

# agripreneur

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INSPIRING AGRICULTURAL STORIES



MR. NTANDOYENKOSI  
NDLOVU: **REVOLUTIONIZING**  
AGRICULTURE AS THE **2023**  
**GOAT FARMER OF THE YEAR**

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Department:  
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# THE AGRIPRENEUR QUARTERLY:

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

## PREFACE

Welcome to the 37<sup>th</sup> edition of the Agripreneur publication from the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). The NAMC aims 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. 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.

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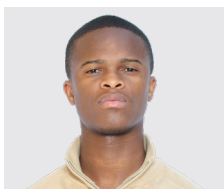
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

**This 37<sup>th</sup> edition of the Agripreneur provides a snapshot of some of the agricultural sector's dominating news stories, from April to June 2024, beginning by Former Minister Thoko Didiza's reflection on her legacy. In other key highlights, President Ramaphosa promises effective government with the new cabinet formed by the government of National Unity, while the rest highlight the need for inclusive growth of the agriculture sector, which is underpinned by improved traceability and quality assurance of meat exports, support through private-public partnerships, infrastructure development, and curbing stock theft. A 30-year celebration for one of the agriculture sector's research engines, the Agriculture Research Council (ARC) is also covered. The food inflation's downward trend continues, while South Africa's citrus industry intensifies its battle against the European Union (EU) in relation to the EU's citrus import regulations.**

The Agri-tourism series continues with part 7, which covers educational experiences, with farm tours being the most comprehensive. The Mohair Empowerment Trust (MET) series continues with Part 3, which expands on the essential components of mohair discussed in Part 2.

Other stories cover the lessons learned from the 2023 Avian Influenza outbreak, which had a significant impact on the South African poultry industry; the collaboration of Randwest City vegetable producers in pooling resources; and the KYTO abattoir's contribution to the socioeconomic challenges faced by the communities of Globlershoop in South Africa's Northern Cape Province.

Lastly, this edition shares the success stories of women and youth driven by passion and enjoying getting their hands dirty on the farm. We begin with part 2 of Nosipho Vuthela's quest. This is followed by inspiring story of Anna Tshirema's efforts to



Kayaletu Sotsha

produce mangos and lemons, and we conclude our coverage of these inspiring articles with the winner of the Pacesetter Award for Goat Farmer of the Year 2023.

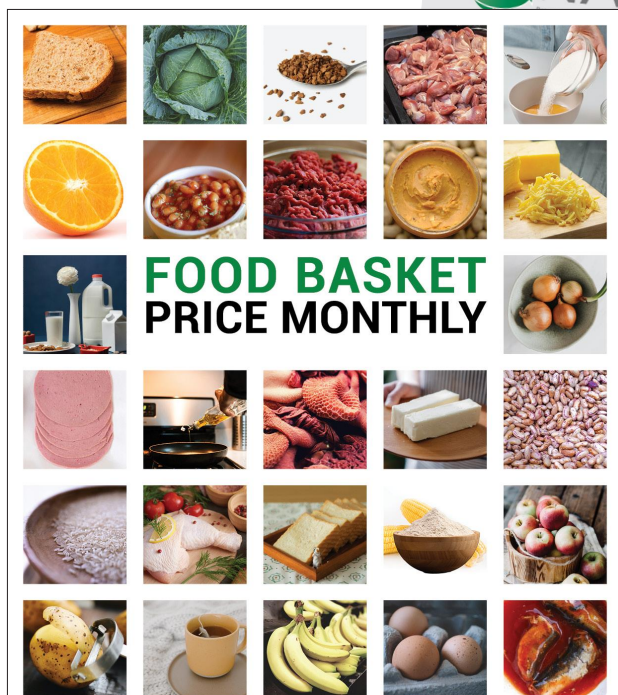
Enjoy the reading!

*Kayaletu Sotsha*

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL MARKETING COUNCIL

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possible action that could be  
taken when national and  
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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:

## APRIL – JUNE 2024



### 6<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION

#### End of term: Minister Didiza reflects on her legacy

As she prepares to leave office ahead of the upcoming elections, agriculture minister Thoko Didiza reflects on her legacy, highlighting her achievements in enhancing market access, supporting small-scale farmers, and ensuring food security. Her tenure saw the development of the Agricultural and Agro-processing Master Plan, expanded global markets for South African produce, and policies targeting land allocation for young people, women, and people with disabilities. Didiza also addressed climate change challenges by improving seed varieties and promoting climate-smart agricultural practices. Despite the progress, some challenges remain, particularly in completing ongoing projects and adapting agriculture to new climate-related issues.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za)

\* Photo: [Leon Barnardt/Food For Mzansi](#)

### 7<sup>TH</sup> ADMINISTRATION

#### Ramaphosa promises effective government with new cabinet

In President Cyril Ramaphosa's newly announced Cabinet, DA leader John Steenhuisen has been appointed as the Minister of Agriculture. This appointment comes as part of a broader Government of National Unity, which includes members from various political parties. Ramaphosa emphasized the need for effective governance and skilled leadership to address the country's challenges, including those in the agriculture sector.

Source: [sowetanlive.co.za](https://www.sowetanlive.co.za)

### EXPORT

#### Red meat export boom: Can new-era farmers join the feast?

At the 2024 Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba in Pretoria, experts led by Agbiz chief economist Wandile Sihlobo discussed opportunities and challenges in the red meat industry. Dewald Olivier, CEO of Red Meat Industry Services,

emphasized the importance of involving emerging and small-scale farmers by enhancing animal health, implementing traceability systems, and creating export opportunities. Dr. Sifiso Ntombela highlighted the government's efforts to review industrial and competition policies to benefit young farmers. Commodity analyst Khani Baloyi stressed the rising global demand for high-value red meat products and the critical need for traceability and quality assurance in meat exports.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za)

### INVESTMENTS

#### Old Mutual partners to boost agricultural growth in SA

Old Mutual has partnered with the Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry to boost South Africa's agricultural growth by providing financial support and digital tools to rural farmers. This collaboration aims to create an enabling environment for businesses and stakeholders to flourish. Key initiatives include the Old Mutual Masisizane Fund, which offers micro-business loans and support to underprivileged entrepreneurs, and the introduction of Old Mutual SMEgo, a digital platform designed to meet the needs of agricultural SMEs. The partnership seeks to address financial challenges and promote sustainable agricultural development in underserved communities.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za)

### CRIME

#### Rural crisis as livestock theft bleeds farmers dry

Livestock theft in South Africa is a severe issue, causing significant economic and emotional distress for farmers. Despite technological advancements aiding in its decline, rural communities, particularly in



the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, remain heavily affected. Farmers face substantial losses, with the crime costing the economy around R1.4 billion annually. Experts recommend preventative measures like branding and tracking livestock to combat theft. Additionally, engagement with provincial departments for livestock branding, which is relatively inexpensive, is crucial for identifying and recovering stolen animals.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za)

## CELEBRATION

### Cultivating success: ARC marks 30 years of agricultural innovation

Celebrating 30 years of innovation, the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) has significantly enhanced South Africa's agricultural productivity, sustainability, and resilience. Through its 10 specialized campuses, the ARC has pioneered research in areas like seedless lemon development, indigenous vegetables, genetic resources management, and livestock welfare, benefiting both commercial and smallholder farmers.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za)

## FARMER'S SUPPORT

### Land Bank boosts farmers with R980m support

Land Bank, recovering from a 2020 default, has disbursed nearly R1 billion in grants and loans to support South African farmers, as outlined by CEO Themba Rikhotso at the 2024 Nampo Harvest Day. The bank's turnaround strategy focuses on revising its funding, commercial, delivery, credit risk, and operating models. Collaboration between public and private sectors is emphasized for agricultural revival, with Land Bank's efforts aimed at mitigating

risks and ensuring resilient support for the sector to boost job creation and food security amidst ongoing challenges.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za)

## TECHNOLOGY

### Tech-based ear tags target livestock theft in Eastern Cape

The Eastern Cape government introduced the livestock identification and traceability system (LITS) in Tsolo, aiming to enhance cattle security and combat stock theft across 120 farming enterprises. This technology-based ear tag system, which will benefit 30,000 cattle, allows for individual animal identification and owner verification. While some farmers expressed concerns about the visibility and potential removal of the tags, the initiative represents a significant step towards integrating modern technology with traditional agricultural practices to secure livestock and improve prosecution rates for theft.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za)

## INFLATION

### Relief for consumers as food inflation eases

The reduction in food inflation to 11.8% from April's 13.9% offers relief to South African consumers facing economic challenges. This improvement, attributed to better market conditions, saw notable price decreases in key staples like maize and sunflower, though prices for some vegetables like onions and potatoes increased due to demand spikes. Improved supply led to lower fruit prices, such as oranges and bananas. Experts expect continued deceleration in food inflation in the latter half of the year, supported by stable domestic grain and oilseed supplies, despite the potential impact of load shedding and a weaker rand on

imported goods prices.

Source: [iol.co.za](https://www.iol.co.za)

## EVENTS

### Agbiz Congress: Agriculture needs infrastructure upgrade to thrive

At the Agbiz Congress, industry leaders emphasized the urgent need for infrastructure upgrades in South Africa to support economic and social progress. Discussions focused on enhancing water management, ports, and railways, highlighting the critical role these improvements play in driving growth and job creation. Challenges include securing funding for new dams and addressing port backlogs, with calls for increased public-private partnerships and streamlined infrastructure management. Delegates underscored that collaboration and effective planning are essential for overcoming current obstacles and achieving long-term sustainability.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za)

## TRADE

### Citrus trade battle intensifies: SA gov't challenges EU regulations

South Africa is challenging the EU's citrus import regulations at the World Trade Organization, arguing that measures against citrus black spot and false codling moth are unscientific and harmful to the local economy, jeopardizing thousands of jobs. The government and Citrus Growers Association seek to establish adjudication panels, emphasizing the importance of the EU market for South African citrus exports. They contend that the EU's regulations are not based on scientific evidence and are excessively restrictive, negatively impacting the profitability and sustainability of the citrus industry.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za)

# PART 7: EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

By: Christelle Van Zyl

*Following Part 6, which discussed outdoor recreational activities and attractions, this section explores educational experiences.*

**T**he most comprehensive educational offering is a farm tour. The farmer, a family member, or an employee can guide visitors around the farm. This authentic experience allows tourists to observe the day-to-day activities firsthand. The tour does not need to cover the entire farm; it can focus on a specific aspect. For instance, it might showcase the vineyard, wine cellar, orchard, garden, nursery, plantations, horse stables, or milking parlour.

Additional educational experiences focusing on farm-produced beverages may include wine, beer, and tea tastings, as well as food-and-beverage pairing sessions. History also offers valuable learning opportunities, which farms can share through historical memorials, battlefield routes, monuments or on-site museums. As mentioned in previous instalments of this series, utilise your available resources. The unique history of your farm and its agricultural products will shape the educational experiences you can offer visitors.



Ideally, all agri-tourism farms should offer some form of educational experience to inform visitors about various aspects of farming. There are three main advantages for farmers who incorporate education:

1. **Sharing passion with others.** Farmers have a unique opportunity to impart their wealth of information as the individuals most knowledgeable about their farm's operations.
2. **Connecting with customers.** Direct communication allows farmers to build relationships and address queries, advancing agricultural transparency.
3. **Capitalising on tours by selling tickets or offering educational workshops.** Additionally, farmers can sell farm products after the tour.

Identifying the target audience is likely the most important consideration (e.g., families, students, adults, seniors, and school groups). The audience selection influences the tour content, learning style, length, difficulty, pricing structure, and marketing efforts. It is essential to consider which part(s) of the farm to include, assuming liability and accessibility. Another crucial aspect is the tour guide, who must be knowledgeable about the farm and agricultural activities, able to interact with tourists and offer an authentic farm experience.

An educational farm experience provides tourists with a firsthand look at a farming operation, expanding their knowledge whilst fostering an appreciation for the industry. Through interactive tours and authentic experiences, farmers can share their passion and expertise.

# PART 3: ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF MOHAIR (CONT'D)

By: Lauren Moore & Beauty Mokgwamme

*The third instalment in this series delves further into the essential components of mohair, covering regenerative agriculture, education and training, mohair characteristics, harvesting, processing, and using mohair.*

## Regenerative Agriculture

**M**ohair South Africa (MSA) is committed to addressing the rapidly growing demand for fibres from regenerative sources. The industry is keenly aware of the increased interest in this aspect of production.

Regenerative agriculture has become a widely discussed topic, with many brands and retailers globally seeking to source fibres and raw materials from farms that employ a progressive approach to holistic management practices. These practices are essential as they help revitalise the soil, capture carbon emissions, increase food security and store water.

MSA supports the drive to highlight the positive impact of regenerative practices on mohair-producing properties.

As the industry body, MSA aims to facilitate regenerative agriculture, as it does for the Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS). Producers are encouraged to participate in this field, create educational tools, and contribute to the overall movement towards regenerative agriculture.



## Education and Training

The South African Mohair Growers' Association (SAMGA) and the Mohair Empowerment Trust (MET) host training days and workshops for farmers and farm workers, educating them on Angora goat handling and health.

The mohair industry employs a dedicated veterinarian, Dr Mackie Hobson, who assists with these events and is always available to producers requiring veterinary support.

With Dr Hobson's assistance, the best practice guidelines for Angora Goat Health Management were developed as manuals and videos for training. These resources have been translated into four languages commonly spoken in the mohair industry.

## Mohair Characteristics

### ▪ Lustre

Mohair's natural lustre gives garments a silky sheen, making them ideal to wear day or night.

### Climate control

Mohair breathes naturally, absorbing and releasing atmospheric moisture. It controls its own "climate" to ensure optimal comfort.

### Lightweight

Mohair fabric is luxuriously lightweight and renowned for its versatility, staying cool in summer and warm in winter.

## Non-flammable

Mohair is virtually non-flammable, keeping you safe and stylish throughout the year.

### ▪ Crease-resistant

Products from mohair possess innate elasticity, ensuring they hold their shape and resist creasing.

## Durability

Due to its pliability, mohair is rated one of the world's most durable fibres.

## Dye affinity

Mohair responds exceptionally well to dyes, retaining even the most brilliant colours over time. The process - from farm to fashion

## ▪ Shearing

Mohair fleece is clipped from Angora goats twice a year, either by hand or with electric shears. The animals are handled carefully, with protocols to ensure ethical treatment.

## Classing

Mohair is sorted into various lengths, fibre diameters and quality types. Meticulous classing adds value to the product, categorising it by fineness, from super fine to strong mohair.

## Scouring

The process involves washing the mohair to remove excess dirt and oils.



### ▪ Carding

Mohair fibres are positioned in uniform lengths, removing most vegetable matter. A sliver or coil of mohair called a carded sliver, is produced.

### Combing

The remaining vegetable matter and shorter, irregular-sized fibres are removed from the carded sliver, transforming it into a soft, luxurious mohair “top”.

### Spinning

The mohair top is converted into yarn with specified structure, thickness (yarn count) and surface. Mohair yarns are often twisted or brushed (raised) for a fluffy appearance.

### The end product

#### ▪ Dyeing

Products can be dyed after combing, spinning or weaving.

#### Weaving

Yarn is utilised to manufacture worsted (suiting fabric) or woven cloth.

#### Knitting

Yarn is machine knitted into panels for garment production. Hand-knitting yarn is sold as balls or skeins and is available in various colours, textures, and blends.

#### The mohair mark

The Mohair Mark was developed to assist consumers in selecting products containing only the highest quality natural fibre.



Displaying the Mohair Mark signifies a commitment to excellence. It represents authenticity and luxury, deserving respect and pride when worn. For more information on how Mohair South Africa can help you apply to use the Mohair Mark on your products, please contact us at [info@mohair.co.za](mailto:info@mohair.co.za)



# WHAT SOUTH AFRICA CAN LEARN FROM THE 2023 **AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAK**

By: Francois Baird

*The FairPlay movement hosted a webinar on 15 May to discuss lessons learned from the 2023 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreaks. The forum included several government representatives: Dr Adri Grobler, Chief State Veterinarian; Dr Ziyanda Majokweni-Qwalela, Deputy Director of Epidemiology, Biosecurity and Laboratory Diagnostics; and Dr Alan Kalake, Director of Epidemiology, all from the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Other participants were Mr Izaak Breitenbach, GM of the SA Poultry Association's broiler board, and Mr Francois Baird, Founder of the FairPlay movement and discussion moderator.*

**T**he discussion focused on developing higher-order solutions to persistent avian influenza outbreak issues affecting both the poultry industry and the government. Several critical points were highlighted during the conversation:

## **Critical Shortage of Veterinary Resources**

Despite the government's best efforts, South Africa faces a critical shortage of veterinarians and veterinary resources. Due to the lack of state resources, this shortage has caused delays in creating a vaccination roadmap for willing producers and forces many to bear additional costs. Employing more state veterinarians could ease the congestion in developing a vaccination programme. Furthermore, it could address the additional inspection requirements for those seeking to export their products. South Africa urgently requires more veterinary professionals to address these challenges.



## **Complex Biosecurity and Monitoring Requirements Not One Hundred Percent Effective**

The biosecurity and monitoring requirements for vaccination and

exemption from culling are overly complicated and burdensome. Dr Grobler elaborated on the virulence of certain strains, illustrating how some pathogens were endemic, thus negating the

efficacy of stringent biosecurity protocols. More effective and practical solutions were needed to lower compliance barriers—this complexity might force producers to contravene Animal Diseases statutes. The panel made it clear that the South African government subscribed to a “stamp-out” policy and had unreserved support from SAPA. However, this did not preclude the existence of other innovative solutions or approaches to the problem.

### **Government and Producer Compliance With the Animal Disease Control Act of 1984**

The South African Government currently adheres to a “stamp-out” policy—if an infected bird is detected, the entire flock is destroyed, and the poultry houses are cleaned and sterilised at a significant cost to the operator. Dr Majokweni mentioned that farmers could apply for culling exemption. The Gauteng Department of Agriculture confirmed that the ten remaining flocks that survived HPAI and applied for exemption were not shedding the virus. It was hoped their applications would be finalised promptly.

Dr Kalake made it clear that while poultry producers could apply for financial relief, no such payments were being made at the time, nor were funds available to reimburse farmers for culling their flocks. This lack of compensation could lead to producers choosing not to cull surviving birds, posing a significant risk to other flocks nationwide. Culling without reimbursement is devastating,

particularly to small farmers, as they cannot sell their product, and there is no insurance to replace the lost stock – a double loss. The additional costs of cleaning and sterilising the chicken houses and equipment are also not factored in.

During the 2023 outbreaks, producers had to cull over 9.5 million infected birds. Mr Breitenbach stated that this translated to a minimum of R9.5 billion in financial losses for the industry in just replacing their flocks – not accounting for the cost of cleaning and disposal, which were all out-of-pocket expenses for producers. He emphasised that compensating farmers for culling was critical not only to the sustainability of the industry but also to protecting South African consumers through the enforcement of the Animal Diseases Control Act.

### **Failed/unachieved Objectives on HPAI Preparedness**

Currently, no producers are able to vaccinate their flocks, and no exemption from culling has been granted. Addressing these shortcomings is crucial in preparation for another HPAI outbreak.

We gratefully acknowledge the core insights provided by our state veterinarians, which serve as an excellent basis for addressing the issues of bird flu outbreaks. In our search for higher-order solutions, further discussions with senior policymakers are necessary to strengthen the local poultry industry against future outbreaks

that waste money and cost jobs. FairPlay will continue to engage with government bodies, including the DTIC, DALRRD, Treasury and SARS, to ensure the Poultry Industry is included in policy-setting conversations. From these discussions, we aim to:

Expedite the facilitation of company compliance with culling exemptions

1. Simplify compliance with vaccination requirements, enabling producers to protect their livelihoods and flocks through immunisation
2. The establishment of an emergency fund to compensate farmers for culling infected flocks, in line with the Animal Diseases Act, was proposed. A suggestion to source this fund involved utilising the Anti-Dumping Duties charged to importers for purchasing products from dumpers.

The forum agreed that these were mission-critical considerations, and timing was crucial; avian influenza threatens all South Africans, not just poultry producers. Empowering the industry to take care of itself is vital, as it cannot be expected to look after others otherwise. South Africa’s poultry sector strives to produce the most cost-effective protein possible. Unnecessary and avoidable complications caused by bird flu may increase consumer costs whilst wreaking havoc on farms.



# GROWING TOGETHER THROUGH RANDWEST CITY **VEGETABLE PRODUCERS'** SECONDARY CO-OPERATIVE

By: Staff Reporter

*The Randwest City Vegetable Producers' Secondary Co-operative was established by smallholder farmers in 2018 within Randfontein's jurisdiction in West Rand District Municipality, Gauteng Province.*

**M**embership consists of three primary co-operatives and 84 active participants. These farmers cultivate vegetables, including spinach, tomatoes, beans, and cabbage, which are particularly noteworthy. Since 2018, the co-operative has received significant government support, including tractors, trucks, and farm implements. These assets, previously held by the Rand West City Council, are being transferred to the co-operative following CIPC registration to better serve local farmers.





*\* Some of the tractors available to the co-operative*

Co-operative members sell their produce at retail and national fresh produce markets, each with distinct advantages and disadvantages. Fresh produce markets accept all volumes regardless of compliance certification but rely on unpredictable demand-supply pricing mechanisms.

In contrast, retail markets offer farmers price-setting opportunities, providing a more stable economic environment. However, they have stricter requirements, demanding certifications such as SA GAP and Global GAP. While some members possess these certifications, many are undergoing the audit process to obtain them, assisted by the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (GDARD).

Truck used by the co-operative  
In light of these developments, officials from the GDARDE and the

National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) have recently begun linking some co-operative members to a vegetable buyer specialising in processing. Due to its focus on processing, this market can accommodate various quality standards.

The co-operative's progression towards larger-scale commercial farming is characterised by steady advancement. Although many members still operate on a small scale, a clear shift towards commercial activities is evident. This transformation is facilitated by the co-operative's adoption of mechanisation, which significantly reduces labour requirements and time investment.

Produce packaged for the market  
Co-operative members can utilise a tractor for up to two hectares of land each, while non-members may access the service at a different rate. Transportation remains crucial

to the co-operative's operations. The government has supplied trucks to facilitate produce distribution, implementing a structured booking system for efficiency. Both members and non-members can reserve transport, pay a nominal fee, and ensure their produce reaches the market promptly, thus reducing post-harvest losses and improving market access.

The co-operative aspires to a future of self-sustainability and decreased reliance on government support. It aims to manage operations independently, maintaining produce quality and quantity whilst fostering collaboration. This vision encompasses centralised planting and harvesting, collective marketing, and a profit approach focused on dividends. Through ongoing efforts towards compliance, market growth, and self-sufficiency, the co-operative is set to transform the agricultural landscape in the West Rand, establishing a standard for other regions to emulate.



*\* Produce packaged for the market*



# THE BEACON OF HOPE

By: Phelelani Sibiya

*KYTO, a privately owned abattoir, was established in 1993 alongside the Kalahari Kid Project. Located in Groblershoop, an area known for goat production, the abattoir's proximity to farms ensures that animals are not transported over long distances, maintaining meat quality and benefiting farmers. The abattoir started as a small operation, slaughtering 100 sheep a day. It has since expanded its daily slaughter capacity to 1 600 sheep*

**T**he abattoir plays a crucial role in the surrounding community by serving all types of farmers, from small-scale and emerging to commercial operations. It sources animals from Namibia, the Northern Cape and the Free State.

KYTO is registered as an export facility for sheep and goat meat, with China as a primary destination. Exports have grown from 12 units daily to about 100 units of goat meat exported to China, and the facility intends to reach 400 units daily. Lamb is primarily exported to the Middle East. Approximately 90% of products are locally supplied to Gauteng markets, including

Checkers, Woolworths, and various small shops. The facility also produces goat and sheep hides.

As one of the largest employers in town, KYTO currently employs about 118 workers. The abattoir further supports between 200 and 400 families daily by packaging and donating intestines and other products to those struggling financially. Additionally, it operates a soup kitchen.

The abattoir also contributes to the local municipality's service delivery efforts through essential maintenance, ensuring the town has a running and uninterrupted water supply.

Additionally, it allows farmers to slaughter one animal per month free of charge for household consumption, and solar panels have been installed to mitigate the effects of load-shedding and preserve jobs.



\* Produce packaged for the market

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# FROM **GRADUATE TO AGRIPRENEUR:** NOSIPHO VUTHELA'S JOURNEY – PART 2

By: Bernard Manganyi and Dineo Chiloane

*Part 1 covered the beginning of Nosipho's journey in farming, her achievements and contribution to society by training high school learners, creating employment opportunities and donating surplus produce to those in need. Part 2 reveals the recipes for Nosipho's success. One of these is the courage to seek help. The other includes the ability and wisdom to optimise the support received.*

**B**etween 2021 and 2023, Nosipho received support from various sources, most of which were not financial but included seeds and mechanisation. These contributions reduced production costs and increased profit margins while adding to capital investment. During this period, Nosipho intensified her capital reinvestment by fencing 100 hectares, purchasing a boom sprayer and a bakkie, and constructing a storage facility for machinery and an office structure.

Support from various organisations has been instrumental, including the Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC), Mfaba Fund, Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR), Africa Seeds, Department of Agriculture,



*\* Cabbage prepared for the market*

Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Elundini Municipality, and Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA). Vuthela emphasises the importance of complying with regulations and paying taxes to secure future funding. Many people perceive agriculture

merely as planting and growing crops. However, Vuthela's story challenges this limited view. Agriculture is recognised as one of the world's most significant sectors, encompassing a vast and dynamic industry that covers primary production, processing, distribution and consumption, contributing substantially to many developing economies.

If the reader is inspired by Vuthela's journey and considering a career in agriculture, she offers these wise words: Success in agriculture requires a specific blend of characteristics. Positivity fuels passion for the work; humility fosters respect for the land; patience is essential for navigating natural cycles; a clear vision keeps one focused and hardworking. She emphasises that hard work is the key to achieving goals.

With dedication, perseverance and a love for the land, one can cultivate a bright future in agriculture. Like Nosipho Vuthela, anyone can be the one to make a difference.



*\* Cabbage prepared for the market*

# START SMALL BUT **DREAM** BIG

By: Phelelani Sibiya

*Itsha Ri Vhone General Trading, located in Mutele A, Limpopo, was established by Annah Tshirema in 2017 on land she inherited from her late husband. Faced with limited job prospects due to her educational background, Tshirema turned to farming.*

**T**he 10-hectare farm has grown significantly, with 80% of the land now under cultivation. From an initial one hectare of mango production in 2017, it expanded to seven hectares by 2022. Tshirema has diversified her crops by adding a hectare of Eureka lemons.

The enterprising farmer invested her own funds to acquire farm equipment and generated most of her income by selling tomatoes, atchar, cabbage, and clothes in a neighbouring village, particularly on social grant collection days. Her efforts have enabled her to purchase and install an irrigation system and a tractor.

Annah values her produce highly due to its excellent taste and long shelf life. She produces 30 tonnes of mangoes and 1 tonne of lemons annually, supplying these fruits to markets in Johannesburg,



*\* Eureka lemon trees on Tshirema's farm*

Pretoria, and local areas. Annah uses social media, face-to-face engagements, and the internet to market her produce.

A significant challenge she occasionally faces is the oversupply of mangoes in the markets, which leads to plummeting prices and sometimes results in unsold

produce rotting on the farm.

Over the next five years, Annah plans to expand her land to about 50 hectares, increase her mango and lemon tree numbers, and create employment opportunities. She advises aspiring farmers to conduct thorough research and plant crops in demand.



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# GOAT FARMER OF THE YEAR 2023: PACESETTER AWARDS

By: Khathutshelo Rambau

*Mr Ntandoyenkosi Ndhlovu, an Agricultural Economist and former Farm Manager in Zimbabwe's municipality of Beitbridge, aspires to improve and revolutionise African agriculture. The 36-year-old Boer goat stud breeder is registered with the South African Boer Goat Association and Stud Book.*





**N**dhlovu's 2-hectare property is situated in Vanderbijlpark, Gauteng Province. He primarily used savings to launch the farm activity. However, Ntandoyenkosi mentioned that financial resources are not the only consideration, stating, "Sometimes the capital you need is trust, not money." The farm has generated two permanent positions.

In early 2021, Ndhlovu rented out the property to pursue this endeavour. He initiated commercial breeding with ewes and two breeding bucks and incorporated the Lukas Burger's bloodline to expand stud breeding operations in early 2023. The current bloodlines originate from Lukas Burger and Hein Booysen, resulting in a mix of Pablo, Escobar, Canon, Porsche, and popcorn.

Ntandoyenkosi explained that the three most significant aspects of goat and sheep breeding are genetics, nutrition, and management. He emphasised that small-stock farmers must adhere to the illness treatment and vaccination calendar and ensure the shelter is well-ventilated and dry to avoid muddy areas. These practices, he noted, protect animals against infections such as pneumonia during the winter season.

He advises farmers to be aware of distinct body condition stages and the timing of ewe/doe breeding preparation and enzootic abortion vaccinations. Ntandoyenkosi added that farmers must understand the



\* Mr Ndhlovu attending a Royal show in 2023

concept of breeding and the technique of selecting animals with high conversion rates, growth rates, reproduction, and good length for breeding and selection. He stressed the importance of appraising animals as they grow from weaning, which helps determine which ones to maintain for breeding and which to slaughter.

Ndhlovu's target market comprises both new and experienced breeders, to whom he provides high-quality genetics to strengthen their bloodlines. He supplies farmers in South Africa annually and delivers approximately 300 goats to Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia. Mr Ndhlovu added that goat farming has become more exciting than ever, as it brings new avenues, markets, and challenges that test a farmer's readiness for commercial agriculture. He expressed enthusiasm about

collaborating with fellow farmers to breed the best stock and supply more countries, noting the high demand. This collaboration extends to frequently organising seminars, engaging in marketing activities, and sharing valuable tips on social media platforms.

### Challenges

- I. Access to finances - Farming requires significant capital investment before generating profits, making it a financially intensive activity.
- II. Veterinary services - Survival in the livestock management industry necessitates reliance on private veterinary services, which proves costly for the average farmer.
- III. Kid mortality rate - Newborn goats face a high mortality risk during the rainy season from increased parasite activity and in winter from freezing temperatures.

## Achievements

In 2021, Ntandoyenkosi earned recognition as one of the top 20 influencers in Beitbridge, Zimbabwe. He received awards for Goat Breeder, Exporter of the Year, and Male Most Promising Entrepreneur the following year. The year 2023 was his year as he scooped several awards. He participated in the Annual KwaZulu-Nalata (KZN) Royal Show in Pietermaritzburg, and one of his breeding goats came out in second place. He claimed the Farmer of the Year Award at the Matabeleland South Provincial Awards. The Continental Chapter in Tanzania honoured him as The Pacesetter Goat Farmer of the Year. Additionally, Ntandoyenkosi won Small Business of the Year at the Beitbridge Business Expo Corporate and People's Choice awards.

Ntandoyenkosi operates programmes to help young people resist drug use temptations. He also trains smallholders in goat and sheep husbandry to promote increased participation in small stock production.



\* Gatsheni boer goats



\* Accolades

His advice to young and aspiring farmers emphasises the numerous opportunities in small livestock farming. He stresses the importance of identifying target markets, researching requirements, and understanding market dynamics. Ntandoyenkosi acknowledges the challenges in the farming industry but asserts that determination, thorough research, and effective use of social media for business purposes can improve one's chances of success.

Ntandoyenkosi's vision for Gatsheni Boer Goat encompasses becoming a household name across Africa as a small stock and goat/sheep meat provider. He also aspires to develop the best infrastructure for a state-of-the-art learning centre focused on livestock breeding and breeding clubs.

# LEVY ADMINISTRATORS



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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.

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