

PULA INVULA

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JULY
2018

Another incredible NAMPO

Grain SA's spectacular NAMPO agricultural show is a week jam packed with so many diverse experiences it is really difficult to capture it in a few words!

Suffice it to say that if you are at all interested in agriculture and the agricultural value chain, you really really do need to get to experience at least one day (preferably two!) on the NAMPO farm outside Bothaville for yourself!

The extensive exhibition caters for farming enterprises of all sizes – and even though it is Grain SA's initiative, it is by no means limited to the grain sector – there is something worthwhile for

everyone to see and to learn. All the significant role-players in the Agri-sector are represented and the atmosphere is one of excited enthusiasm, a time to celebrate the achievements and progress which keeps our industry dynamic and relevant.

There are amazing displays of farm vehicles and equipment, innovative ideas and demonstrations of the latest 'gizmos and gadgets' from the smallest drone to the newest seed technologies. There is a wonderful tractor museum which takes many a farmer on a flashback in time and there is a very interesting stall with 'boerepatente' displaying the clever ingenuity of farmers' own designs and engineering plans.

While this is certainly an eye-opening experience for farmers, it is also a family outing since there are many stalls which cater for ladies, including a ladies programme filled with interesting talks and demonstrations and the





NKGONO JANE SAYS...

'There is always space for improvement, no matter how long you've been in the business'. – Oscar De La Hoya. This quotation is so very true as we have seen during the trips to evaluate the three levels of the Farmer of the Year Competition.

Two years ago, we believed that the farmers were so good that they could not improve – we were wrong and the farmers are better still! Striving to improve is one of the great things about being human – each day we can start again and plan to be better/work better/be a better worker/be a better parent/AND BE A BETTER FARMER.

Modern technology is also helping us to become better farmers. The type of seed that we can buy is so good that if we use it wisely we can get yields that we never believed were possible. Think about the weed control – a few years ago, many of our farmers were doing manual weeding; standing in the field in the sun and digging out weeds. Now we spray before and after we plant, and again during the growing season – and there are no weeds. What a huge improvement – both in terms of the crop and to our lives. No more backbreaking work in the sun!

Many of you will have been to NAMPO – the biggest agricultural show in Africa. We love NAMPO every year because we are able to see all things new. There is always new equipment, new chemicals, new technology and new ideas. Although we are not able to all be at the same level, as long as we are improving then we are doing very well. We should strive to move ahead – even just a little each year.

As farmers we are optimistic and we have a way of looking forward to planting the next crop. We also believe that the next crop is going to be a good one. We would not like to leave that to chance – if you keep your weeds under control, buy good seed and fertiliser, plant at the correct time and continue to control the weeds – you will have an excellent chance to have the good crop you dream about.

It is time to plan for the coming season – if you are part of the Jobs Fund, please make sure that you deposit your money in time so that we can get the inputs to you early. We always hope for early rains and when it does rain then you will want to plant at once!

Good luck for your harvesting – we believe that you will be richly rewarded for your efforts in the previous season. Pat yourself on the back and thank yourself for the contribution you are making to feeding our fellow South Africans. If you were not producing food, our brothers and sisters would not have food. Be Blessed!

Another incredible NAMPO

children are spoiled for choice with enticing displays of tractors which they may clamour on with Daddy and close-up encounters with horses, cattle and sheep. The stud breeders bring their pride and joy animals to NAMPO to educate us about their breeds and show off their beautiful animals.

Apart from everything there is to see, it is also an opportune time to meet and network with other like-minded people who are also invested in the sector. These are moments where one can learn from other farmers or mentors and pick the brains of top experts in their field about issues ranging from inputs and production to processing, storage and marketing challenges.

Here are some of the tweets sent out from the audience there:

Jane said: We must think creatively around the challenges we face for example: Ask what can we do, despite the fact that farmers don't have title deeds – we need to make plans and we need to invest in PEOPLE.

What concerns me is how the government does things. They come to a point where they let go of the farmer's hand and don't look back.

– Preline Swart

I'm also concerned about our white boys out there. They feel so uncertain about their future.

– Preline Swart #NAMPO2018

The big challenge is that everyone wants to have an income, but everyone doesn't want to be a farmer.

– #JaneMcPherson @gsafarmerdev

The fantastic initiative 'Nation in Conversation' has become a significant platform where sector leaders, economists, politicians, farmers and other role-players thrash out contemporary and even contentious issues. Panel discussions take place throughout NAMPO week in the on-site TV studio and leaders of Grain SA like CEO, Jannie de Villiers, are regular panel members.

Encounters with passionate farmers are inspirational and energise us to keep on with the task of transformation and development.

I was privileged to attend the panel discussion facilitated by Rozanne McKenzie where leaders in our Grain SA Farmer Development Programme, Manager Jane McPherson, and Grain SA Vice-chairperson Preline Swart, talked about the role of women in agriculture. Jane said: 'We don't want to feel that men are tolerating us in the sector, we want to be there to make an intellectual contribution'. She also pointed out that we need a holistic solution – access to finance, equipment and inputs – to encourage more female involvement in the sector.

Of course, they both had lots to say about the importance of farmer development and transformation in the sector.

There is always a loud buzz of conversation in the popular Grain SA Members hall, which is where all farmer members are welcome to go for a cup of coffee or coldrink and a chat with the Grain SA team managers and mentors.

It is always nice to meet our members face to face. Encounters with passionate farmers are inspirational and energise us to keep on with the task of transformation and development. In the words of our Program Manager Jane McPherson: 'If we could change the paradigm in our minds to reach out to everybody, men and women, big and small we can build an amazing country, we are not going to leave it to the politicians, this is our country and it's in our hands to make a difference'.

A NAMPO encounter inspires us afresh to keep striving for household food security and the zero-hunger goal and to keep reaching out to take the hands of the wonderful grain farmers of South Africa. Hopefully we'll meet YOU next year!

Article submitted by Jenny Mathews, Pula Imvula contributor. For more information, send an email to jenjonmat@gmail.com.



BOOST GRAIN PRODUCTION WITH LEGUMES

Many farmers in the developing sector have realised today that legumes, such as soybean, groundnut, dry beans and cowpea, can make a significant contribution to excel their cropping system.

More grain farmers should become aware of the benefits these crops hold to contribute to lower the impact of risk and to enhance profitability of the farming business. The benefits can be categorised in the following manner:

Agronomic value

Enhancing soil fertility

Legumes can improve soil fertility by their special ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen in the soil. Nitrogen forms a major component of chlorophyll, which is crucial in the process of photosynthesis.

In this process, sunlight is used to form sugars e.g. glucose. Sugars are vital to the growth and development of the plant. Nitrogen also forms a major component of amino acids, which are the building blocks of proteins. No plant can exist without proteins. Fixing of atmospheric nitrogen reduces the

need for chemical fertiliser with significant input cost savings to the farmer.

Limiting pests and diseases

In rotation, these crops contribute to the reduction of losses caused by pests and diseases. Where groundnuts are, for example, rotated with maize infested with *Diplodia*, inoculum levels of the pathogen will decrease over time, because the pathogen can only infect maize.

Inoculum are the infective structures of a disease that survive in plant residue and soil. These structures are capable to cause disease in the following crop. The rotation with groundnut (which is a non-host) results in the pathogen not having a viable host to infect and propagate on, resulting in the eventual decline in inoculum levels. The non-host accordingly, provides unfavourable conditions for the pathogen.

Economic value

Increased income opportunities

Legumes can increase income opportunities. Good quality red speckled sugar beans, for example, can obtain commodity prices as high as R12 000/ton and even more. Local demand for

this commodity currently exceeds local supply abilities. The average of dry beans produced in South Africa over the previous five production seasons stands on 59 500 ton. Compared to local consumption, the demand is 137 712 ton, which represents a deficit of 78 212 ton of dry beans.

Large quantities of dry beans are therefore imported each year, mainly from China. This trend creates an opportunity for expansion and, especially for developing farmers located in suitable production areas, to enter the market.

The deficit in local production creates an opportunity for expansion and, especially for developing farmers located in suitable dry bean production areas, to enter the market.

Helps to curb risks in production

In a production environment known for its high risks, legumes also provide an opportunity to diversification. Planting a wider variety of crops implies the spread of the farmers risk on inputs, yield and income in a country known for its erratic farming conditions. Crops like cowpea for example is adapted to tough farming conditions, able to produce food even under harsh climatic conditions.

Nutritional value

The high nutritional value of legumes is well known (Table 1). These crops are an excellent source of protein and fibre. In addition, legumes are an inexpensive source of protein, vitamins and minerals and often it is even regarded as a perfect substitute for meat. Table 1 gives a clear indication of the protein contents of certain crops in comparison to maize.

Table 1: The protein content of some legumes compared to the protein content of maize.

Crop	Dry protein content in seed (%)
Groundnut	24 - 26
Cowpea	22 - 24
Dry beans	17 - 22
Maize	8 - 12

Source: MRC Food composition tables

Production of legumes under dryland conditions in South Africa

Although local soybean, dry bean, groundnut and cowpea are widely adapted, they show preferences to specific soil and climatic conditions and will do better on deep and well-drained soils.



Mr Johannes Simelane in a well-established block of sugar beans. He planted the crop in 2013/2014 on his farm Mpembe, in the Balfour district, Mpumalanga.



For instance, dry beans will not perform in Limpopo because of the high temperatures that are prevalent during the summer season (mid-November to mid-March), while groundnut will not perform optimally in Ermelo, Mpumalanga because the temperatures are too low, the daylight lengths too short and the humidity too high.

Note that dry beans are successfully grown in Limpopo, however, only under irrigation during winter months in the frost-free areas.

Table 2 provides an exposition of soybean, groundnut and dry bean, indicating the production conditions in which these crops will perform best.

Within each legume crop, however, a wide range of varieties (cultivars) exist. Each cultivar has its own, specific characteristics that makes it better adapted and more suitable for specific production areas ARC-Grain Crops runs a comprehensive programme to evaluate cultivars for their adaptability and various characteristics in the respective production areas. During the evaluation process, cultivars that obtain the best yield and quality for a specific locality within a specific geographical area, are identified.

This information, published annually, in the form of a leaflet (cultivar recommendations) can be obtained, free of charge, from Private Bag X1251, Potchefstroom, 2521, (Tel: 018 299 6100).

Seed requirements and planting guidelines

Table 3 provides the plant population, seed spacing within the row, quantity or amount of seed per hectare recommended and seed



A youth group in a field of cowpea at Nokaneng in the north-western part of Mpumalanga (in the dry season of 2010/2011). The maize in the background struggles while the cowpea crop performs well despite the dry conditions.

costs for soybean, groundnut, drybean and cowpea. For some legumes, e.g. the seed of dry beans has become a very expensive input component.

In view of the high seed costs, planning of the planting process and the specific amount of seed is, therefore, a crucial activity in the

establishment of legumes (In the case of dry beans, seed cost alone entails 38% of input costs. See **Table 5**).

Furthermore, apart from proper spacing, planting depth (between 20 mm and 50 mm deep depending on soil moisture and clay content) is also important to ensure

Table 2: Soil requirements, suitable production areas and optimal planting dates for soybean, groundnut and dry beans. (Production contribution adapted from: Trends in the Agricultural Sector 2016, DAFF).

Crop	Soil requirements	Production contribution per province in 2016*	Optimal planting period
Soybean	Sandy loam to Sandy clay (15% - 50% Clay)	Mpumalanga – 47,7% Eastern Free State – 34,6% KwaZulu-Natal – 5,8%	Moderate areas (North West) Mid-November - mid-December Colder areas (Eastern Free State, eastern parts of Mpumalanga) End-October - end-November
Groundnut	Loamy sand/Sandy loam (10% - 20% Clay)	North West – 42,0% Northern Free State – 28,8% Northern Cape – 22,1%	Mid-October - mid-November
Dry bean (Sugar bean: Growing season 109 - 121 days)	Sandy loam/ Sandy clay loam (15% - 35% Clay)	Eastern Free State – 48,0% Mpumalanga – 16,9% Limpopo – 10,6%	Mid-November - end-December

*Contribution per province – based on farmers' selection of crops most suitable for a specific area

Table 3: Seed requirements per hectare and seed cost of soybean, dry bean and cowpea under dryland conditions.

Crop	Plant population (plants/ha)	Seed spacing at a row width of 900 mm	Number of seeds/m	Seed quantity (kg/ha)	Average seed cost/25 kg (R)	Average seed cost/ha (R)
Soybean	300 000	35 mm	28	65	850	2 210
Groundnut	80 000 - 100 000	90 mm	11	60	700	1 680
Dry bean (Sugar bean)	130 000 - 145 000	75 mm	12 - 13	60 - 65	1 225	3 307
Cowpea Upright/Runner	122 000	90 mm	11	15	750	450
	88 000	125 mm	8	10	750	300

Boost grain production with legumes

Table 4: Inoculants developed for specific legumes.

Legume	Specific inoculant to apply	Active strain of bacteria
Soybean	Soybean inoculant (WB74)	<i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i>
Groundnut	Groundnut and Cowpea group inoculant (XS21 group A)	<i>Bradyrhizobium sp. (vigna)</i>
Cowpea	Groundnut and Cowpea group inoculant (XS21 group B)	<i>Bradyrhizobium sp. (vigna)</i>
Dry beans	Bean inoculant (UD5)	<i>Rhizobium leguminosarum biovar phaseoli</i>

Source: Stimuplant

simultaneous germination. Unfortunately, inadequate mechanisation systems currently deployed in the developing sector of South Africa presents a significant challenge.

A lack of good planters, which can be adjusted to plant the crop at the required plant density and depth, is a factor that makes it difficult for some farmers to adhere to plant populations as recommended.

Fertilisation of legumes

As indicated earlier, legumes have the ability to fix their own nitrogen (N), which reduces the need for chemical fertiliser. They have the unique ability to, in symbioses with *Rhizobium* bacteria, fix atmospheric nitrogen to make it available to follow-up crops.

These characteristics make legumes ideal crops to be included in crop rotation systems. Before planting, legumes should be inoculated by means of a seed treatment. Note: Inoculants are prepacked sachets containing beneficial microorganisms preserved in a carrier to apply as a seed treatment.

The value of inoculation is that the inoculant enables the crop to, effectively, fix nitrogen at a low cost. As indicated in **Table 4**, inoculants should be selected for the specific crop only. In the case of soybean, no proper inoculation will surely result in low N levels available to the plant, which will result in poor yields, unless inorganic nitrogen fertiliser is applied, at high cost.

Inoculants should be selected for and applied to the specific crop only as indicated in the table.

In the case of cowpea, the rhizobium organism responsible for N fixation occurs naturally in South African soils. In view of this, the economic advantages of the inoculation of cowpea is still in question.

Commercial producers of dry beans usually do not inoculate their seed and in most cases, they stick to official fertiliser recommendations (see Table 5). As an alternative, some dry bean farmers, however, do use *Rhizobium*

leguminosarum (Table 4) with good results. The economic value of inoculation and N fixation in the production of dry beans should, however, be researched further.

All South African soils are inherently low in phosphorus (P), which can only be built up with extended commercial crop cultivation. Although legumes respond well on residual P, levels of the soil in which it is produced, should be at least 25 mg/kg (Bray 1). At P levels of 15 mg/kg or lower, a purposeful P build-up programme should be implemented, to improve soils prepared for legume production.

Soybeans are able to utilise potassium (K) reserves in the soil well. In general, however, legumes are likely to show deficiencies of K in soils with less than 60 mg/kg K. Hence, legumes planted in soils with low K levels will react well on K fertilisation.

In the case of groundnut for example, calcium (Ca) is an important macronutrient for kernel development and yield performance. In order to provide sufficient Ca, the uptake of Ca also takes place directly through the pods.

When a soil sample indicates that the Ca is low, in a case where liming to rectify acidification is not required, then, calcium in the form of a surface application of gypsum (200 kg/ha - 300 kg/ha) can make a significant contribution to increase the yield of groundnuts.

Table 5: Direct variable production costs for dry beans (sugar bean).

Input item	Specification	Quantity/ha	Unit price (R)	Cost (R/ha)
Seed	RS6	65 kg	1 225/25 kg	3 185
Mechanisation	Diesel and repairs	-	-	1 045
Fertiliser	3:2:1 (32)	200 kg	313/50 kg bag	1 252
Herbicide	Bateleur Gold	1,5 litre	2 038/5 litre	611
Disease control (Seed dressing)	Celest XL & Apron XL	81 ml 7 ml	625/1 litre 1 398/250 ml	51 39
Treatment – Bean rust	Sparta plus	500 ml	1 298/5 litre	130
Treatment – Anthracnose	Amistar Top	500 ml	4 576/5 litre	457
Labour	Temporary workers	-	-	1 560
Total				8 330



Mrs Beauty Skhosana showing her dry bean harvest on her farm Uthembekile near Balfour. She obtained a yield of 1,55 ton/ha and harvested a total of 35,6 ton in 2014.

Production costs of dry beans

Table 5 illustrates an example of variable costs incurred by dry bean farmers. The total variable cost of R8 330/ha highlights the demand for sound management of the crop, which will also be applicable to legumes such as soybean and groundnut.

Yield potential and the economic value of legumes

Table 6 indicates the national average yields and income earned by maize, soybean, groundnut and dry bean farmers during 2013/2014 to 2015/2016.

Yield of legumes compared to the yield obtained from maize is relatively low (Table 6). However, prices earned for these commodities



Table 6: Average yield and farmer prices received for maize, soybean, groundnut and dry bean production during 2013/2014 to 2015/2016 (Adapted from: Trends in the Agricultural Sector 2016, DAFF).

Crop	National average yield for 2011/2012 to 2015/2016 (ton/ha)	Farmer price in Rand/ton*/ production season		
		2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Maize	4,33	2 626	2 379	3 529
Soybean	1,55	5 549	4 732	6 217
Groundnut	1,10	8 756	8 234	7 582
Dry bean	1,03	12 277	10 957	12 965

*Income depends on the product's quality and the various grades. Groundnut prices, for instance, will vary significantly between choice, standard and crushing grades



Farmers at Puleng in Limpopo exposed to a wide range of groundnut varieties in an on-farm variety evaluation trial.

The deficit in local production creates an opportunity for expansion and, especially for developing farmers located in suitable dry bean production areas, to enter the market.

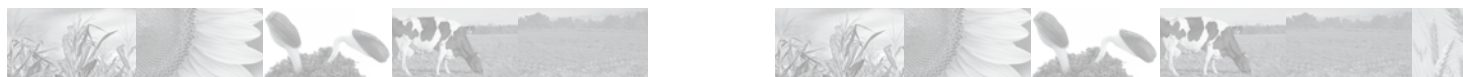
compared to the price of maize compensate for their lower yield.

A further decrease in the price of maize during October 2017 (R1 871/ton – Safex), presents the production of legumes as a viable alternative to exploit. The introduction of legumes into an existing cropping system also provides an opportunity to diversify the cropping system and to bring down the risks in terms of inputs, yield and income. For instance, with good management of a dry bean crop (sugar bean), a yield of one and a half (1,5) t/ha can be achieved.

Let us assume an income of at least R12 000 per ton can be generated. Since the direct variable cost is R8 330 (Table 5), the profit margin of this crop can be $1,5 \text{ t/ha} \times R12\ 000 = R18\ 000 - R8\ 330 = R9\ 670/\text{ha}$. In view of this favourable earning, opting for an alternative such as dry beans implies a meaningful income opportunity, particularly in a time of low maize prices.

The introduction of legumes into an existing cropping system also provides an opportunity to diversify the cropping system and in so doing, brings down the risks in terms of inputs, yield and income.

Article submitted by APN du Toit, ARC-Grain Crops, Potchefstroom. For more information, send an email to dutoitp@arc.agric.za.



Pula Imvula's Quote of the Month

There is always space for improvement, no matter how long you've been in the business.

~ Oscar De La Hoya

Meet our 2018 FARMER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES (Part 1)

It is that exciting time of the year again where the nominees for the 2018 Grain SA Farmer of the Year competition have been identified.

It must always be kept in mind that the main goal of this competition is not about winning, it is about celebrating the learning, growth, development and hard work of the thousands of

farmers in the Grain SA Farmer Development Programme.

It is meant to act as a beacon of motivation and inspiration to all of us to continuously work towards bettering ourselves to achieve our goals, irrespective of how big they are. Your goal should never be to be nominated or to win anything, but to grow every day, every month and every year to get closer to reaching the

yields, profitability, the efficiency or whichever goals you have set for yourself and your family. Ultimately, that is winning!

If you have been nominated for this competition, you are doing something right and setting an example to others of what can be achieved. With that said, we would like to introduce you to 2018 Farmer of the Year nominees!

Our nominees are...





Subsistence nominees



Ndlalankululu Jona Zungu

Ndlalankulu was born in 1948 at Matshana area near Wakkerstroom. He grew up on the farm Ogiesfontein near Wakkerstroom. Ndlalankululu's interest in farming started at a young age helping his father on the farm to plant and harvest their maize.

Although he had always worked in Gauteng and other places, he returned home in 2007 and decided to try his hand at planting in the hope of getting enough maize for his household. After getting involved with Grain SA he managed to provide enough for himself and had extra maize to sell for an income.



Ncamisile Liphine Mdluli

Ncamisile was born in Swaziland to Agnes and Alfred Hlophe on 29 January 1958. She is married to Norman Mdluli and they have six children of which four are girls and two were boys.

Her love for agriculture developed at a very young age as she used to help her parents when they were planting and she did various chores in the village they lived in. Ncamisile officially joined Grain SA in July 2016, but prior to that she had attended some study group meetings as she was interested in what was happening in the field of agricultural. This hard-working lady attends and participates in meetings regularly and her mentor is impressed with her diligence to put into practice what she has learnt.



Anderson Cetywayo Magidela

Anderson is a full-time resident of Khanyayo location and was born there on 28 June 1934. He started farming a long time ago, but back then he had no one to mentor him in correct agricultural practices. He became a Grain SA member and began learning a lot about farming.

Apart from becoming a farmer he also learnt how to look after the soil so that the structure does not become poor. Unfortunately, most people, especially those who do not have the privilege of having mentors do not look after their soil well. Anderson is proud to be part of Grain SA and is hoping for the best in the future.

Meet our 2018 Farmer of the Year nominees (Part 1)



Thembie Linah Shongwe

Thembie was born on 20 June 1966 in Swaziland and grew up in Swaziland in the Manzini area.

She became interested in agriculture as a young girl seeing her parents working in the fields planting different crops in order to provide food for the family.

Her interest in agriculture increased after getting involved with Grain SA. Thembie started planting maize in 2009, but was harvesting a very small yield.

In 2014 she joined the Grain SA study group in Breyten. To her this was an eye opener because it is where she managed to gain valuable farming skills.

Last year she harvested 5,3 tons and is looking forward to improving even further. She dreams of having her own piece of land where she can plant crops to provide for herself and be able to sell her produce and one day become a sustainable farmer.



Jeneth Thembi Shoba

Jeneth was born on 5 April 1959 at Zandspruit between Ermelo and Piet Retief. She started to gain interest in agriculture when she was still young as her parents worked on the farm. It became clear to her that there was no life without agriculture.

She started farming with maize and cattle with her late husband Simon in 1994. Jeneth joined Grain SA in 2014 and began enjoying farming when she became a study group member of Grain SA. Through Grain SA she was gained the skills and knowledge to farm in a more professional and productive manner. During the previous season, Jeneth managed to produce 7,5 tons of maize for the first time on 1 ha.



Victor Bumisani Nelson Dube

Victor was born on 19 September 1960 and raised in the village of Dukuza in Bergville, KwaZulu-Natal. He started farming in 2000 and joined Grain SA in 2009, attending training, study group meetings and in 2014/2015 he was part of the Monsanto/ARC pilot project. He has since been part of the Jobs Fund Project.

Victor's desire is to become a commercial farmer. He has considered various options to improve his profitability from producing popcorn maize to value adding like making stamp mealies. Vegetables and fruits also form a part of his farming operations.



Alfred Magongo

Alfred was born and raised at Mooiplaas near Elukwatini village in 1958. His father was a farmer and planted maize, groundnuts and sweet potatoes. The money earned from farming helped raise his family. In 1983 he started farming independently with maize and other crops like sweet potatoes and vegetables and used cattle for ploughing his arable lands.

Currently Alfred is planting maize and planted 7 ha this year. He is a very progressive farmer who contributes more and more from his own pocket every year under the Jobs Fund Programme. Last year he achieved an average of 6 t/ha on the 7 ha that he planted.



Thenjiwe Mirriam Ngudle

Thenjiwe was born at Qolombana Location in the Tsolo District on 1 April 1961. She grew up working in the mealie fields, ploughing with cattle before going to school with her brothers and this is where she developed an interest in agriculture.

Since 1982, Thenjiwe is an educator at Ngubesi-zwe Primary School in the Qumbu District and in 2012 was promoted to principal of the school. This hard-working farmer has managed to harvest good yields of high quality. She is involved with Grain SA as one of the members of the Sityala Sitye Kambi Study Group.



Amos Mfaniseni Kubheka

Siyavuya was born at Ntlozelo location in the Mbizana village in the Nkhwe administration. This is where he grew up with his family and where he still lives. Siyavuya comes from a farming family and grew up looking after his family's animals with his siblings until he left home to look for work in Welkom in the Free State province.

He has a keen interest in livestock and crop production and with the help of Grain SA has great potential in producing more maize, up to between 5 t/ha and 7 t/ha. Currently Siyavuya has planted 2 ha of maize.

Amos was born on 18 December 1955 at Paul Pietersburg. He developed an interest in agriculture because he farmed with his grandfather and realised that in order to survive and take care of his family, he should be a farmer.

His grandfather farmed with both livestock and cash crops and taught him how to farm properly in order to produce good yields.

In 2004 until 2008 he joined the Grain SA study group at Oshoek. He re-joined the Grain SA study group again in 2014 as he realised he was not going to improve his farming activities without the assistance of Grain SA and the skills that they instilled in him.



Siyavuya Njeya

Mgezeni was born near Dirksdorp on the farm Twyfelhoek in 1961. He is the third of twelve children. His interest in agriculture started when he was still young and he assisted his father to plough the fields using oxen. This is also where his love for soil originated. Mgezeni also has an interest in livestock and crop production.

With the help of Grain SA, he has great potential in producing more maize considering that he has improved from planting 1 ha to the 3 ha he currently plants. In the future Mgezeni would like to plant more maize.



Mgezeni Richard Hlatswayo

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Meet our 2018 Farmer of the Year nominees (Part 1)

Smallholder nominees



Nhlanhla Sicelo Mngadi

Nhlanhla was born to Muriel and Aron Mngadi on 3 April 1970 in the Ntabamhlophe Village at Estcourt. He joined Grain SA in 2015 after he saw the beautiful and healthy maize of Mr Mbatha, his neighbour who was already a member of Grain SA. He needed no further motivation to join Grain SA and has never looked back.

Becoming a commercial farmer is Nhlanhla's dream and together with his brother, they are slowly working towards building up their farming capacity and equipment. They have worked hard implementing what they have learnt. The improvement has not only been in hectares and yields, but also in agricultural practises and efficiency.



Mduduzi David Mnisi

Mduduzi was born in 1986 in Breyten on the farm Bankfontein. He grew up there and in 2010 started working with his mother on this farm. He sees agriculture as a means of self-employment and a way of getting himself out of poverty.

Mduduzi farms under the guidance and mentorship of his neighbour, Corne Butter, and the two of them plan everything together. Three years ago, he became involved in the DRDLR REID Project – first planting 25 ha in the first year, 60 ha in the second year and currently planting 66 ha. Every year has been very successful. Through a lot of determination and hard work this farmer has shown other young farmers what can be done when one is given a chance.

Nominees are in no particular order.

Article submitted by Liana Stroebe,
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