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Community Building Through Communal Land

Sabhinah Ncongwane

Communal land is land controlled by the community with no individual or organisational claim to its ownership. Communal land is commonly used for grazing of small and big livestock by subsistence or small-scale farmers, which is unfortunately accompanied by a host of problems from overgrazing and resultant soil erosion, to total neglect.

In order to organise and fully utilise communal land, community building often forms the basis for future success. Community building involves activities or practices that bring members of a community together in their pursuit of a common interest or goal. These activities ideally enhance the community spirit amongst individuals within a neighbourhood, through problem-solving and leadership skills development. Community gardens on communal land are good examples of community building activities where communities meet to share common interests.

A community garden is often a public open space providing the platform where people meet, share ideas and goals, within the local community, and provides a forum to learn and work on gardening skills, while growing fresh food for the community. Community gardens are ideally managed by community members - community gardens in neighbourhoods growing their own food or selling their produce to informal markets and those neighbours who are not involved.

The results of successful community building include:

- Providing a safe, friendly and accessible space for people to meet and be involved in a variety of

community-based activities;

- Improving and strengthening community pride and foster connections across differences like age, gender, and ability, through shared involvement;
- Creating an environment for people to work cooperatively; supporting and contributing to community-based sustainable economic development initiatives like the sale for fresh produce, and provide a space to create and display community art, holding community events and celebrations; and
- Inspiring people to become involved in community services and support.

On a larger scale, clusters of farmers within the same broader community, with matching crop production goals can form cooperatives. That will help them when sourcing inputs as a group for better prices and bulk discounts, while marketing their produce as a group for quantity and consistency purposes, giving them the advantages of "scale" to the benefit of all in the group or community.



Sabhinah Ncongwane

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Tips and tools
for advisors

Pest Control

Portia Phahlane

Pest control is an essential component of crop production as pests affect the quantity, quality and ultimately, the marketability of agricultural products. Farmers continually battle with pests that attack their crops. Uncontrolled pests can wreak havoc, and cause costly and damaging effects to crops. As a preventative measure, constant monitoring of possible infestations will enable farmers to act proactively, and to make decisions for best control actions.

The most common way to control pests is the use of pesticides. Environmental damage caused over many decades by agricultural chemicals, however, have raised awareness on the use of alternative non-chemical pest control practices such as cultural and biological controls available to farmers. Although natural control measures are usually slower in taking effect, they remain efficient, while being environmentally friendly, and economically sustainable, at the same time.

When and where pesticides are used, remember to use only registered chemicals and read the labels for proper application methods and storage.

ESO Provincial Top User

Portia Phahlane

Extension Suite Online is proud to introduce Mr Edgar Monokane. He is the Free State ESO Provincial Top User for November 2017 and an Agricultural Advisor at the Department of Agriculture in Thaba Nchu, Mangaung Metro. Edgar started off with a B-Tech in Agricultural Management, and now has a Master's Degree in Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Extension. He is currently registered as a PhD candidate at the University of the Free State.

Edgar joined the Department of Agriculture as an intern at Glen Institute in 2005 for five months and then left to pursue other opportunities. He returned to the Department in September 2007 to work as an Agricultural Development Technician in the Naledi Municipality. He was transferred in 2011 to Thaba Nchu where he is still based. His superiors are Ms Nthabiseng Nyate (Assistant Director), Mr Bossie Kotze (Deputy Director) and Ms Thabitha Mokone (District Director).

While he concentrated mostly on Plant Production and Grain Handling during his studies, he is recognised as an expert in holistic farm planning today. Edgar enjoys presenting at farmers' days, demonstration sites, participating in Multi-Disciplinary Task-Teams and chairing farming community meetings.

While struggling to plan and profile new feedlot enterprises during 2013, he turned to ESO in desperation, and the system helped him with the necessary information. He now uses ESO when he needs to plan and provide solutions to farmer's problems. He mostly uses The Farm Information System (FIS), Animal Production (Enterprise Budgets and Market prices) and Plant Production (especially pastures and vegetables), on ESO.

Edgar says that using ESO has resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of his agricultural advisory to farmers. Amongst others, it allows him to provide relevant market information - what to sell when to sell, and at what prices - advice that was previously hard to offer, due to the unavailability of access to updated and current information. He encourages his colleagues to familiarise themselves with the system as it holds many informational benefits for them.

Edgar summarised the strengths of ESO:

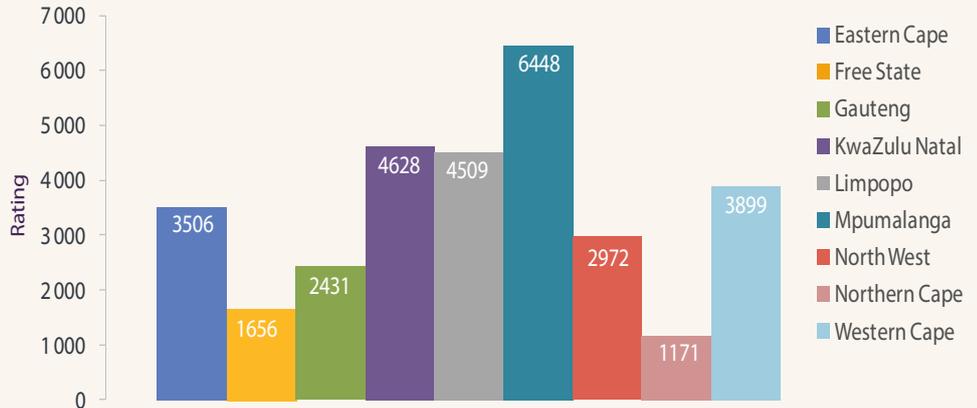
- "For the Non-users, it is just a computer system."
- "For the Occasional users, it is a user-friendly system."
- "But for us Regular users, it is our secret colleague who does most of our work on our behalf."

EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE® UTILISATION:

November 2017

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

ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USER GRAPH



ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USERS

| PROVINCE | NAME |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Eastern Cape | Sindile Magoda |
| Free State | Edgar Monokoane |
| Gauteng | Grace Pule |
| KwaZulu Natal | Dumisani Nzama |
| Limpopo | Louis Khomola |
| Mpumalanga | Anikie Sebenzile Khoza |
| North West | Rapula Klaas Joseph Monnana |
| Northern Cape | Johan le roux |
| Western Cape | Riaan Nowers |

CLIMATE WATCH

Issue #23

November started off with good rainfall over the Western Cape and the west coast region. Isolated thundershowers caused rainfall over North-West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KZN during the first week. During the second week, the cape region remained dry with isolated showers, but most parts of the summer rainfall region received good rainfall with many parts of Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KZN receiving more than 40 mm.



Read the full article on the Manstrat AIS website.

www.manstrat.co.za - Climate Watch

ESO TIPS:

Thulani Zengele

Keeping Social Profiles Safe from Intruders

Happy holidays to all our readers. During this period, we need to remain alert to protect our social profiles. Remember, log out of social media pages that you may be signed into especially when using freely available wi-fi access from establishments like restaurants, hotels and shopping malls. It is a free zone to hackers and identity thieves as there is a constant exchange of information between devices and locations. When in these public areas, users must continue to practise extreme vigilance with internet access which needs passwords or any exchange of personal information. Drive safely and return in one piece!

National ESO Top User



Anikie Khoza

Congratulations to **Anikie Khoza** the ESO National Top User for **November 2017** from **Mpumalanga** Province.

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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