

This edition



1 The role of infrastructure in recovering from drought

1

Tips and Tools:
Pruning and training of trees

2

ESO Tip: Easy computer tricks

2

ESO Provincial Top User:
Petunia Magolele

The role of infrastructure in recovering from drought

Colleen Janse van Rensburg

The recent El Nino-induced drought experienced in the summer rainfall area of South Africa has amongst other things, led to extensive losses for livestock farmers. This has placed an added responsibility on producers to manage their enterprises carefully to make up for loss of stock and feed sustained during the drought, through increasing their productivity and lowering input costs.

With the added challenge of an economy under pressure, farmers are acutely aware of the need to reduce production costs while at the same time trying to restore the condition of their remaining livestock in preparation for breeding and slaughtering in the summer months.

Infrastructure on a livestock farm varies from simple feed troughs to exceedingly expensive and essential, handling, feeding and milking facilities.

1. ASSESSMENT AND UTILISATION

A good way of reducing production costs is to start with the re-assessment of the infrastructure on the farm - its general condition, state of repair and functionality. The next step would be to repair, maintain and replace infrastructure economically, as and where required. The benefits of having well-maintained correctly applied infrastructure are many, as it not only saves time and money, but it increases opportunities for higher yields and profits!

A lack of, or poorly maintained and constructed infrastructure facilities, invariably makes farming in general, and livestock production in particular, difficult and costly.

2. FEED AND WATER STORAGE

Poor veld conditions and feed shortages lead to farmers having to store additional feeds for their livestock for the winter months. For safe storage of feeds, storage areas need to be kept clean and dry, and access to feeds by pests, wild birds and animals must be restricted. Repairing roofs to prevent rainwater leaks will keep dampness

out while fitting windows with screen cover will keep unwanted animals and pests out.

Farmers may also want to check their feed and water troughs to avoid wastage, as health risks associated with water wastage often lead to increased veterinary costs.

3. HOUSING AND SHELTER

Building shelters for animals go a long way to keeping animals warm and protected from the elements. This is especially true for animals in relatively poor condition after a period of severe drought and other causes of stress. Shelters do not have to be elaborately constructed buildings, but simple structures to accommodate animals, keep them out of strong wind, rain, and other extreme conditions experienced throughout the country in winter, are sufficient.

4. FENCING AND HANDLING FACILITIES: PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Winter is also a good time for farmers to check the status of fences, handling facilities and dipping tanks. As summer and warmer weather approaches, tick and parasite numbers increase drastically and farmers will need to dip and deworm their animals more frequently. Many vaccinations are also administered in the spring months before the breeding season starts. Since animals will need to be handled more frequently, ensuring all handling facilities are in good working condition well before the summer months will make handling much easier and safer, and less stressful for animals and workers.



Colleen Janse van Rensburg

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

Pruning and training of

Portia Phahlane

The pruning and training of trees as they develop improve not only the yields but also the quality of fruit produced thus making pruning one of the most important activities in the lifecycle of fruit trees. Fruit trees must be pruned in the first 3 years to allow the farmer to determine their future shape and size. In South Africa, most fruit trees are pruned during late winter - during the dormant stage of their growth.

Advantages of pruning include:

- Stimulating new growth - encouraging the production of more fruit
- Shaping trees for structural strength - for ease of cultivation and harvesting
- Opening all branches to sunlight - to increase growth capacity
- Maintaining tree health by removing dead, diseased, or injured branches
- Allowing for an equal and smooth distribution over the entire tree when spraying.

Getting to know the ESO Provincial Top Users

Someone once said that the distinguishing feature of a winner is their intensity of purpose, and Petunia Magolele –the Mpumalanga Extension Suite Online Provincial top user for April– is such a person. Originally from Zeerust in North West, Petunia currently works and resides in Standerton, Lekwa Municipality, Gert Sibande District, Mpumalanga Province. The key economic activities at Lekwa Municipality are agriculture and mining, mainly power generation with the Vaal River as the primary water source with the Grootdraai Dam as the central catchment area.

Petunia has been with the Department of Agriculture in Mpumalanga for 12 years and currently works as an Animal Scientist with both ruminants and non-ruminant's animals. She is a registered as a Professional Natural Scientist with SACNASP. Petunia attends to more than 40 individual farmers, 9 cooperatives, and several community members.

Her day as an Extension Practitioner involves interaction with farmers and communities, advising them about the improved products and techniques that could enhance their production efforts, and ensure that there is project compliance with statutory requirements. Petunia provides advisory services to farmers on animal production, including selection and breeding, management of animals, nutrition, record keeping, and general herd improvement measures.

Our Top User was introduced to Extension Suite Online® in 2009 at a workshop and immediately became "hooked" on the system. Her first port of call is checking the Breed of the Week on the ESO Homepage and its characteristics and adaptability. She says she has been learning through the years with ESO as the primary tool in ensuring that her clients - farmers and rural communities - are provided with reliable information. She often cross-checks ESO information to make sure of her facts but has found the system to be reliable. Because she can access the system anywhere, anytime, she feels that it is an interesting and helpful aid. During project and farm visits, she uses her phone to access the system. She also downloads necessary pdf documents for her farmers and shares information through Whatsapp. She describes ESO as a #SolutionOnTheClick – due to its accessibility anywhere anytime.



Petunia Magolele

National ESO Top User

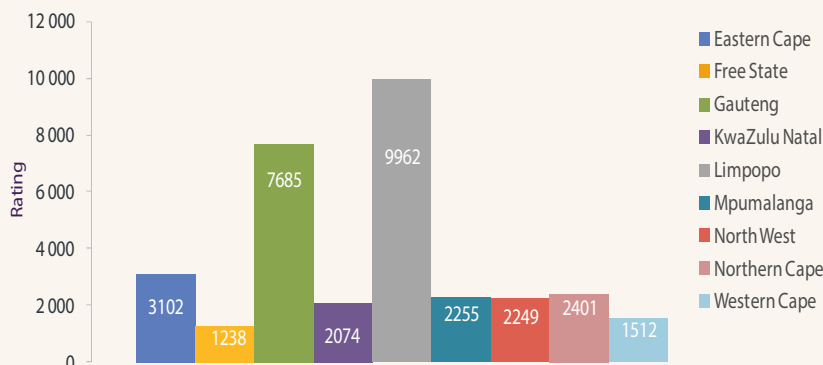
Congratulations to **Jeremia Murovhi** the ESO National Top User for April 2016.

Monthly national ESO users receive the following prizes: First time National ESO User 2016: **4 Gig USB memory stick**, second time National ESO User 2016: **Digital Camera**, third time National ESO User 2016: **Nokia Lumia 520**, fourth time National ESO User 2016: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE UTILISATION: April 2016

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



CLIMATE WATCH

April 2016

For our previous Climate Watch articles we used MODIS Terra data. Unfortunately, MODIS Terra stopped receiving and processing data during

February 2016 but we are fortunate to be able to replace MODIS data with PROBA-V data, received from the Copernicus European Earth-monitoring programme. The Flemish Institute for Technological Research (VITO) in Belgium distributes the data received on a 10-day-cycle, which they process to monthly composites. Although higher resolution PROBA-V data is available, we use the 1 km product due to its comparability to the 1km VEGETATION dataset processed and distributed by VITO. We create our NDVI derived maps by using both the PROBA-V and VEGETATION datasets.

Read the full article on the Manstrat AIS website.

www.manstrat.co.za - Climate Watch

ESO TIPS:

Easy computer tricks

Thembeke Zengele

There are always new computer tricks that one can learn to become more productive. In this issue, we have compiled two computer tricks you might not be taking advantage of:

1. Reduce the number of programs running at startup

Having too many programs running at startup can considerably reduce the time it takes your computer to boot. This can be reduced by changing the items running at startup. Go to Run using the hotkey

Windows key + R, and type "msconfig." A small window will appear (see the screenshot below), select the Startup tab. From here you will be able to turn off many startup programs. (Note Windows 8 has moved this functionality to the Task Manager). Try to make sure you research what you are turning off as some processes might be needed by third party programs or drivers you have installed.

2. Backup important files on cloud

Always make sure that you backup important files on cloud, not just locally. You can use services like Dropbox, Google Drive, or any of the other popular cloud storage solution which will do the legwork for you on the background.

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.



Editor:
Thembeke Zengele

Publishers:
Manstrat Agricultural Intelligence Solutions (Pty) Ltd.

Correspondence:
newsletter@esuite.co.za | +27 12 460 2499



ManstratAIS



@ManstratAIS



ManstratAIS

