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# PULA IMVULA

GROWING FOOD • PEOPLE • PROSPERITY

GRAIN SA MAGAZINE FOR DEVELOPING FARMERS





## Editorial team

### GRAIN SA: PRETORIA

PO Box 74087  
Lynnwood Ridge  
0040  
■ 086 004 7246  
■ www.grainsa.co.za

### MANAGING EDITOR

**Dr Sandile Ngcamphalala**  
■ 082 862 1991 ■ Office: 012 943 8296  
■ sandile@grainsa.co.za

### EDITOR AND DISTRIBUTION

**Liana Stroebe**  
■ 084 264 1422 ■ Office: 012 943 8285  
■ liana@grainsa.co.za

### PUBLISHING PARTNER

**INFOWORKS MEDIA PUBLISHING**  
**Assistant editor – Louise Kunz**  
■ louise@infoworks.biz

### Team leader – Johan Smit

■ 082 553 7806 ■ Office: 018 468 2716  
■ johan@infoworks.biz

**Publishing – Elizma Myburgh, Joritha Hechter**



## Grain SA Farmer Development Programme

### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS

**Johan Kriel**  
Free State (Bloemfontein)  
■ 079 497 4294 ■ johank@grainsa.co.za

**Jerry Mthombothi**  
Mpumalanga (Mbombela)  
■ 084 604 0549 ■ jerry@grainsa.co.za  
■ Office: 012 943 8289 ■ Smangalisu Zimbili

**Jurie Mentz**  
Mpumalanga/KwaZulu-Natal (Louwsburg)  
■ 082 354 5749 ■ jurie@grainsa.co.za  
■ Office: 012 943 8218

**Graeme Engelbrecht**  
KwaZulu-Natal (Dundee)  
■ 082 650 9315 ■ graeme@grainsa.co.za  
■ Office: 012 943 8287 ■ Nkosinathi Mazibuko

**Liana Stroebe**  
Western Cape (Paarl)  
■ 084 264 1422 ■ liana@grainsa.co.za  
■ Office: 012 943 8285 ■ Hailey Ehrenreich

**Du Toit van der Westhuizen**  
North West (Lichtenburg)  
■ 082 877 6749 ■ dutoit@grainsa.co.za  
■ Office: 012 943 8290 ■ Lebo Mogatlanyane

**Luke Collier**  
Eastern Cape (Kokstad & Mthatha)  
■ 083 730 9408 ■ luke@grainsa.co.za  
■ Office: 012 943 8280 ■ Luthando Diko  
Cwayita Mpotyi (Office assistant: Mthatha)  
■ 078 187 2752 ■ umthatha@grainsa.co.za  
■ Office: 012 943 8277

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location, farmers are all very helpful.*

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## A WORD FROM...

*Luke Collier*

**A** YEAR AGO, TO THE MONTH, I WAS WRITING FOR THE SAME PUBLICATION. THEN I TOUCHED ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE HARDSHIPS THAT MANY COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES HAD ENDURED. ALTHOUGH THE PANDEMIC IS PASSING AND RESTRICTIONS ARE EASING, THE COVID-19 HANGOVER IS STILL VERY MUCH IN FULL SWING.

Around this time of the year, most messages talk about the readiness of farmers – what should be done or what still needs to be done. For this issue, I would like to focus on the huge cost implications that farmers now face due to the COVID-19 hangover.

If we focus on the direct inputs, fertiliser has increased in the region of about 150% to 180%, many chemicals in the region of 30% to 50%, seed about 10% and diesel – let's not even go there. What this means, is that farmers across all sectors will need to become imaginative to make the crop perform to its best potential. The bigger farmers can absorb the extra increase in cost to a degree, but the smaller farmers are at a bit of a crossroads.

Although the crossroads that those farmers will have to cross are bumpy, there are some interesting and exciting possibilities. I had several discussions at NAMPO with various fertiliser suppliers, who have shown me that natural organics are a way to go.

Many companies are in fact looking seriously at these alternatives – not to replace the normal blends, but more to add and assist the normal blends to get the most out of the soils. These natural organics are very cheap and there are many available. I think these could be very viable options going forward, as fertiliser is farmers' biggest cost.

It is now more important than ever to use your savvy as farmers to get through the next few years. If you do manage to get these new ideas right, then it could change the way farmers farm for generations to come. If you manage, you could be farming effectively and at a lower cost if you can incorporate your current mixtures with natural organic fertilisers, which could massively change the cost per hectare.

I think the time has come for everyone to think out of the box and use their creativity to go forward in their farming operations. The fact is, it does not look as if the cost of inputs is coming down any time soon.

Keep strong and positive. Farming is about being resilient and waking up in the morning and tackling these challenges. ■



# Buying groups can help farmers to cut costs

**W**ITH SOARING FUEL PRICES AND HIGH INPUT COSTS, MAKING PLANS TO CUT COSTS HAS BECOME CRUCIAL. BULK BUYING IS ONE WAY TO SAVE, BUT THE AVERAGE PERSON DOES NOT HAVE EXTRA MONEY AVAILABLE TO BUY ENOUGH PRODUCTS TO LAST A FEW MONTHS. FORMING A 'BUYING GROUP' TO PURCHASE THE NECESSARY INPUTS CAN BE A PRACTICAL SOLUTION FOR FARMERS IN RURAL AREAS.

Group, bulk or collective buying refers to a buying group who purchase their seed, chemicals and fertiliser in bulk and then split the cost (and inputs) among themselves – making the unit cost lower for each product. It is especially beneficial for subsistence and small-holder farmers, particularly those in rural areas, as they won't be able to access these terms from the suppliers if they buy individually.

A study about farmer groups and fertiliser use in rural South Africa, which was published in the *South African Journal of Science* in 2018 (<https://www.sajs.co.za/article/view/5171>), found that small-holder farmers in South Africa use less fertiliser than they should, mainly as a result of a lack of finances to purchase it. The other problem was that their land is usually far from major centres on impassable roads.

The study results suggest that farmer groups play a positive role in the use of improved agricultural inputs in South Africa, as it helps them overcome various challenges.

## TEAMWORK IS CRUCIAL

Planning, teamwork and timeous payment are of importance in bulk buying. If an individual pays late or does not pay the whole amount in time, it affects the transaction and negatively impacts the rest of the team as delivery can only take place once the payment is done. Late delivery can have an impact on the planting window.

Luke Collier, regional development manager at Grain SA's Kokstad office, believes planning and management are key in buying groups. In his area Collier does the legwork, but the farmers have to handle the rest. What has proved to be successful in the Kokstad buying groups, is that each group elects a committee with a chairperson, secretary and treasurer who handle the administration. 'Individuals who want to be part of a buying group also need to have their own bank accounts,' he adds.

Once the calculations are done, the individuals must pay the owed amount into the group account by a certain date. The committee then goes to the Grain SA office, where Collier verifies the payments before it is paid over to the supplier.

To function effectively, healthy relationships amongst group members are important. Unfortunately, group buying does not run smoothly in all regions. Infighting and/or mistrust among group members will result in dysfunctional groups. However, farmers who are not comfortable working with others may soon realise how beneficial the group concept can be.

'For example, it can even help when a group of farmers approach the government together to ask for assistance with mechanisation. It

they do it together, the government can help them as a group as they have the same objective,' says Jerry Mthombothi, regional development manager at Grain SA's Mbombela office.

## MORE POSITIVES THAN NEGATIVES

The most obvious advantage of group buying is the savings, as it allows the group to purchase items in bulk at better prices, meaning all members of the group get access to these savings. 'When buying as individuals, farmers will buy the cheaper product to save money. However, when buying together in groups, it is possible for them to buy high-quality inputs thanks to the discount given for bulk purchases,' says Mthombothi.

Besides the discount prices, dealing with a collective of farmers makes it easier for the suppliers to offer technical support. It also reduces the cost in logistics of reaching every individual farmer to deliver the inputs, as delivery can be done to a central location where





*If everyone helps, offloading gets done quickly.*

farmers can help off-load the purchases. This also promotes teamwork, says Mthombothi, who has witnessed how the farmers assist one another when deliveries are made.

It also promotes community spirit. When farmers get together to collect their inputs, they have time to discuss communal farming issues and can support each other by offering advice. Through these shared interactions, relationships are strengthened.

To Johan Kriel, Grain SA's regional development manager in the Free State, and his son, Hannes, an area manager for a local seed company, the main advantages of buying groups are:

- **Volume purchases:** Most companies have a sliding scale on which they give a specific discount for a certain volume. If a few subsistence or smallholder farmers buy inputs as a group, they qualify for a higher volume discount. Because they are now buying a larger volume, they can use their position to negotiate between the various companies for a better deal.
- **Contacts:** Farmers can share contact information with each other, which will make it possible to get more quotes, information and a better deal – even from someone who may not be a local supplier. A buying group can negotiate better discounts.
- **Better service:** A bigger order usually gets preferential delivery.
- **Financing:** Groups can negotiate for better interest rates, as they spend more. Larger organisations will be interested in getting their business and their bargaining power will therefore increase.

#### FACTORS THAT CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE GROUP

Although group buying or buying in bulk can lead to big savings, there are certain loopholes one must try to avoid:

- Farmers with different needs should not buy together. Make sure the group has common needs.

- Members who do not pay their money on time. This can cause a delay in delivery.
- A farmer whose payments on his production loan are in arrears. If one year's payment is late, it could influence the group's discount – so ensure that the members of the group are creditworthy.
- Impassable roads. Ensure that the road to the delivery address is accessible. 'Additional charges can be added if the location is difficult to reach,' says Du Toit van der Westhuizen, Grain SA's regional development manager in North West.
- Not buying full loads. 'When buying fertiliser, for example, farmers have to buy full loads. Otherwise there may be a delay in doing the delivery. A truck usually loads 34 tons. If there is a truck that transports only 4 tons of carriage, the supplier will not let the truck leave the factory,' says Du Toit.
- Everyone who is part of the group must be registered for VAT.
- Farmers who give an incorrect reference number make it difficult to trace the owner of the inputs.
- Everyone must be ready to offload the products when it arrives. 'If one member does not give his full cooperation, it can put the whole group in a bad light and possibly harm the transaction,' says Du Toit. A buying group is a matter of people scratching each other's backs. ■



LOUISE KUNZ,  
PULA IMVULA EDITORIAL TEAM





# Let's debate the DIESEL rebate

**F**OR THE MONTH OF MAY 2022, OIL PRICES TRADED ON AVERAGE AT \$111,35/BARREL. THIS LED TO AN INCREASE IN THE DIESEL PRICE FOR JUNE 2022. THE BASIC DIESEL PRICE INCREASED TO R16,08/LITRE FROM R14,98/LITRE IN MAY 2022. THIS IS THE REAL PRICE OF DIESEL.

The high diesel prices come after record prices were already reported in 2021, and the situation has just worsened in 2022. For June 2022, the wholesale diesel price was R23,09/litre.

Real data for the 2019/2020 season indicated that diesel expenses account for about 10% of a farmer's total input cost. Diesel prices rose by 40% in 2021, and on top of this have increased by 28% in 2022 (until May), with more increases expected to come. The total

input costs (including seed, fertiliser, agro-chemicals and fuel) increased by 50% on an annual basis.

## 1 The current rebate.

DIESEL PRICE			DIESEL REFUND			
Date	RAF c/l	Tax c/l	RAF c/l	Tax c/l	Total c/l	Tax %
April 2021	218	370	218	148	366	40
April 2022: Temporary reduction in fuel levy	218	220	218	88	306	40
July 2022	218	295	218	118	336	40
August 2022	218	370	218	148	366	40

## HOW IS THE DIESEL PRICE DETERMINED?

The price determination of fuel in South Africa is a concept that very few South Africans are familiar with. The buying of petroleum products on the international market at import parity and the transport thereof are the main factors which influence the basic diesel price.

These two factors are heavily influenced by the international oil price and the rand/dollar exchange rate. From the basic fuel price, levies and taxes are added by the government.

**Graph 1** shows a breakdown of the wholesale price of diesel at 0,05% sulphur (S) against R23,09/litre (as on 1 June 2022), the following is clear:

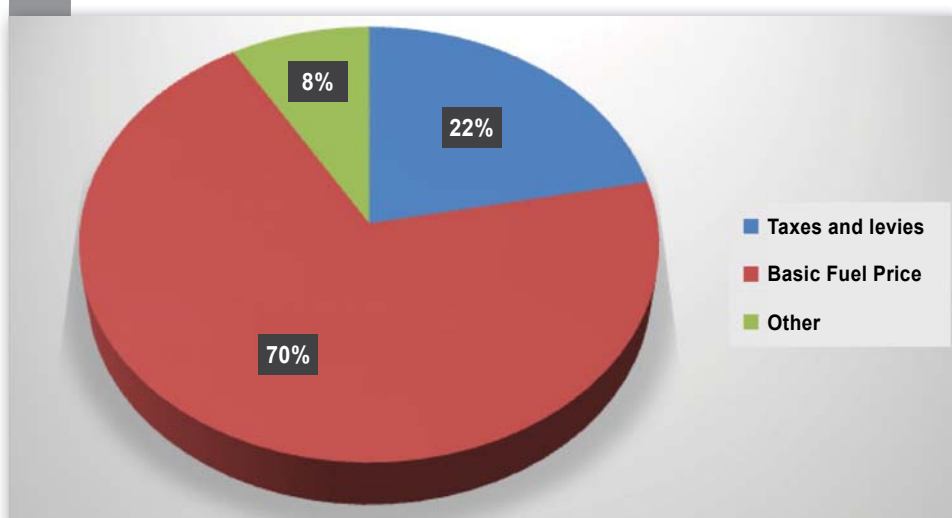
- Basic fuel price: R16,08/litre (70%).
- Taxes and levies: R5,05/litre (22%).
- Other: R1,97/litre (9%) – this segment consists of the wholesale margin, storage and distribution, transport margin and retail margin.

## TAXES AND LEVIES

The two biggest levies are the general fuel levy and the Road Accident Fund (RAF) levy.

- The general fuel levy is a levy on each litre of fuel, which amounted to R80 billion in the 2019/2020 fiscal year and is almost 6% of the total national tax income. These

## 1 A breakdown of the wholesale price of diesel.



Source: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, 2021



funds flow into the national income fund, where it is earmarked for the eight metro municipalities in South Africa. In the 2019/2020 fiscal year, R13,2 billion was paid to these municipalities.

- The RAF levy is currently R2,18/litre and generated R41,2 billion in the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

**Graph 2** shows the relationship between landed cost and diesel, and also the movement of the landed cost and levies and taxes.

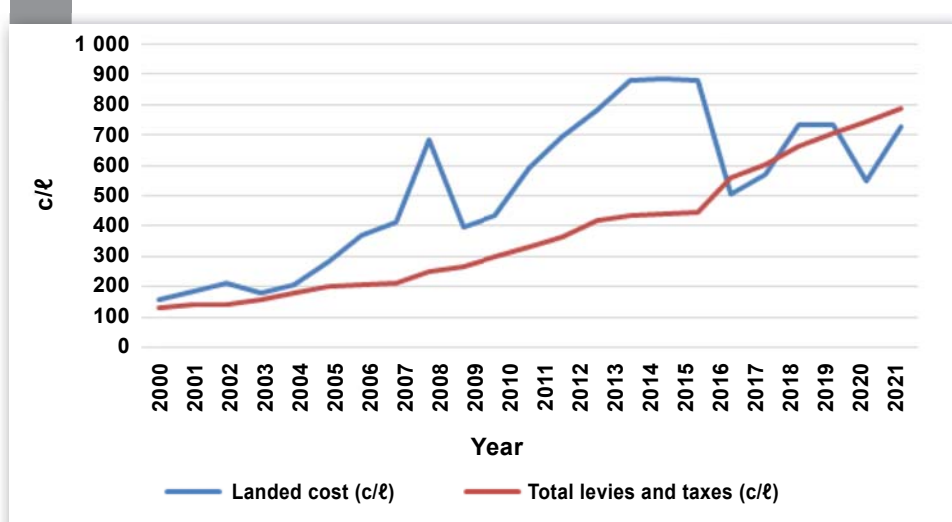
### DIESEL REBATE

The diesel rebate is a refund system where people who are tax registered and work in the farming, mining and forestry sectors may apply for a refund on diesel used for these activities.

#### Steps to receive the diesel rebate

Persons who are registered for VAT can apply for registration with SARS to participate in the diesel refund system by completing the VAT101D form.

**2** Landed cost of diesel vs total levies and taxes.



Source: Grain SA

to R3,36, and finally in August 2022 the full R1,50 will return, which means the diesel rebate will return to R3,66.

### IN CLOSING

South Africa currently has the highest fuel price in history. This is not only a hurdle for farmers but for the whole value chain. Every product must move through the value chain to be processed into its final form. This means that the high diesel price causes the prices of products to rise, which in turn leads to higher inflation. This is an unpleasant circle, with the whole value chain feeling the pinch. ■

Scan the QR code to download the form:



Since April 2021, the diesel rebate amounted to R3,66/litre. With the reduction of the general fuel levy by R1,50 to combat rising fuel prices, the National Treasury decided that the diesel rebate will also be reduced by 60 cents for April and June. In July 75 cents of the reduced levy will be added, which means that the rebate will increase

CHRISTIAAN VERCUIEL,  
INTERN: APPLIED ECO-  
NOMICS, GRAIN SA



# Know your pests: Cotton bollworm

**A**FRICAN OR COTTON BOLLWORM FEEDS ON ALMOST ALL CULTIVATED CROPS AND IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE MAJOR PESTS OF COTTON IN SOUTH AFRICA. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT FARMERS CAN IDENTIFY THESE PESTS TO MANAGE THEM EARLY WITH THE RIGHT SET OF TOOLS.

The lifecycle of cotton bollworm (*Helicoverpa amigera*) ranges between 25 to 35 days and is temperature dependent. Moths are most active at dusk and dawn, with male moths having a characteristic light pale green colour and female moths being brown. Female moths lay large batches of eggs (1 000 to 3 000), which start to hatch after two to three days. The eggs are initially cream or white with longitudinal ribs but darken just before hatching.



**A single bollworm egg close to a cotton ball.**



**A young brownish bollworm.**



**Colour variation in bollworms vary from brown to green.**

Larvae vary in colour from pinkish to green or yellow, but the most common colour is brown. Young larvae have black spots and can look similar to young fall armyworm larvae, with dark heads. Older larvae have yellow or brown heads, with clear spiracles and alternating dark and pale longitudinal bands along the body. There are normally six larval instars as feeding continues for two to three weeks before larvae pupate in the soil.

The pupae have a smooth shiny brown appearance, with two spines on the rear end, and are seldom seen. Pupation takes ten to 20 days, following with the first moths starting to emerge, beginning their search for a mating partner and repeating the cycle again.

Young larvae feed prolifically on the growing tips and terminal buds. From the second instar onwards, squares, flowers and bolls are attacked and often hollowed out. When bollworms attack the cotton bolls, they may open prematurely and stay fruitless. Damaged bolls fall off, fail to produce lint or produce lint of inferior quality. Damage symptoms characterised by circular holes bored into fruit serve as entry points for secondary infections by fungi and bacteria and may lead to the rotting of fruits.

Planting cotton cultivars modified with insect resistant technology (Bt cotton) offers excellent control, but it is crucial that the area also includes the planting of a mandated refuge. Weeding, inter-row cultivation, removing crop residues, deep ploughing before planting and the use of registered insecticides for bollworm are additional control options.

Regular scouting of cotton fields and monitoring the flights of moth populations with pheromone traps are essential for early detection, so that bollworm infestations can be reduced before it causes serious crop damage.

For more information, visit [https://croplife.co.za/KnowYourPest\\_CottonBollworm](https://croplife.co.za/KnowYourPest_CottonBollworm). ■

**CROPLIFE SOUTH AFRICA**



*Success is not final, failure is not fatal:  
it is the courage to continue that counts.*

~ SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL  
British Prime Minister during the Second World War





# The team who put grain farmers first

**G**RAIN SA IS AN ORGANISATION THAT LOBBIES ON BEHALF OF THE GRAIN FARMERS OF SOUTH AFRICA. IT ALSO ACTS AS A WATCHDOG, MONITORING MANY DIVERSE ASPECTS OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR – FROM INPUT QUALITY TO GOVERNMENT POLICYMAKING, FROM DIESEL REBATES TO IMPORT TARIFFS. EVERY ASPECT OF THE INDUSTRY THAT CAN AFFECT THE FARMER'S POCKET COMES UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS OF THIS HIGHLY SKILLED AND COMPETENT TEAM.

## THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

The Grain SA staff members are employed by the grain farmers who are members of Grain SA. This means that the farmers have elected members out of their own delegates to the congress, who are also actively involved in the day-to-day activities of the organisation. The executive members are the farmers' voice and the only way they can address issues that concern the farmer, is by talking to them.

Because they are also farmers, they understand the challenges farmers deal with on a daily basis. They are active on all the committees within the organisation and ensure that the personnel are well informed about farmers' challenges. The executive members also serve on numerous external committees in the broader agricultural sector and act as the voice of the grain farmer on these platforms.

At this year's Congress the two people elected to serve as vice-chairpersons on the executive are Richard Krige, who farms near Caledon in the Western Cape, and Jeremia Mathebula, who farms near Amersfoort in Mpumalanga. Together with Derek Mathews, the chairman, they serve as the management committee and work closely with Grain SA's chief executive officer, Dr Pieter Taljaard, and other key management personnel.

They are further supported by Jaco Breytenbach, Ramoso Pholo, Danie Minnaar, Sarel Haasbroek and Ramodisa Monaisa, who serve on the management committee overseeing day-to-day business at Grain SA, including financial matters and personnel appointments.

## MEET JEREMIA MATHEBULA

After serving as a farmer representative on Grain SA's executive, farmer Jeremia Mathebula's leadership qualities and farming expertise led to him being elected by delegates to the 2022

Congress to serve on the management committee as one of two vice-chairpersons of Grain SA.

Jeremia has always had farming in his blood and grew up in a family who are all passionate about farming. His father was a hard-working small-scale farmer and in his heart Jeremia always knew he would like to follow in his dad's footsteps. Although he successfully studied for his Bachelor of Commerce: Administration degree, the call of agriculture was strong.

He soon realised he needed his own place, so he approached the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development for help. He began farming with ten cattle in 2009. He now farms on Klipplaatdrift, a 1 300 ha farm near Amersfoort in Mpumalanga. Jeremia plants maize and soybeans, and also has a 600-head strong livestock component.

He believes in continuing education and even after his degree continued with a number of general agricultural courses to better equip himself. Although he continues to enjoy mentoring from other farmers, in particular the commercial farmers around him, he in turn passes on his knowledge by mentoring others and helping them to make informed decisions within their farming businesses.

Jeremia believes farmers need to learn about modern farming methods, precision farming and the newest technologies. For him moving with the times means improved on-farm efficiency, better timing of activities, using the correct fertiliser and planting the right number of seeds per hectare. He practises crop rotation by planting his fields with 60% maize and 40% soybeans, since he has learned this is a way to improve soil health and increase disease resistance.

In his role as representative of the grain-farming sector, Jeremia has served on numerous committees within Grain SA, such as the Maize and Farmer Development Working Groups and the newly established Phahama Grain Phakama NPC.

Looking beyond Grain SA, he has also served on the Agri SA Centre of Excellence: Natural Resources committee, the Oilseeds Trust and the Oilseeds Advisory Committee. He has also represented his farming community as a delegate to the Agri SA and Mpumalanga Agri congresses.

Jeremia's dream is to see more successful developing farmers enjoying the fruits of their labour. He believes this will happen when farmers get the most out of the natural resources they have at their disposal. He is also convinced that farmers all need to be given title deeds to their farms to facilitate ease of access to the necessary finance that every commercial farmer relies on. ■

A big thank you to Ramodisa Monaisa for his term as vice-chairperson of Grain SA. Ramodisa is now an additional member representative of Farmer Development.



*Ramodisa Monaisa and Jeremia Mathebula at the 2022 Grain SA Congress.*



**JENNY MATHEWS,  
MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT  
SPECIALIST AND EDUCATOR**

# Be inspired!

**A** NEW AGRI-TV SERIES, *NICHE FARMERS*, STARTED AIRING ON ETV IN AUGUST. *NICHE FARMERS* IS A FIRST-OF-ITS KIND ENGLISH AGRI-TV SERIES WHICH IS BROADCAST ON ETV WITH SAME WEEK REPEATS ON THE EXTRA AND HONEY CHANNELS ON DSTV.

The series will tell the aspiring stories of both successful black commercial farmers and 'niche' farmers, to inspire others. Essentially, the aim is to show that everyone with a little bit of space and the hunger to succeed can become a niche farmer.

The programme is hosted by two popular radio personalities, Wilson B. Nkosi and Rozanne McKenzie, both of whom are also experienced television presenters. Nkosi shared that he has always had the desire to do something deeper, something that truly speaks to the human condition.

According to McKenzie, *Niche Farmers* will without doubt debunk conventional views about agriculture and create a new narrative of what it really means to be a 'farmer'. As such, the show will also feature lesser-known farming enterprises which produce the likes of mushrooms, honey, saffron, berries and truffles.

Successful black commercial farmers who produce more common staple foods will be profiled, telling the stories of their daily struggles, and the key partners who are instrumental in their success.



**Rozanne McKenzie and Wilson B. Nkosi are the two presenters of a new agri TV-series called Niche farmers.**

The show will reach viewers in South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Namibia, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, DRC and Cameroon. ■

**MEDIA RELEASE, 25 JULY 2022**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### Part 3

# Handle portable *power tools* safely

**T**HE SAFE HANDLING OF PORTABLE POWER TOOLS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BOTH THE EMPLOYER AND THE PERSON USING IT. HOWEVER, THE EMPLOYER SHOULD ENSURE THAT ALL POWER TOOLS ARE IN A GOOD WORKING CONDITION AT ALL TIMES AND SAFE FOR USE BY EMPLOYEES.

Before using power tools, an employee must perform a visual inspection to ensure that it is safe for use. The user must also ensure that all moving parts are protected. Any unsafe electrical connections should be reported to a supervisor or the employer immediately.

If a power tool overheats while being used, it must be switched off immediately and removed from the power source. The employee/user must report the faulty tool immediately.

Electrical cords should also be checked before being used. Unsafe joints in cables or unsafe plugs should not be tolerated. An electrical cord should be unrolled before use to ensure that it does not overheat when used.

To ensure that employees are aware of what kind of protective clothing should be worn when working with electrical equipment, safety signs should be affixed in the workplace. Protection for hands, eyes and ears, safety shoes, welding gloves and a welding apron should be worn when working with power tools. Protected clothing should be provided to employees free of charge.

The employer must provide the employees with an inspection list to ensure that all portable power tools are inspected on a monthly basis. All portable power tools must also be included in a risk analysis. A safe work procedure should be signed by employees who use power tools. ■



**CHARL SAAYMAN, HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTANT AT MEGA HEALTH AND SAFETY**





# Is your CROP ADVISER accredited?

**B**Y NOW MANY PEOPLE ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE CROPLIFE SA CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) PROGRAMME, ESPECIALLY THOSE PRODUCERS WHO HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO BUYING FROM AN ACCREDITED CROP ADVISER.

CropLife SA drives this programme to ensure that participants of member companies continue to engage in industry learning activities that maintain and enhance their professional competency and knowledge. The programme aims to advance the status of being merely a transactional sales agent, to becoming a crop adviser, acting in the interest of the environment, the community and the producer.

The CPD cycle runs every year from May to the following April, and during this twelve-month cycle, participants need to acquire a certain number of points in three respective categories to be compliant. The type of training that qualifies for points, range from very technical topics and product-related information to safety and legal aspects of the industry as well as good agricultural practices and stewardship, to name but a few. In addition to the training offered by member companies, industry experts, educational institutions and approved training partners, CropLife SA provides a number of online learning modules that can be completed directly on the system and in the participant's own time. These points are allocated immediately, meaning progress can be monitored throughout the year.

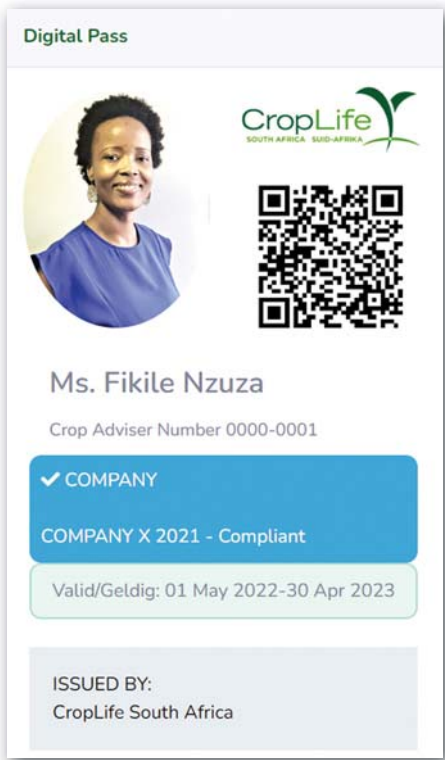
Once an agent has obtained the required number of CPD points, he/she is issued with a digital CropLife SA accreditation card and earns the title of crop adviser. Farmers should note that the usual printed cards are now completely replaced with these digital cards, which include a QR

code that can be scanned for the relevant information or emailed to a recipient for verification. Farmers should also be sure that the crop adviser is identified correctly, that the word 'compliant' is stated next to the correct distribution company name, and that the validity is for the current cycle.

Before cards are issued, crop advisers must acknowledge that they will adhere to the CropLife SA code of conduct and that they will only recommend and sell crop protection products that are registered in accordance with Act No. 36 of 1947. This means a farmer can have peace of mind when buying from a CropLife SA-accredited crop adviser because the person is qualified, up to date with industry knowledge and has agreed to conduct business according to a certain standard. For an export producer, this is particularly important for auditing purposes such as GLOBALG.A.P.

CropLife SA encourages all farmers to insist on this accreditation before purchasing agrochemical products. That being said, a farmer must always ensure to only use products that are registered in South Africa for the intended purpose, which refers to a specific pest, crop and application method as well. An easy way to verify this is to subscribe to [www.agri-intel.com](http://www.agri-intel.com) and view the label information of the product in question.

Any CPD-related queries can be emailed to [cpd@croplife.co.za](mailto:cpd@croplife.co.za). ■



*A digital CropLife SA accreditation card.*



**CROPLIFE SA. FIRST PUBLISHED  
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# How NON-COMPLIANCE could cost you in the long run

**M**OST PEOPLE SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE CONCEPT OF STEWARDSHIP IN AGRICULTURE BY NOW, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES ON FARM LEVEL, SUCH AS RESISTANCE MANAGEMENT AND INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT. BUT STEWARDSHIP ENCOMPASSES SO MUCH MORE THAN THAT.

From a crop protection perspective, stewardship already starts at the research and development stage of the product lifecycle and continues all the way through manufacturing, storage, transportation and distribution, to responsible use and finally, empty container and obsolete stock management.

Stewardship is defined in the Oxford dictionary as the job of supervising or taking care of something, while in CropLife SA we refer to it simply as doing the right thing. In other words, stewardship is not just a checklist to tick when certification is needed, or something that needs to be done to comply with certain regulations, but rather a way of life. But what if, for some reason, the mere concept of doing the right thing is not motivation enough for some individuals to do their part in embracing stewardship? In those few cases, perhaps the following might serve as a gentle reminder of some of the possible consequences if stewardship is treated as optional.

## LOSS OF PRODUCTS OR TECHNOLOGY

It is no secret that bringing a new crop protection product to the market is a time consuming (over a decade) and expensive (approximately \$250 million) exercise – and it is increasing over time. For instance, back in 1995 the development of a single successful product required the testing of 52 500 compounds, but since the year 2000, this figure has risen to around 140 000 compounds. In addition, the industry allocates huge resources not only to research and development, which have increased substantially over the years, but also to comply with manufacturing practices and to adhere to national and international standards such as ISO 14000 and 9000.

But why would this matter to a producer? And what does it have to do with stewardship? Well, to start with, it shows the lengths that the industry goes to in order to ensure that the crop protection products on

the market have undergone the necessary testing for product performance, and more importantly, for human and environmental safety. But it also shows that bringing a new product to the market takes time, effort and money. If we lose a crop protection product for whatever reason – be it non-compliance on the part of the user leading to ultimate bans, or loss of product efficacy due to resistance development – it is not that easy to just find a suitable replacement for that product. This refers to plant biotechnology as well, which takes an average of eight years and \$135 million to develop a new genetically modified (GM) product and pass it through the regulatory process.

With all the challenges and risks our producers are already facing on a daily basis, is loss of technology really one we want to add to that list? Especially if it is something that can be avoided so easily by incorporating basic stewardship practices, such as integrated pest management (IPM). IPM consists of three main components, namely prevention, monitoring and intervention. This means all the available tools and technologies need to be incorporated in a proactive and planned manner to manage pest levels as best as possible, without necessarily just eliminating pests from the onset. If intervention is the only option left, we need to rely on a combination of cultural, mechanical, biological and chemical pest control methods and not just one single magic bullet year in and year out to solve a pest problem. IPM is just a better approach all around – it promotes good agricultural practices, environmental sustainability and product longevity.

## HUMAN HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

If the thought of losing valuable active ingredients or GM traits due to non-compliance isn't enough, then perhaps knowing that non-compliance could have severe effects on human health or the environment, may do the trick. In this case we can use a few examples from the other end of the lifecycle approach, like responsible use. CropLife SA holds regular training sessions for its members and often their clients (producers and farmworkers) about the responsible distribution and application of crop protection products. A number of useful resources have been developed and are available freely on [www.croplife.co.za](http://www.croplife.co.za) to use as training and awareness material.

The main reason for this is that crop protection products by their very nature are obviously hazardous to target organisms, but potentially also to non-target organisms, including humans, if all the neces-



## 1 The stewardship lifecycle approach.



sary precautions and label instructions are not followed. This includes wearing the correct personal protective equipment (PPE), taking heed of the pictograms and colour bands on the label, ensuring the product is registered for use in South Africa, adhering to all the warnings and precautions, adhering to the preharvest intervals, taking note of pollinator warnings and paying attention to the particular resistance group, to name just a few.

Stewardship does not stop there, though. Even after the product has been used and only the empty container remains, the producer has a responsibility to make sure the containers are disposed of in such a manner that it does not pose a risk to human or environmental health. So, burying or burning containers on the farm is not an option – it is unlawful anyway. One can only imagine the environmental disaster that such practices can lead to. Repurposing or reselling these containers are not options either, because they are still potentially hazardous. There have been several instances where families have succumbed to poisoning because they repurposed a pesticide container for foodstuff or other liquids.

The only acceptable way to dispose of empty pesticide containers is first to triple rinse them on the farm, which removes 99,99% of the original formulation – meaning the containers are nominally clean and can be considered non-hazardous. Once this has been done, they need to be handed over to and recycled by a CropLife SA-certified recycler. This means the containers are taken out of the system, recycled into other useful commodities and do not pose a risk to humans or the environment.

When looking earlier in the lifecycle towards product storage and transportation, there are also a number of rules and regulations that need to be followed to ensure that these products reach the intended destination and target safely. The National Road Traffic Act, 1996 (Act No. 93 of 1996) regulates the transport of dangerous goods. Within these regulations the specific duties and responsibilities of the consignor, operator and the consignee are detailed, along with many other particulars, such as the required placarding for all dangerous goods vehicles and the statutory documentation to be carried by the drivers of such vehicles.

Storage of pesticides is no different and SANS 10206:2010 stipulates several safety regulations that need to be complied with, even if the store is on the farm. All these regulations exist for a reason, namely to minimise risk and provide guidance and a framework in case something goes wrong. This is an issue that is all too easy to ignore because emergencies or accidents are rare. Things usually go right, so we tend to become complacent because of our optimism. This is why stewardship should be a proactive way of life. If something does go wrong that impacts another human's safety or negatively affects the environment and you did not dot

all the i's or cross all the t's, that responsibility falls squarely on your shoulders.

### WRONG SIDE OF THE LAW

There are numerous acts and regulations in South Africa that govern nearly every aspect of the crop protection product lifecycle, all of which are aimed at ensuring things are done in the right way.

In addition to some of the regulations referenced earlier in this article, the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural

Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 of 1947) places the obligation for the correct and proper use of a crop protection product squarely on the person who uses it. But Regulation R1716 also specifies that any advice, recommendation or use that do not comply with the label instructions are 'off-label' and contravene the act; this includes verbal advice or recommendations. In other words, all parties involved in the sale, recommendation and application of a crop protection product have a responsibility to ensure that they follow the label-directed instructions to the tee.

Besides the fact that it is illegal, off-label use could also pose a major risk to the marketability of a producer's produce if the maximum residue limits (MRL) are exceeded because of deviation from the label instructions. These instructions have been developed through extensive research and field trials to establish what the preharvest interval and dosage must be to not exceed the MRL. If the MRLs exceed the destination's requirements, or worse yet, if residues are detected from a product that is not registered for that crop, a producer stands to have his entire consignment either quarantined or rejected entirely. This is a very expensive mistake, and no producer should be willing to take such a risk.

Another draft regulation that was promulgated on 30 March 2022, which is fully aligned with CropLife SA's stewardship principles and the lifecycle approach, is the Expended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulation. This basically mandates all pesticide manufacturers to establish mechanisms for producers to dispose of empty pesticide packaging and obsolete stock in a responsible and lawful manner. CropLife SA and its members are fully committed and geared to complying with these regulations. However, producers also have a responsibility to ensure they make use of these available mechanisms for disposing of these containers and stock.

The list of laws and regulations go on and there are way too many to list in this article, but stewardship in general should not be confined to a carrot or stick approach. As mentioned previously, it must be a non-negotiable, proactive way of life for every role-player in the value chain – not just because it can affect a producer's pocket or that they can find themselves on the wrong side of the law, but simply because it is the right thing to do, for humanity, for the planet and for the future generations that rely on us to leave a better world. ■

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# Meet the Grain SA FARMER DEVELOPMENT TEAM

**S**INCE THE EARLY 2000s, GRAIN SA HAS BEEN DEDICATED TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF EMERGING FARMERS FROM SUBSISTENCE TO COMMERCIALISATION. SINCE OUR PROGRAMME IS ABOUT FARMER DEVELOPMENT, OUR PRIMARY AIM IS TO ASSIST ACTIVE GRAIN FARMERS TO GROW GRAIN PROFITABLY USING THE BEST AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGIES AND PRACTICES FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

Despite the challenges and many other changes over the years, the heartbeat of the Grain SA Farmer Development programme remains unchanged. We care about agricultural development in South Africa, and we care about farmers growing their enterprises even within a challenging environment – we always strive to make a positive difference wherever we place our footprint. Our vision is to contribute to the development

of an inclusive rural economy in which all farmers should have greater opportunities to meaningfully participate in the economic, environmental and social opportunities on offer. Our mission is to do the following:

- Develop and capacitate sustainable grain farming enterprises in South Africa.
- Ensure increased access to sustainable funding of farmers as well as the commercial viability of advanced farmers towards self-sustainability.
- Increase hectares under grain production within the custodianship of emerging farmers.
- Support the inclusion of both young farmers and female farmers into the grain industry.
- Ensure the employment of good agricultural practices on all agricultural land under production.
- Support the diversification of grain farming enterprises to ensure enterprise-wide sustainability.
- Increase the emerging farmer contribution to national food security.

After many years of footwork at grassroots level, we now have a well-established footprint with regional development managers, mentors and administrative staff in position to meet farmers and identify their needs in order to offer adaptive and responsive developmental support.

The team is led by Dr Sandile Ngcamphalala from the corporate office of Grain SA in Pretoria. He is supported by Liana Stroebe as the training and operations manager and Jean Adams who is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and support of the farmer development field teams as well as other secretarial services for the programme.

At the regional development level, the footprint of the Grain SA Farmer Development programme presently extends to nine development regions, with each presenting its own unique character and needs.

Across the different regions, we cluster our farmers into the following groups:

- Study group members who are subsistence farmers, cultivating less than 10 ha of arable land.
- Small-holder farmers operating on 10,5 ha up to 100 ha of arable land.
- Potential commercial farmers farming over 100 ha of arable land.
- New era commercial farmers who are producing more than 250 tons per year.

In some regions like the Western Cape, North West and the Free State, we service fewer, larger farmers who would fall into the potential commercial farmer and new era farmer categories, while other regions such as Mpumalanga, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape are dominated by subsistence and small-holder farmers. There are, however, concerted efforts to develop more potential new era and new era farmers across all the development regions.

As we strive for continuous learning and adapting to ensure sustainability and relevance, we are committed to attract good talent across our responsibility programmes. Trainers and mentors are our last-mile team for supporting farmers. We also strive to continuously develop collaborating relationships with well-aligned industry partners to strengthen our efforts, accelerate growth and develop a network of support for farmers locally. ■



**Dr Sandile Ngcamphalala, Farmer Development lead and Jean Adams, secretary to the Farmer Development lead.**



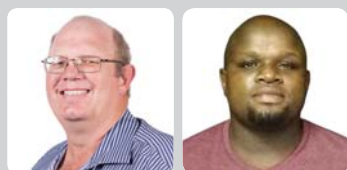
**Liana Stroebe, training and operations manager and acting regional development manager: Western Cape (Paarl) and Hailey Ehrenreich, office assistant.**



**Jerry Mthombothi, regional development manager: Mpumalanga/Limpopo (Mbombela) and Smangaliso Zimbili, office assistant.**



**Jurie Mentz, regional development manager: Mpumalanga/KwaZulu-Natal (Louwsburg) and Lianie Swanepoel, office assistant.**



**Graeme Engelbrecht, regional development manager: KwaZulu-Natal (Dundee) and Nkosinathi Mazibuko, office assistant.**



**Du Toit van der Westhuizen, regional development manager: North West (Lichtenburg) and Lebo Mogatlanyane, office assistant.**



**Luke Collier, regional development manager: Eastern Cape (Kokstad and Mthatha), Luthando Diko, office assistant (Kokstad) and Cwayita Mpotyi, office assistant (Mthatha).**



**Johan Kriel, regional development manager: Free State (Bloemfontein).**

**DR SANDILE NGCAMPHALALA,  
FARMER DEVELOPMENT LEAD,  
GRAIN SA. FIRST PUBLISHED IN  
SA GRAAN/GRAIN JULY 2022.**





# They let the sparks FLY!

**D**URING JUNE, SIX OF THE NAMPO PARK SITE WORKERS WERE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND A WELDING COURSE AT NAMPO PARK. MANY VALUABLE SKILLS WERE LEARNED THAT CAN BE USED NOT ONLY IN THE WORKPLACE BUT ALSO IN THEIR PRIVATE LIVES.

This workshop skills course in welding forms part of the training courses of Grain SA's Farmer Development Programme. The course was presented by Fanie Pienaar, one of the trainers of the Farmer Development Programme for the Free State and North West areas.

One of the attendees, Klaas Twala, thanked Grain SA for the opportunity and noted that he not only learned the necessary skills but also how to apply the compulsory safety measures to protect his eyes. This group will also receive training in basic mechanisation maintenance in October. ■



*The group who attended the workshop, with their certificates: Isak Tshabalala, Joseph Tladi, Isaac Mpitso, Klaas Twala, Ashley Mathisa and Willem Lengola.*



*Klaas Twala and Isaac Mpitso worked together to make this chair. With them is the trainer, Fanie Pienaar.*



*Ashley Mathisa and Willem Lengola show off their handiwork.*



*Joseph Tladi and Isak Tshabalala made burglar-proofing for a window.*

PULA IMVULA EDITORIAL TEAM



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# A one-of-a-kind expo

**I**F YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT LIVESTOCK OR ENJOY OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES LIKE HUNTING OR 4x4 ACTION, YOU SHOULD ATTEND THE NAMPO ALFA LIVESTOCK, HUNTING AND OUTDOOR EXPO. IT WILL BE HOSTED AT NAMPO PARK NEAR BOTHAVILLE FROM 29 SEPTEMBER TO 1 OCTOBER 2022.

After extensive discussions, Grain SA and Alfa decided in 2019 to join hands and present a new agricultural expo. However, COVID-19 placed these plans on hold for two years.

## SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

### Livestock

The livestock industry in South Africa forms an important part of the local economy. This growth was clearly visible in the fact that Alfa developed into the best livestock expo in the country over a four-year period.

NAMPO Alfa now combines this livestock expo (which was held in Parys in the Free State) with an exciting hunting and outdoor section. It offers Alfa the opportunity to expand and offer even more to producers. It also offers several unique platforms that provide role-players in the livestock industry excellent business networking opportunities. This applies to local role-players and stakeholders across the African continent. For 2022, a packed livestock programme for young and old has been planned.

On the livestock side, developments include a variety of projects that cover all the different livestock species – including beef and dairy cattle, small livestock, pigs and goats. It further includes the National Beef Cattle Interracial Championships, the Junior Interracial Championships (agricultural schools), the various performance championships (large and small livestock), and the Moneymaker qualifiers (large and small livestock).

Furthermore, the youth programmes with the agricultural schools and students are also involved. The programmes and mini-expos with workhorses, working dogs, rabbits and poultry are also back.

### Outdoor activities

Simultaneously, there is currently a great need among producers for a hunting and outdoor expo with a practical approach. Livestock, outdoor life and hunting are extremely complementary aspects of the South African agricultural community and the combination offers a winning recipe.

The inclusion of a variety of practical demonstrations of 4x4 vehicles, caravans, camping and hunting equipment is in the pipeline. A shooting range, where interested parties can try out rifles, is being planned.

NAMPO Park will also host the fifth and sixth rounds of the national South African Rally Raid Championships (SARRC) rally during the expo.

### THE IDEAL LOCATION

As South African producers already feel at home at NAMPO Park, this is the ideal location. There is ample parking, kiosks, ablution facilities, livestock facilities and other venues that can not only accommodate this big event, but also facilitate an opportunity for growth. It is ideally equipped for such an expo and visitors will be able to test firearms on a shooting range. In the case of 4x4 vehicles, visitors will be able to test-drive the latest models on a track that is not highly technically laid out.

With a large variety of exhibitors in the livestock, hunting and outdoor industries, the expo promises to be a great experience for livestock and nature lovers, hunters, adventurers and, of course, the adrenaline junkies.

Visit the website, [www.nampoalfa.co.za](http://www.nampoalfa.co.za), for more information. ■

GRAIN SA PRESS RELEASE





# THE CORNER POST

## TAMSANQA RAPHAEL MASUKU

*Focus on the goal, not the obstacles*



**T**AMSANQA RAPHAEL MASUKU (74) IS ONE OF THE FINALISTS IN THE POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL PRODUCER OF THE YEAR CATEGORY OF THE GRAIN SA FARMER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION. AFTER RESIGNING AS TEACHERS IN 2001, TAMSANQA AND HIS WIFE, NONHLAHLA (72), BECAME FULL-TIME FARMERS AT KWAGGA'S DRIFT FARM, A FARM NEAR NEWCASTLE IN KWAZULU-NATAL, WHICH THEY BOUGHT. HERE THEY HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD AND DREAMING OF BECOMING FULLY-FLEDGED COMMERCIAL FARMERS.

Kwagga's Drift Farm is 1 096 ha big and is in the Amajuba district, with 300 ha of arable land and 796 ha being used for grazing. This year, the husband-and-wife team planted a total of 300 ha of maize and although the excess rain was challenging, they are hopeful that they will have a good harvest. They also planted 45 ha of soybeans and previously planted dry beans, but decided that the planting conditions were not favourable this year.

The couple is blessed with four children – three sons and a daughter. One of their sons, Andile, is very interested in farming and takes leave from his job at Foresight Consulting every season to assist them on the farm with the ploughing and planting. 'Our other children are all working and when we need anything, they help with the finances, as we didn't get a loan,' says the proud mother, Nonhlahla.

### PLANS CHANGED, BUT THE GOAL STAYED THE SAME

Tamsanqa studied at the University of Zululand, where he obtained a BA degree in 1979 and completed a B.Ed. degree in 1981, after which he began his career in education. Nonhlahla is also a qualified teacher and they started farming together while they were both still teachers.

'We were full-time teachers and part-time farmers,' says Nonhlahla. She adds: 'We had cattle and a dairy and sold milk to the community.' Tamsanqa later became a school principal, before joining kwaGqikazi College of Education in 1987. The couple had fruitful careers in education, but their goal was always to become full-time farmers.

Although they initially attempted to do everything on their own and only harvested 1 t/ha, their dedication and Grain SA's assistance have seen their yield increase to 4 t/ha last season. 'This may not be very high for most people, but, it is very good for the poor soils in our area,' says Tamsanqa, and adds that this fundamental increase in their yield is thanks to Grain SA's input. 'We now see ourselves as serious contributors to food security in South Africa.'

Nonhlahla is especially proud of being part of the agricultural sector, which has played a vital part in the country's growth through the COVID-19 pandemic. 'What we are doing, is making a difference.'

The couple joined Grain SA in 2019 and have seen a vast improvement in their maize production since then, thanks to the guidance of their mentor, Chris de Jager, and the regional development coordinator, Graeme Engelbrecht. 'Before joining Grain SA, our maize production was dwindling. Grain SA's team made a huge difference in our operation,' says Nonhlahla enthusiastically. 'We had very little knowledge about soil conservation, seed selection and the use of chemicals.'

Through study group involvement and Grain SA's mentorship, those two enthusiastic farmers soon learned about the importance of

knowing your soil to ensure successful crop production. They plan on expanding their knowledge in the future by attending more courses. As they wish to leave the farm in a better condition than they found it, soil conservation practices such as weed control and fertiliser management have become increasingly important to them. They are working hard to improve their agricultural practices and their produce.

Nonhlahla describes Tamsanqa as a dedicated farmer, who perseveres no matter which stumbling blocks the road ahead may present. 'He is a good farmer because if he wants to do something, he will do it. Although it may go slowly, he will always achieve his goal.'

Some of the challenges that are slowing down their progress and expansion are a shortage of resources, theft and problems with mechanisation. Currently they use equipment provided by the government. However, this equipment is very old and not in a good condition.

'If the department decides to take it away, we can do nothing,' says Tamsanqa. This is why they have invested in some second-hand implements. 'We hope to finish paying it off after the harvest this year.'

No matter what happens, the Masukus are sticking to their goal to improve and become commercial farmers – even if it means changing their plans along the way.

### PROUD TO BE FARMERS

They are extremely proud to have been nominated in Grain SA's Farmer of the Year competition and beyond excited to have been chosen as finalists in the Potential Commercial Producer of the Year category. 'We are very, very proud,' says Tamsanqa, who is the chairperson of the Amajuba District Farmers Association. Nonhlahla adds: 'We couldn't believe it! There is a huge difference between what we were doing before and what we are doing now. To be recognised in the whole country is a big honour.'

Although they are already in their seventies, this 'dream team' still has plans to expand their farming operation, increase their maize production and get more cows in the future. They would also like to own bigger tractors and other equipment to make their production easier. The most important lessons they have learned over the years is the importance of having a goal to work towards. 'All your efforts must go into the farm. Farming is hard work, it is not a status thing,' says Nonhlahla.

Their wish for South African agriculture is that the government will be truly committed to assist all farmers. 'We hope and pray that people will realise that we need to do intensive agriculture. If the government can support the farming sector, farmers can farm. They should think of the farmers first, because without farmers there will be no food and without food there will be no people.'

The Masukus encourage other farmers to be hands-on farmers. 'Be consistent in what you do and persevere. It is all worth it in the end.' ■



LOUISE KUNZ,  
PULA IMVULA EDITORIAL TEAM

# A programme that is changing lives



## Hard work and training make the DIFFERENCE

**AS FARMING REQUIRES A DIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE, PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH ANYMORE. ALL FARMERS REQUIRE ONGOING EDUCATION BECAUSE THERE ARE CONTINUOUS NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY, SCIENCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT. TRAINING HELPS FARMERS TO INCORPORATE THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES AND TECHNOLOGY TOOLS INTO THEIR DAILY OPERATIONS; AND ENSURES THAT DEVELOPING FARMERS ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND.**

One of the most common problems the team of Grain SA's Farmer Development Programme has noted at the study groups, is that most of the farmers have not been exposed to best practices – so their knowledge about modern agriculture is lacking and their skills in advanced maize production are therefore compromised.

Furthermore, many of those farmers are daunted by complex environments such as marketing and agribusiness development. Training to address these knowledge gaps is essential for sustainable development in the sector.

The courses are well designed and based on the feedback of managers, mentors and farmers regarding what training needs exist in the different regions. They are taught in languages the farmers are familiar with and each farmer is gifted a course manual to keep for future reference. Courses are aimed at empowerment through the acquisition of new knowledge and skills development.

Attending the training courses has proven to be beneficial and em-

powering for developing farmers, contractors and agricultural extension officers alike.

### THE JUNE COURSES

Although the harvest season was imminent, Grain SA – with budget support from the Maize Trust and Bayer – managed to present three courses for developing farmers during June 2022. More than 50 developing farmers attended these courses, presented by Grain SA's trainer mentors.

- Fanie Pienaar presented a Sesotho workshop skills course in welding at NAMPO Park.
  - Eric Wiggill presented 'Introduction to maize production' at Mount Fletcher.
  - Timon Filter taught 'Introduction to maize production' to 21 Siyachathula study group farmers at KwaNgema near Piet Retief.
- Some of the topics that were addressed in the theoretical side are soils, planting, weeds, pests and bookkeeping. The course also included practical demonstration on things such as:
- Taking a soil sample, where a profile hole is dug and topsoil and subsoils are discussed.
  - The function of each part of the maize plant – roots, leaves, tassels, pollen and kernels – is analysed.
  - A practical demonstration of how to calibrate a knapsack sprayer.
  - A discussion on how to set the planter to release more (or less) fertiliser and seed.

## AT GRASS ROOTS



*During one of the courses, farmers learned how to calibrate a boom sprayer correctly.*



*Farmers found out more about maize plant morphology in the course 'Introduction to maize production'.*



*These ladies learned more about the soybean plant.*



*During one of the courses at Emahlathini, farmers were shown how to dig a profile hole to do soil sampling.*





Farmer  
Development  
Programme

Feedback

## Getting ready for the future

**THERE** is an African proverb that says tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today. During June, the Grain SA team was making sure that farmers were preparing for tomorrow through the following farm visits, study group meetings and training courses:

- 89 on-farm visits took place to give one-to-one mentoring and guidance.
- 59 study group meetings were held for developing farmers.
- 26 schools were visited to talk about careers in agriculture and show videos discussing career opportunities with plants and livestock in the agricultural sector.
- Three five-day skills development training courses helped farmers to be better prepared.



*A field visit to Alfred Manqoba Gondo showed a rewarding maize crop which is projected to yield 8 t/ha.*



*Thaele Mampho Adeline in his sunflower field. In June, his sunflower crop was nearly ready for harvesting and looking good.*

## Our farmers have THEIR SAY

**HERE** is what some of the farmers reported after attending the course, 'Introduction to maize production':

- 'We learned things that we did not know about maize production. We did not know how to take a soil sample. We were made aware of how critical it is to keep our lands weed-free – it can be worse than hail damage. We are so glad that we were able to receive this training. We also learned that plants eat and if we want to have a good harvest so we can eat, we must first feed our maize.'  
– Khabonina Kunene
- 'Our training was great and it helped that it was translated into understandable isiZulu. We are grateful to receive training for the farmers.'  
– Mlamleli Mbatha
- 'We have gained more experience and information about the production of maize. Now I have knowledge on how to deal with problems, the importance of good drainage in our lands and how to use nitrogen and fertilisers.'  
– Nkosi Fikile



*Paying a visit to maize fields to look at problems and discuss solutions helps farmers develop into better farmers.*





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