

YOU CAN BECOME AN ESO INFORMATION PARTNER

Manstrat is continually building the Extension Suite Online (ESO) databases, and populating it with relevant and useful information. It should be noted that every user of ESO is regarded as a crucial part of the ESO Knowledge Base and therefore each user can make a subject matter orientated contribution to the system.

Such contributions can be sent to the Manstrat Information Centre where it will be reviewed by our Subject Matter Experts and published in the appropriate section of ESO, together with an acknowledgement to its author(s) and institution(s).

Why don't you become an information partner to ESO? Here is an excellent opportunity to either write a short article on a subject close to your heart; or to develop a short information pamphlet; or to create a new tool or describe a technique used by you as an Extensionist in agriculture. You can even gather all those old information booklets and "almost lost" archived materials and send it to us for inclusion in the appropriate section of ESO. There are so many older – and still relevant - documents hidden away in the system. All users are welcome to send their contributions to Piet van Zyl at the Manstrat Information Centre. Piet can be contacted at piet@manstrat.co.za.

Dr Roelof de Villiers

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do."

Pope John XXIII



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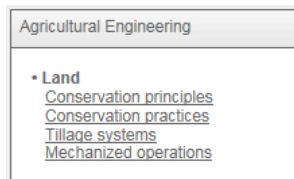
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www.newsletter.esuite.co.za

THE ESO AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING SECTION

Agricultural engineering is the application of engineering principles to agricultural **production** and **processing**. It involves the **technologies** and **equipment** involved in crop and animal production, processing of **food** and **non-food products**. More recently agricultural and **bio-resource engineering** has been developing efficient and environmentally-sensitive methods of producing food, fibre, timber, bio-based products and renewable energy sources for an ever-increasing world population.

Agricultural engineering on Extension Suite Online (ESO) is being categorized, for convenience, into sections on **land**, **water**, **built structures** and **processing**. The Agricultural engineering section can be found in any Plant module's sidebar.



The section on aspects of engineering related to the **land** is complete and accessible to users. Various technical aspects of activities and equipment are described. Obviously **tillage** is a major activity together with the subsequent planting, cultivation, treatment and harvesting of the crop. Each activity involves different equipment. The efficiencies and cost of these operations are critical in deciding the economic viability of the cropping enterprise.

Tillage however, is the prime activity affecting the land and a contentious one. Poor planning and **inappropriate tillage systems** have in the past led to **soil erosion** and **land degradation**. This not only degrades the value of the land as a national asset but also leads to diminishing returns for the individual

farmer. This has stimulated concern for long-term conservation of the land and the soil. An approach has been developed with the aim of achieving **sustainable farming systems** that are productive and maintain the soil in its optimal condition. This approach, and its implementation, is often referred to as **conservation agriculture**. It is, more specifically, a system that maintains an optimum environment for root growth, reduces run-off from the soil surface (which increases water in the soil for plant growth), increases ground water levels and promotes biological activity in the soil (which contributes to capture, retention, chelation and slow release of plant nutrients). **Reduced tillage**, **zero tillage** and appropriate **crop rotations** are all part of the conservation agriculture approach.

The question is does it work **in practice**? The benefits are not immediate but can be seen after a couple of seasons. Throughout the world it is increasingly being adopted and land degradation halted. From an individual farmer's view point, **yields** can be as **good**, or better than conventional systems, and production **costs lower**. Furthermore this success has been transferred to appropriate small scale cropping systems and embraced by these farmers.



Zero-till maize about four weeks after planting

Dr John Lapham

Extension Suite Online has been designed to be compatible with the most popular browsers used today, such as Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome. In this article I would like to introduce to you a browser called Google Chrome. Google Chrome was designed with speed, simplicity, security and customizability in mind. Chrome is simple and easy to use, but is also one of the most sophisticated browsers available today. Chrome's popularity is growing exponentially at the moment and at the current rate, could be the most used browser in the world by April 2012. Some of Chrome's most useful features are automatic translation, built-in malware and



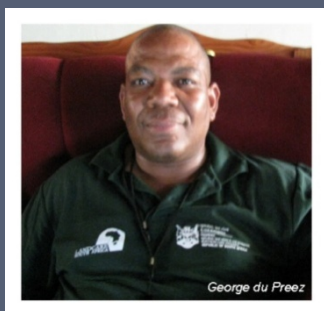
phishing protection, automatic updates, searching the internet directly from the address bar drag-and-drop, and auto-complete functionalities, to name but a few. One can also customize Chrome by choosing a custom theme or adding an extension from the web store. There are literally thousands of apps and extensions available to make your browsing experience more enjoyable, fun and safe. Go and give Extension Suite Online a try on Google Chrome. The Google Chrome browser can be downloaded from:

<http://www.google.com/chrome/intl/en-GB/more/features.html>

NATIONAL EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE USER FOR NOVEMBER 2011

The top ESO user for a specific month is determined by monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces. Values are attached to Visits, Pages Visited and Duration of Visits to establish the National ESO USER of the Month, for that month.

Congratulations to, **George du Preez** (Northern Cape Department Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development), who is the ESO National User for November 2011, George is a first time **winner of the ESO National User** award, and receives an ESO 4Gig USB memory stick, pen and certificate.



George du Preez

During December, we had the opportunity to ask **George** a few questions regarding his usage of ESO:

Q: What are your responsibilities at the department?

I am an Extension Officer at the Northern Cape Department Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, specifically in the field of plant production.

Q: How long have you been working for the department?

Previously I was employed at the Department Public Works, but up to date I have been with the Northern Cape Department Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development for 5 years.

Q: How regularly do you make use of ESO?

I consult Extension Suite Online at least once during my day, when I receive a request from a farmer I immediately start my research process with ESO.

Q: Which module in Extension Suite Online do you use the most often?

I do most of my Extension Suite Online research work specifically in the vegetable module, but from time to time

research on specific crops such as Lucerne, Maize and Wheat are also necessary.

Q: What impact has ESO had on your relationship with your clients?

If Extension Suite Online did not exist, I think we might have had a problem on our hands. ESO has given us the opportunity to do our research in a more time-effective manner. Also, library resources quickly become out of date, but ESO is the platform where I can get information on updated and new technologies in the Agricultural field.

Q: Would you recommend ESO to your colleagues and why?

Extension Suite Online is a valuable asset to the world of Extension and farming, I urge each and every colleague of mine to start using the system today.

Q: What have you learned so far from ESO?

Extension Suite Online has given me a broader spectrum of knowledge on specific subjects such as soil analysis, equipment needed to successfully take soil samples, and also on product quality.

Q: Do you have any tips to other users regarding ESO?

If you want to be successful in the work that you do every Extension Officer should consult ESO when doing research for farmers.

Q: How would you describe ESO as an Extension tool?

"Extension Suite Online is "jou biblioteek op voete" (mobile library)"

NOVEMBER 2011 UTILISATION

For all practical purposes 2011 has had its innings. Everyone and everything seem to be entering a "slowdown" before the big "meltdown", and active work-life is slowly grinding to halt.

Looking back at the first five months of the "ESO 2011/2012 Utilisation Year", starting on July 1 annually, two things require mentioning.

Firstly we had someone win the ESO National Monthly User award, four months in a row against fierce competition.

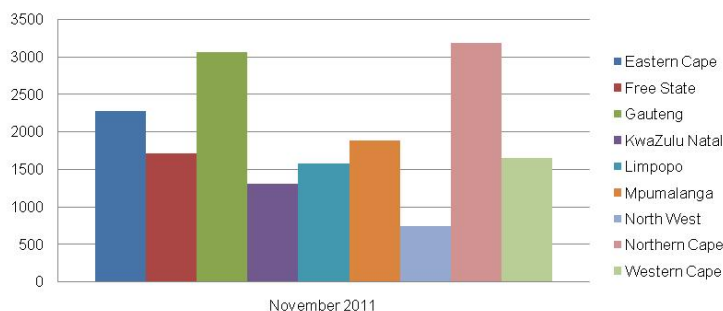
Secondly ESO now has a record 2, 555 registered ESO users nationally of which 73.5% have activated their accounts.

So how can we enlarge our SA Extension footprint in Agriculture in 2012? We should start with those who are dependent on our expertise and support for their livelihood – the small scale producers of SA, and use whatever tools and means we have to make a positive impact. ESO is one of those instruments. Let us use it.

Happy Holidays.

Piet van Zyl

PROVINCIAL TOP USER RATING



NAME OF TOP USER IN EACH PROVINCE NOVEMBER 2011

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Bonisiwe Patience Mbanjwa
Free State	Moses Moshe Mbongo
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Nobuhle Miya
Limpopo	Malongane Thommy
Mpumalanga	Malele Tebogo
North West	Aletta Mothupi
Northern Cape	George du Preez
Western Cape	Antony Louw