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RE-INVENTING EXTENSION SERVICES

Dr Roelof de Villiers, Managing Director, Manstrat Agricultural Intelligence Solutions (Pty) LTD.

We are at the end of another exciting year at Manstrat. 2014 Year marks the fourth anniversary of the implementation of Extension Suite Online® in South Africa and it is especially exciting because we are seeing the enormous impact ESO has on advisory services in South Africa.

During the past four years, Extension Suite Online® has helped to re-invent agricultural advisory services in South Africa. It has provided Extension Practitioners easy access to fresh, practical and relevant information right there where they work – on the farm. The system has ensured that quality information can be provided to farmers and today there is not only a quicker response time, but Extension Practitioners also serves more farmers per week. This has resulted in farmers being more productive, farms being more successful and in general the relationship of trust has been restored between farmers and Extension Practitioners.

It is certain that Extension Suite Online® has become deeply entrenched in the service delivery strategy of every provincial Department. Extension Practitioners use it to further their studies, to develop training material, do presentations and to organise and lead farmers' days and demonstrations. This has established Extension Practitioners as key role players in the agricultural community.

On top of it all, Extension Practitioners today have access to internet enabled devices and they have learned to use additional tools such as word processors, spreadsheets and presentation software. All-in-all, Extension Services in South Africa has been re-invented to serve the needs and requirements of developing farmers in the 21st century.

We at Manstrat would like to thank all Agricultural Researchers and Extension Practitioners for their valuable contributions during the past year, and wish everyone a wonderful festive season and are looking forward to an even more exciting 2015.



Dr. Roelof de Villiers

ESO WALLPAPERS

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE DESKTOP WALLPAPER TODAY!

Liven up your computer's desktop with an Extension Suite Online wallpaper. Download wallpapers directly from the ESO newsletter e-mail or on the ESO media website: media.esuite.co.za



Tips and tools for advisors

Jeanne-Louise Bekker

Effective time management

Extension advisors have the duty to respond to requests from clients on time, arrange visits and perform general tasks within a restricted time period. The following are a few time management tips that one can follow to optimize efforts to ensure that the job gets done within the limited amount of time available:

- **Prioritise:** Identify and list what is important and what is urgent.
- **Plan:** Plan your day by making a daily "To Do List."
- **Decide & Start Faster:** Procrastinating on decisions wastes time, if you have the necessary information, step up and take a decision.
- **Keep people informed:** Communication helps to avoid timely misunderstandings.
- **Use a diary:** Keep a diary, keep it updated and consult it before agreeing to or scheduling a meeting.
- **Develop systems:** Systems allows you to work more focused and efficiently. A system is a series of actions that ensure you address the matters you need to in the most efficient manner.

TOP NATIONAL ESO USER:

The monthly national ESO user will receive the following prizes: First time National ESO User 2014: **4 Gig USB memory stick**, second time National ESO User 2014: **Digital Camera**, third time National ESO User 2014 **Nokia Lumia 520**, fourth time National ESO User 2014: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

Congratulations to Mr Sifiso Mthabela (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and environmental affairs), the ESO Top National User for November 2014.



Mr Sifiso Mthabela

Sifiso Mthabela, Extension Advisor from KwaZulu Natal, Nquthu municipality, has now won the Extension Suite Online National Top User award on a run from September 2014, and breaking all records in the process. His latest winning ESO score is a massive 17,621. Congratulations Sifiso, you are really an agricultural champion, and we wish you many, many, more! Sifiso wins the Nokia Lumia 520 for his diligent usage of Extension Suite Online, towards improving advisory services in South Africa.

Over the past 3 months we have come to know Sifiso a little better and this month we learn even more of how this wonder-advisor from KwaZulu Natal operates:

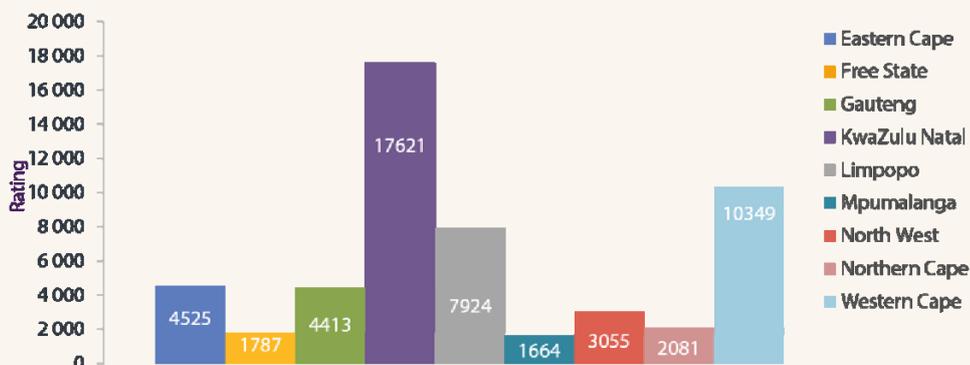
Sifiso feels that the "Plant production" module in ESO is the module that he uses most, as it addresses the concerns of the farmers that he serves. He also makes use of the Regional Data module to help him in his work. He encourages all Extension Officers to consult Extension Suite Online before they visit farmers or clients. He says that those who do not use ESO on a daily basis are missing out on a whole lot of information and also on the interaction with colleagues from other provinces through the ESO Discussion Forum. "We share ideas, questions and opinions in discussion groups."

Even though Sifiso is at times faced with challenges such as farmers who do not follow the advice that he gives them, it won't get him down. Witnessing how farmers develop into suppliers of top quality produce to local markets, and how they contribute to their own food security, while generating additional income on extra produce, makes all his hard work worthwhile.

EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE UTILISATION: NOVEMBER 2014

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	Mzuthule Nobadina
Free State	Moses Moshe Mbongo
Gauteng	Maritz Maisela Mahlangu
KwaZulu Natal	Sifiso Mthabela
Limpopo	Ndamulelo Netshifhefhe
Mpumalanga	Jacob Madisha
North West	Ratha Manoahedile Solomon
Northern Cape	Amelia Viljoen
Western Cape	Riaan Nowers

PEST TALK: FEATURED PEST

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

Scientific Name: *Plutella xylostella*
Popular Name: Diamond Back Moth

Small light-green caterpillar. Feeds on the underside of leaves. Eats the green tissue resulting in window damage and holes.



Diamond Back Moth

Send your pest or disease related questions to newsletter@esuite.co.za with your name, province and the question and we will answer you via ESO's Question and Answer module or in the newsletter.

ESO TIPS:

Updating your ESO user details

Thapedi Setschedi

E-mail addresses are not only applied by Extension Suite Online to communicate with its 2,600 registered users, but also as usernames to access the system.

Some users are not using the original email addresses used to register them as users. It is therefore difficult to communicate effectively with our users thus having a detrimental influence on information received by users. Manstrat Information Centre Help Desk is also struggling to inform and assist users in the utilisation of South Africa's premier agricultural decision making tool.

Contact emails are used to inform users of new developments, and to make them aware of the system and all its benefits. In turn, officers can help farmers and producers who rely solely on extension officers for production and other agricultural information. There are many users who want to see their utilisation scores and their chances to win flash discs, cell phones, cameras and Samsung Tablets in our utilisation competition.

If you do not receive ESO Newsletters or SMS's, know that your correct contact details are not available to us. Please update your profiles with the latest email and cell phone numbers or contact us through the Help Desk for assistance: Support@esuite.co.za; or 0860376376; or 0723828278.

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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