family day packages and experiences
- Develop educational programmes for school groups
- Host birthday parties
- Run kids' holiday camps
- Sell farm-themed products like storybooks, activity books, or souvenirs

What's in it for you as a farmer?

When families plan their holidays or day trips, one of their first questions is: "What will my kids enjoy?" This is your opportunity to

stand out. Kids who have great experiences on your farm today may become loyal customers in the future. Offering activities that focus on kids can also help generate income during your off-season and provide a steady income beyond traditional farming. Education, entertainment, and family connection can become a part of your business.

Agri-tourism for kids is more than just fun and games, it is an opportunity to educate, diversify your income, and to build a future beyond agriculture. Look around your farm, see what you have to offer, stay true to your land and your culture, and consider sharing that with our next generation.

For any questions or comments, please contact: ChristelleCvanZyl@gmail.com



THE RISE OF A YOUNG CABBAGE FARMER IN THE EASTERN CAPE

Buhlebemvelo Dube



In the rolling hills of Dutywa, Eastern Cape, an area where smallholder agriculture is both a livelihood and a lifeline, a determined young farmer is rewriting the narrative of rural opportunity. Working 1.5 hectares of privately-owned land, he has transformed modest beginnings into a productive cabbage enterprise, supplying fresh, organic produce to informal markets while creating much-needed jobs.

“I started with nothing,” he recalls, “just an idea, hard work, and the hope that farming could feed my family and my community.” Six years later, his seasonal

output reaches approximately 4 000 cabbage heads, each grown without artificial inputs, using a disc harrow, buckets, and a single water tank. Without a formal irrigation system, he fetches water directly from the nearby river, a labour-intensive process that limits scale but has not dimmed his resolve.

A Business Rooted in Community Impact

The farm’s operations generate livelihoods for one permanent worker and ten seasonal labourers, a notable contribution in a municipality where youth unemployment exceeds 50%. His cabbages, sold mainly through informal channels such as street vendors and spaza shops, ensure

that affordable, nutritious food reaches households across Dutywa and surrounding villages.

Yet his ambitions extend beyond current market boundaries. He aspires to supply formal retailers and institutional buyers, where consistent quality and larger orders could stabilise income and enable expansion. Achieving this, however, hinges on bridging critical infrastructure gaps, particularly irrigation and water storage. “An irrigation system is not just equipment,” he explains. *“It’s the difference between one harvest a year and multiple choice, between surviving and truly thriving.”*

Challenges and Resilience in Equal Measure

While some input support has been received in the form of fertiliser, seedlings, and a water tank, the farm’s growth potential remains constrained by manual irrigation and limited mechanization. Climate variability poses another challenge, with drier seasons making river access more unreliable. Still, cash flow remains stable, and he sees an opportunity in embracing digital tools. Social media, he believes, could connect him with both

customers and investors:

“I want the world to see what we are doing here, it’s small now, but it has the potential to be big.”

His proudest achievement is not simply the tonnage sold, but the role his farm plays in uplifting his community. Over 20 tonnes of cabbage are produced annually, ensuring that fresh produce is available locally while injecting income into the village economy. The farm also stands as an example for other young people contemplating agriculture: ***“The future of agriculture belongs to us, the young farmers. Challenges will come, but if you keep planting, you’ll keep harvesting both food and opportunity.”***

Stories like this align with broader priorities under the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP) and the Department of Agriculture’s Youth in Agriculture initiatives, which emphasise smallholder irrigation, market access, and enterprise scaling. With targeted investment in irrigation systems and infrastructure, farmers like him could move from subsistence-oriented operations to high-value market participation, contributing to rural employment and food security on a larger scale. As Dutywa’s cabbage fields stretch toward the horizon, they carry more than green leaves; they hold a vision for resilient, youth-led agriculture that can feed communities, create jobs, and inspire the next generation of Agripreneurs.



A YOUNG FARMER'S MISSION TO FEED AND EMPOWER HIS COMMUNITY

Khathutshelo Rambau

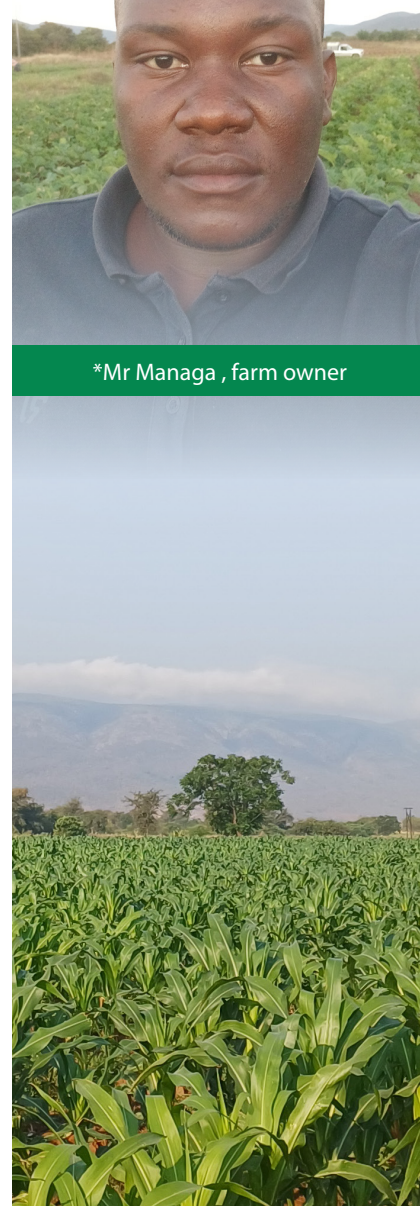


*Baby Marrows

Mr. Funzani Managa is a young graduate farmer who holds a National Diploma in Financial Management from Rabali village in the Limpopo province. He owns two farms, Rabali Farm Services and Pat Farm Services, totalling 16 hectares. He grows maize and vegetables such as butternut, tomatoes, baby marrows and cabbage.

Mr. Managa's Farms began operations in 2020. He inherited the land and all the resources from his father, who sparked his passion for farming. At present, he grows fresh veggies and maize. He produces his own brand of B-strong maize meal, which is made from the maize.

He produces about 100 tons of maize, 1 000 heads of cabbages, 6 000 bags of 6 kg butternuts, and 4 500 bags of 4 kg baby marrows and strives for the best quality. He



supplies the bulk of his produce to the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market. He donates some of his fresh vegetables



*Maize field

and maize meal to local schools and charities as part of giving back to the community.

More than 50 part-time employees now have jobs, courtesy of Rabali and Pat farm services. Managa intended to hire more people due to the

prevalence of unemployment in Rabali and surrounding communities.

The Department of Agriculture assisted by providing fertilizer, for which he is appreciative. In the future, he plans to expand the farm by acquiring more land. He is

also concerned about the high cost of power, which affects the watering routine.

His message to aspiring farmers is to focus on farming to provide enough food for the country while simultaneously reducing poverty and unemployment.

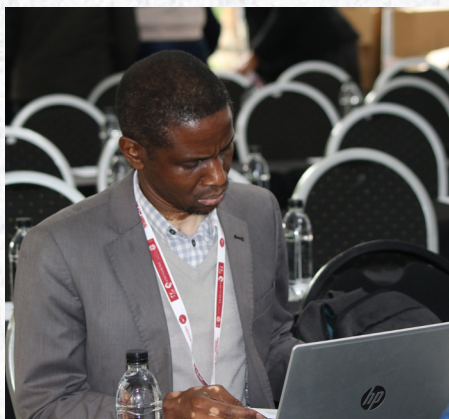


*Maize Meal



AEASA 62nd Annual Conference

COLLAGE



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REALITY OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON CITRUS PRODUCTION: A STORY OF A SMALLHOLDER FARMER IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Bernard Manganyi and Nokuthula Khulu



*A 10kW solar system that powers irrigation



*Frost covers to protect young trees

M eet Mr. Isaac Kemorwe from Kamo Citrus Farming from Mahikeng, North West province. He began farming in 2021, planting about 10 hectares of oranges, with each hectare containing approximately 550 trees.

At a cost of R75 per tree, the original planting cost (excluding land preparation) was around R412 500. In 2022, one hectare of his orchard was affected by frost, resulting in a direct loss of approximately R41 250.

The following year, frost again damaged his farm, affecting two hectares of the orchard. This calamity caused his losses in 2023 to double from the previous year. While some of the remaining trees survived, their growth and output were considerably slowed, resulting in a harvest delay of at least three years.

The financial consequences of these setbacks have been substantial. With no collateral to get a loan, the farmer is unable to obtain formal credit and hence relies significantly on government and industry assistance. When asked how he dealt with these losses, he indicated that he utilized money saved for his son's university fees to purchase frost coverings. These coverings cost around R13.50 per five meters, discounting the additional labour necessary for installation.

To maintain his revenue flow, he expanded into short-cycle cash crops including cabbage, spinach, butternut squash, and watermelons, which he sells at local produce markets. This method has enabled him to cover part of his expenses. He also invested in solar energy for irrigation, specifically a 10kW solar system with solar panels, inverters, and batteries which has reduced his dependency on the local electricity grid and greatly lowered expenditure on energy.

However, frost is not his only challenge. He also faces heatwaves and strong winds, which add to the risks of citrus farming under climate change. When asked about possible solutions, he mentioned that netting can provide the best long-term protection against frost. Although it is expensive, he is prepared to start with a small portion of his orchard and expand gradually. He prefers this option because he cannot afford annual insurance premiums.

Despite his setbacks, he remains hopeful. Soil tests confirm that his land is well-suited for citrus production, and he believes that with tailored support from government and industry, his farm can recover. He emphasized that support should be based on proper needs assessments, as the past assistance he received was not aligned with his actual needs.

Beyond his personal struggles, he also highlighted the potential socioeconomic impact of his farm. His community suffers from high unemployment, as there are no factories or mines nearby. He believes that growing his farm can create much-needed local jobs. Currently, the only nearby farm doing well is a poultry operation, leaving him with the added pressure of being one of the few potential job creators in the area.

When asked about his most urgent need, he was clear: he requires capital to erect netting on about five hectares and financial support to sustain his cash flow for at least three years.

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.

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