this edition

Value Adding of Fresh Produce

Portia Phahlane

Today's farmers work hard to improve their farming livelihood and ensure its sustainability. Farmers have learnt that to grow their enterprises, they needed to move away from producing what they want, to producing what buyers want. Against this backdrop, many farmers now sell fresh produce to markets already overcrowded with the same produce - and the competition (over-supply), affects profit margins. For farmers to succeed in this environment, product differentiation is a solution to consider.

Farmers expand their market base by exploiting value adding opportunities. Value adding are extra features added to products that consumers are willing to acquire at a higher cost. Value adding takes many forms. While one farmer may just remove the excess soil and bunch his carrots, another may cut the tops, wash, sort, grade, package, brand, and have them sliced up. The second farmer took the time and effort to add something extra (adding value) to his produce, making it different and more appealing to consumers. The two farmers will receive different prices in the market simply because by adding more value gives the one a competitive advantage, resulting in higher prices. An important aspect is finding the synergy between a farmers' capacity to add value, and his ability to market the resulting product.

Adding value comes in different forms for different agricultural commodities. Basic activities that add value to agricultural fresh produce include processes like cleaning, sorting, grading, cutting, packaging, and cooling. More advanced processes include transforming the raw materials into products like jams, jellies, pickled vegetables and dried products. Adding value also maintains product quality, extends shelf life, enhances the produce appearance, or creates entirely new products.

Farmers can, therefore, increase their profit margins by adding value to their produce, and as a result, contribute to sustainable rural development. Value adding is a long-term approach that requires the commitment and ability to take calculated risks, invest capital, develop management skills, and dealing with additional rules and regulations. Adding value is putting in more work, for higher returns.

Extension Suite Online® provides Value adding activities for each commodity - go to Plant Production; Economics; and under Adding Value see Value Chains.

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Tips and tools for advisors

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Effective Communication

Communication is such an important part of our lives that effective communication has become a fundamental key to success in many aspects of life. We all need to communicate effectively in our private and public lives - irrespective of our ambitions, commitment, education or personality.

We can speak of effective communication only when the receiver (listener/reader) clearly understands the message that the sender (speaker/writer) intended to convey. This in effect means that there is no communication unless the message is indeed understood by the recipient.

For communication, the following guidelines may be of assistance:

- Define purpose – what is it that we want to communicate;
- Know the recipient - who is the recipient and what type of language and terminology should be used to be most effective;
- Short and simple communication is most effective;
- A positive attitude while writing or talking helps to convey a message more effectively; and
- Listen attentively to the other participant – hearing the message as well as making sure that the message has been delivered.

TOP NATIONAL ESO USER:

The monthly national ESO user will receive the following prizes: First time National ESO User 2015: **4 Gig USB memory stick,** second time National ESO User 2015: **Digital Camera**, third time National ESO User 2015 **Nokia Lumia 520**, fourth time National ESO User 2015: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

Congratulations to **Jeremia Murovhi** (Limpopo Department of Agriculture), the ESO National Top User for October 2015.

Jeremia Murovhi

As an Extension Practitioner, Mr Murovhi is very passionate about agriculture and always try to align himself with new technological developments within his field for the benefit of farmers.

He was introduced to Extension Suite Online by a colleague in 2014 and since then he has been using the system and providing proper technical advise to his farmers. Mr Murovhi uses Extension Suite Online whenever he needs information to assist farmers or to empower himself. He easily access the system using his mobile phone or laptop.

Extension Suite Online makes the execution of his duties easier as he is trained as a crop scientist and his line of duty include advising farmers on both livestock and crops. With the help of Extension Suite Online, Mr Murovhi is now able to advise livestock farmers confidently with the information acquired from Extension Suite Online.

Extension Suite Online enables Mr Murovhi to recommend the types of crops that can be planted in a particular season with better market, identify pests and diseases affecting the crops and also make recommendations.

Mr Murovhi encourages other extension practitioners to use Extension Suite Online as it is a tool that can improve their knowledge and the service they render to clients. The further emphasised that the quality of information contained on Extension Suite Online is not only good for advising farmers but very much helpful when studying.

He concluded by saying "Agriculture is in his blood and now Extension Suite Online has become part of his blood".

EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE UTILISATION: OCTOBER 2015

Extension Suite Online (ESO) utilisation is determined through monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces and by attaching values to Visits, Pages Visited and Duration of Visits; a rating is calculated to establish the ESO National Top User of the Month.

ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USER GRAPH
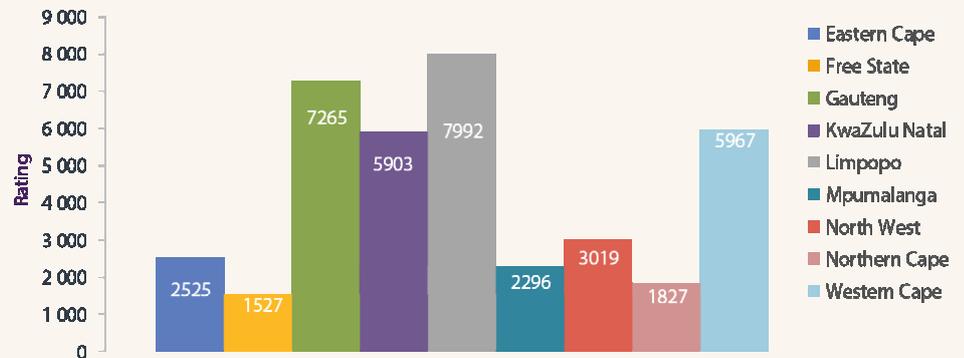
ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USERS

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Nopulula Sinethemba
Free State	Setene Mooko
Gauteng	Sizwe Nzuza
KwaZulu Natal	Dumisani Nzama
Limpopo	**Jeremia Murovhi**
Mpumalanga	Sinekhaya Benson Makukule
North West	Mompati Gabanakgosi
Northern Cape	Jacobus Sedrick Visser
Western Cape	Riaan Nowers

PARASITE TALK:
FEATURED PARASITE

Further information on all featured parasites can be found on ESO.

Scientific Name: *Cydia molesta*
Popular Name: Oriental Fruit Moth

Oriental fruit moth is a dark grey-brown moth that grows up to 4 mm in length. The fully grown larvae are light pink with a dark head looking like false codling moth larvae but are much smaller. The Larvae tunnel into young shoots of the trees and later in the season start attack

Oriental Fruit Moth

ESO TIPS:
A Review of popular browsers

Carlo Schluter

The best browsers go beyond benchmarks and surfing the web. They're easy to set up, flexible and extensible, and connect to other devices and services seamlessly.

Firefox, for instance, is a browser with excellent plugin capability and has an entire site dedicated to plugins, organized by their type and popularity. Installing a plugin is as easy as clicking through a couple of notifications, then restarting your browser. The more plugins a user adds, the more memory and CPU power the browser will consume.

Opera, on the other hand, does not have the same number of available plugins as Firefox, but it does have a unique "sidebar" for widget use. Modern browsers are also adding more and more functionality in the app itself, and it is here, where Edge's Cortana, a digital assistant, makes a difference. Built in, with Reading View options and a service to mark-up webpages called Web Notes.

One reason, therefore, to give Edge a try, is that Cortana does an excellent job of supplying context.

Each browser has distinct qualities making it easy to distinguish between them, as for instance the differences between Chrome and Internet Explorer.

Also interesting to note, is that more and more browsers are moving away from the "homepage" concept and like Opera and Edge, open to an index page, with news and information, organised by the browser company itself.

Firefox also performs admirably, and Opera would be a terrific choice since it speeds through benchmarks and website browsing alike.

Chrome has a well-deserved reputation, not using up any available memory, and has the benchmarks to prove it. Furthermore, it's stable, extensible, performs well, and integrates well with other services and devices very well.

Popular browsers in this day and age compete on a level playing field. Safari is not letting go and is continuing along as the under-appreciated browser playing its role as a by-product of Apple's quest to be the dominating global force.

In conclusion, users should decide according to their personal needs, which browser they prefer as each of them has some feature, distinguishing it from its competitors.

Do you have any technology related questions? Send them to newsletter@esuite.co.za, with your name, province and the question and we will answer them in a following newsletter edition.

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