

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Extension Suite Online newsletter strives to further its readers' knowledge on subjects relating to Extension Suite Online, whether it is technical tips, general articles on different information modules within ESO or new developments surrounding the application, our aim is to inform.

Even though Extension Suite Online and its abundance of information lend itself to many an interesting article, we would also like to hear from you – the ESO user. Why don't you become a contributor to the ESO monthly newsletter? This is an excellent opportunity to write a short article on any subject of your choice; be it practical tips that you would like to share with fellow extension officers, or describing a technique used by you as an Extensionist or subject matter specialist in agriculture.

The newsletter provides you with a platform to communicate those often lost tips and tricks, from someone working in the field, to other Extension Officers throughout South Africa.

Send your contributions to:
contributions@esuite.co.za

Jeanne-Louise Bekker

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Your team will get stronger when you begin to build yourself. Teams are made up of individuals who work together . . . and get their own job done. What are you doing to be sure that your job is being done perfectly?"

- Jeffrey Gitomer -



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VALUE CHAINS AND ADDING VALUE TO FARM PRODUCE

The tool to help identify opportunities for farmers to add value to their produce and benefit from higher returns.

A value chain for farm produce is a map of all activities that fresh produce undergo from its raw state until it reaches the end-user or consumer. It is a tool to help identify opportunities for farmers to add value to their produce and benefit from higher returns. A value chain portrays the many activities involved in getting fresh produce and processed products from producer to consumer. It identifies participants in the chain including farmers, traders, processors, wholesalers and retailers. The activities in the value chain of farm produce are, in sequence, production, handling, processing, storage, transport, marketing and finally the consumer. Each activity of the chain increases the value of the produce and presents an opportunity to producers to be involved. In Extension Suite Online, value chains of different crops have been mapped out to display the processes that crops can undergo before it reaches the consumer and identifies where farmers can exploit those opportunities by adding value to their produce.

Value adding improves the farmer's income by raising the value of agricultural produce and helps producers to exploit new markets. It is worthwhile to add value to produce as it gives a competitive advantage in the market, makes the product more appealing to the consumer, extends shelf life of produce and provide new markets to the

producer. Since not every product will go directly to fresh produce market, the value chain is a tool that indicates other activities that add value to the crop; they are, but not limited to, first level handling, fresh packaging, small scale processing, storage and distribution. First level handling comprises of processes such as cleaning, sorting and grading, packaging and cooling (storage), whilst small scale processing outlines the activities that transform fresh produce into products such as jams, jellies and pickled vegetables. All these processes could be undertaken on the farm and are not capital intensive in terms of labour and equipment. However, value adding cannot improve the inherent quality of crops (making poor quality crops better), it therefore remains vital for farmers to properly maintain their crops in the field for the best quality and then to add value.

The path to the Value Chain in ESO is as follows: First select the **Economics** item in the menu bar where you will find the **Adding Value** sub-menu item which will display **Value Chain** which will open the Value Chain information module. This page contains an interactive image, which will open an overview of each item that is clicked, concurrent with the selected crop.

Portia Maibelo

Last month you were given a little insight into PDF readers while this month sees us looking at the uses of Adobe's PDF reader. Adobe (pronounced "a-do-be"), is the creator of the famous PDF format. There is a vast amount of PDF readers available on the internet, mainly due to the fact that the PDF document format is an open standard format; meaning that anybody is allowed to use the PDF format on their computers to create or read documents. There are currently two versions of the PDF reader available, the more common of the two being the free version. Although it is free, it still allows a user to do multiple tasks on a PDF document, such as making notes on a document, creating high quality



documentation, doing comprehensive file searching and off course to read documents. There is now even a mobile PDF reader available for download. The paid for version has a variety of added features, like OCR (Optical Character Recognition), editing documents, and joining documents. Adobe software is even able to read a PDF document back to you. Although it is recommended that you install a PDF reader on your computer, a great example of an alternative PDF reader is that of the online email service, Gmail. Those of you with Gmail accounts can therefore with ease view your PDF documents through Gmail.

TOP EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE USER FOR MAY 2011

By monitoring utilisation of all users in the nine provinces Manstrat AIS selects the country's top user monthly. These tables will ultimately be used to select an annual national winner.

We have decided, as an added incentive, to reward multiple winners and serious users of ESO like Jabu Baloyi, with helpful tools for use in their daily extension activities. Manstrat AIS are therefore happy to announce that for the rest of 2011, **second, third and fourth time NATIONAL TOP ESO USERS** will receive the following additional prizes:

Second Time National Top User 2011: **Sony Digital Camera**

Third Time National Top User 2011: **Nokia Cell Phone**

Fourth Time National Top User 2011: **Samsung Galaxy Pad**

Once again, congratulations to **Jabu Petunia Baloyi** for being the **NATIONAL TOP ESO USER** in South Africa for the second time running this year!

During June, we had the opportunity to do a follow up interview with **Jabu** on her usage of ESO:

Q: What would you advise a colleague to do, in order to become a better Extension Officer?

I can advise my colleagues to understand their specific field of work and to know the commodities that they work with. It is important for every extension officer to value the dynamics of the environment that they work in.

Q: How would you encourage Extension Officers to increase their utilisation of ESO?

Give yourself time to sit down and browse through Extension Suite Online, get to know the system and the scope of information that is available.

Q: How often do you use ESO per week?

Initially I used Extension Suite Online very often, more than 3 times per week, to familiarize myself with the information that is available and where I can find what I need as quickly as possible.

Q: How many farmers do you advise?

Currently I have 92 farmers on my database.

Q: Describe a typical day in your life as an Extension officer.

I would say that I divide my time 50/50% between in office work and on field work. Typical every day work that I do would be to develop business plans for farmers.

Q: Which part of ESO do you use most frequently?

As an Agricultural Economist I make use of the Economics section on ESO the most, especially the enterprise budgets.

Q: What are the biggest challenges that you face in your everyday work as an extension officer?

I do have quite a number of challenges that I face, for example; a big number of farmers come to me for help specifically for creating a business plan, but the challenge comes in where many of these farmers do not know what type of farming they want to do.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your work as an Extension officer?

I enjoy directly interacting with farmers.

UTILISATION REPORTS

Last month Amanda requested that extensionists encourage at least one colleague to activate their ESO account. Limpopo seems to have taken her up on this and their May activations made up 38% of the national figure!

Each top national ESO user (since September 2010) was sent a 4G ESO memory stick and pen during May as promised. Our editor will follow up on this in the coming weeks.

ESO utilisation figures increased again in May. Congratulations to JP Baloyi the country's top user for May from Limpopo, with a super 4 031 rating.

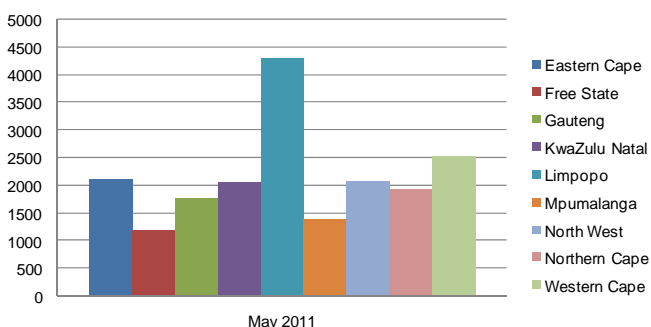
Manstrat and Agricultural Management nationwide ask this question off readers: "If an Extensionist is not using ESO, what exactly is it that they use as agricultural information and decision making tools?"

E-mail your answers to pjet@manstrat.co.za. Please keep answers below 150 words. The best reply wins a mention next month.

In the mean time, *keep on clicking.*

Piet van Zyl

PROVINCIAL TOP USER RATING



TOP USER IN EACH PROVINCE

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Mzola Qeqeshwa
Free State	Selogiloe Herbert Legegeru
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Mlamuli Perci Sikhakhane
Limpopo	Jabu Petunia Baloyi
Mpumalanga	Mpho Mafune
North West	Molemoeng Diratsagae
Northern Cape	George du Preez
Western Cape	Malebogo Phethu