

PULA INVUULA

Grain SA magazine for
developing producers

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there's a way
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Invest in people to invest in the future

THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF ANY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME MUST BE ON STRENGTHENING HUMAN CAPITAL. WITHOUT GOING INTO AN ACADEMIC OR TECHNICAL DISCUSSION, WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF CAPITAL.

In classical economics, capital is one of the factors of production. The others are land, labour and according to some people, organisation, entrepreneurship, or management. These are also forms of capital. Capital can also be considered "stock" or an "asset" – it is something of value, or a "resource".

Since at least the 1960's economists have increasingly focused on broader forms of capital. For example, investment in skills and education can be viewed as building up human capital or knowledge capital and investments in intellectual property can be viewed as building up intellectual capital.

Human capital includes:

- Individual capital, which is inherent in persons

– also called "talent", "ingenuity", "leadership", "trained bodies", or "innate skills."

- Social capital is the value of trusting relationships between individuals in an economy.
- Spiritual capital, which refers to the power, influence and dispositions created spiritual belief, knowledge and practice.

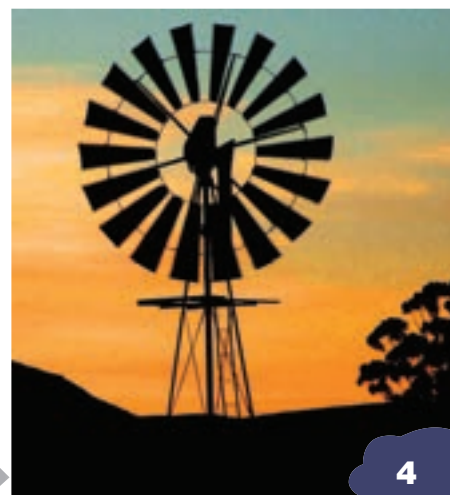
If we are to do successful and sustainable farmer development, then we must invest in the individual farmers. We need to grow their knowledge, their skills, their understanding, their passion, their enthusiasm and build strong and lasting relationships with the farmers.

Farmers are people who use land, money, machines, water, roads, labour and inputs in order to feed and clothe the nation. Without the farmer, all those other types of capital would lie unused.

Human development is concerned both with enhancing human capabilities and with using them productively. Training for the sake of training achieves no purpose. People need to be able to put



2



4



Mme Jane says...

Reading through this Pula made me so very aware of the fact that farming is all about the people who use the land. The land has been there for thousands of years and we are privileged to be able to use it. The only reason why we can still use it is that previous generations cared for the land. We too should care for it so that future generations can also use it to produce food and fibre.

We are very fortunate to be experiencing good commodity prices this year. So often farmers work really hard and produce a good crop and then the price is low. It is not rewarding to farmers to work hard for no return. I hope that all of you will be able to trade your grain and oil seed for a good price this year – a just reward for your hard labours.

We must always keep looking ahead – at this time, it is usually quite on the farms and it is a good time to think about next year. There are new opportunities opening up in the soya industry and soya is a very good crop to be used in a rotation with your maize. Perhaps you could think about what crops you are going to plant in the next summer season so that you can make the necessary preparations now – we slow down during the winter and the spring will be upon us sooner than we think. Please also take time now to go through all your equipment, tractors and machinery. If you take good care now and fix everything properly, the next season will be a pleasure.

Don't forget to sell off any surplus livestock before the winter – a fat animal always commands a higher price. Keep the productive animals so that your farming can prosper – farming is a business and not a savings-bank!

I hope you are making plans to come to the Nampo Harvest Week this year in Bothaville. It will be on from the 15 - 18 May 2012. This show offers you a good opportunity to broaden your vision of agriculture. See you there...

Subsistence farming – where there's a will, there's a way



Thamsanqa Hadebe proudly showing off his mielies.

AS PROVINCIAL COORDINATORS WE AIM TO DEVELOP COMMERCIAL GRAIN FARMERS WHO COULD CONTRIBUTE TO HOUSEHOLD AND NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY THROUGH OPTIMAL USE OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO EACH FARMER. THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY CREATING A POSITIVE CHANGE IN A PERSON'S LIFE THROUGH STUDY GROUP MEETINGS AND FARMER'S DAYS WHERE VALUABLE INFORMATION IS SHARED.

There are many people that say they want to be farmers but one only has to look at thousands of hectares of communal land and redistributed land that are not used to its full potential. Farmers need to take responsibility for themselves and their own destiny. One such a subsistence farmer is Mr. Thamsanqa Hadebe in the Loskop area near Estcourt. He has been a committed member of Emangweni Study Group for three years. He has successfully completed three training courses. Mr. Hadebe started small on a 1,8 hectares piece of communal land but this season he decided to expand by planting 9,5 hectares of Roundup Ready maize. In the past seasons he had a problem with weed control and the use of herbicides. By using his soil sample

results he knew which fertiliser to use and how many bags per hectare. He made use of a pre-emergence and post emergence spraying programme and top dressed with 200 kg of LAN per hectare.

It is so fantastic and rewarding to see the progress of this producer who did the basic things right – soil preparation, fertilisation, correct seed selection and weed control. Very often people tell you that they cannot follow the correct practices for a number of reasons such as – some say that they do not have a tractor, some blame the cost of seed and fertiliser and some blame the government. This producer does not own a tractor or implements and he made use of a contractor.

Mr. Hadebe is very positive and is already thinking of acquiring more fields to plant next year or buying himself a tractor and equipment in the near future. Sustainable development and sustainable livelihood should include the focus what resources are available for an individual and with the proposed intervention, how the use of the already available assets can be increased.

**JURIE MENTZ, PROVINCIAL
CO-ORDINATOR OF THE GRAIN SA
FARMER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

1 Invest in people to invest in the future

the knowledge and skills to good use so as to improve the quality of their own lives. At this stage in South Africa, we are very aware of the many people who have had training (even up to graduate level at Universities) but who have no employment – they are not able to put their knowledge to good use.

There is an old English saying, “practice makes perfect”. This is very true in farming – anyone who has tried farming will know that it takes time and practice to become a good and sustainable farmer – what you learn in the text books is part of the process, but to truly become a farmer, you need to farm (however small your farming operation may be, you need to have the opportunity to put the training to good use).

Development is comprehensive. It is not only about economics. In our society today, we are inclined to think that development only relates to money. This is very far from the truth – giving people money does not mean that they are developing. Similarly, giving people land, machines, money and markets will also not develop farmers – development is about growing the human capital. The farmer has to know how to use all the other capital – we hear so much about the farmers lacking markets, but when you investigate further, you find that there is nothing of quality to take to the market!

The process is endogenous (what do you have now and what are you doing now?) So often we want everyone to be at the same level and to be doing the same thing in the same way (usually because we think that our way is the best). Nothing gets built from the top – everything starts at the foundation level. What the farmer is doing now is what he/she knows to do and understands – building from that point forward will enable the farmer to adopt the “new practices” and continue using them.

Development is a process of positive change in a human life. Development cannot leave a person in a worse position than they were before. We must be sure that the development programme speaks to the needs and desires of the person involved and that any changes brought about are positive.

Development is a slow and sometimes painful process. We are always in a hurry! Remember when your baby was born, you wanted him/her to smile, then to sit, then to walk, then to run, then to go to school etc. All the time you are wanting the next thing to happen quickly. Life is not a race – we read so often that “life is a journey and not a destination”. Developing people takes time, but it is the most worthwhile investment you can make. To invest in another’s life is honourable. Let us allow the time it takes for each and every individual to grow and develop. We cannot always measure the developmental progress, but this must not mean that we stop investing.

Development is achieved by greater self-reliance through effective participation. You cannot “do things” for people and then expect them to develop. People have to be involved. They have to take ownership of the process and the results – they must be the centre of the process. Allow people to make small mistakes so that they can learn from their mistakes. Protecting people from failure results in the loss of valuable lessons.

Please let us take the time and invest in the development of people – without investing in people, we have no future.

JANE MCPHERSON, PROGRAMME MANAGER OF
THE GRAIN SA PRODUCER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



“It’s the action, not the fruit of the action that’s important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, it may not be in your time, that there’ll be any fruit. But that doesn’t mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.”
Mahatma Gandhi.

Environmental change – it's a reality (part 2)

OUR ENVIRONMENT IS FRAGILE, THE CLIMATE IS CHANGING AND THERE ARE SERIOUS GLOBAL WARMING ISSUES WE NEED TO CONTEND WITH. THESE ARE POINTS THAT ARE REAL AND THAT WE AS FARMERS NEED TO START TAKING SERIOUSLY. BUT WHAT SHOULD WE, AND CAN WE DO ABOUT IT ON THE HOME FRONT?

In the March 2012 Pula/Imvula we looked at steps to take in order to make our farms more suited in dealing with environmental change such as drought and water shortages. This article will outline some basic approaches to tackle wildlife problems and alien invasive species which may well result due to a changing climate. Many farmers already need to think on their feet to deal with pests and invasive vegetation which threaten their crops and their arable grazing land. The sooner we act by employing agricultural management practices as well as environmental management practices the sooner we will start to see a positive change.

Wildlife problems

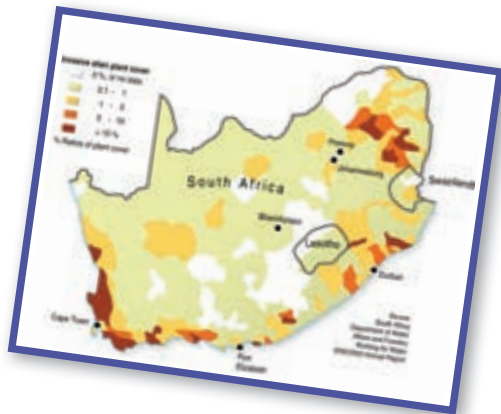
Due to climate change and the resulting warmer conditions, we will start to see an increased occurrence of harmful pests. They will cause damage to our crops and may potentially spread disease amongst our livestock. This is not something that we want...at all! Therefore we need to have a revised approach to our farm management practices – one which moves away from the ideology of mono cropping, mass production and maximum output from small land space. Perhaps an approach that integrates environmental health and economic profitability is a better option. This will result in agriculture being more sustainable into the future and more equipped to face the challenges of a changing climate.

If we don't want pests and wildlife problems to get the better of us we need to achieve this integrated approach, how? Diversify!

- Plant and cultivate diverse plant varieties on your farm with a good crop rotation. This means the plants in your gardens and the crops in your lands.
- Breed diverse livestock and do not remove naturally occurring wild animals, unless of course they are being a pest and threatening your business.
- Diverse crops and livestock's enhance biological stability, which in return provide valuable natural services to your farm.
- Develop corridor systems on your property. These are strips of natural or rehabilitated ecosystems that are left alone and are not cultivated into cropping land. It allows indigenous plant and animal species to have a habitat and to move around freely within that area.
- Promote the presence of positive predators on your farm. For example, set up perches along the edges of your lands where birds of prey such as falcons and owls can hunt from. This will help to reduce crop damage due to vermin.
- Have free range poultry on your homestead. This helps to keep the number of flies down and it aids in keeping weeds in the yard and animal paddocks under control.

It is important to remember that most naturally occurring wildlife species are actually beneficial to us. If we allow for a diverse farming operation then it will in fact aid us in pest management. Diversified farms are usually more economically and ecologically resilient. You can't tell me that that doesn't sound appealing with today's economic and environmental unpredictability. These are just a few ways to start getting the ball rolling towards diversification.





Alien invasive species (AIS's)

With the occurrence of climate change we will start to see changes in the geographical ranges of many plant species – in some areas this phenomenon has already been noticed. AIS's will most likely thrive on certain altered climatic conditions and may therefore pose a threat to our farming operations. Threats such as loss of grazing land, fire hazards, loss of natural ecosystems and an especially worrying one, water security. We, as custodians of the land need to be aware of this imminent threat, and be ready to act upon it when it occurs. So therefore it is important to:

1. **Be educated.** Know which species are AIS's and which are indigenous. Identify vulnerable areas and susceptible ecosystems on your farm. Know what practices to employ and who to contact if a problem arises.
2. **Monitor.** With your attained knowledge of AIS's you should regularly monitor your farm for threats. Employ this into your general farm management practices so that it becomes routine.
3. **Detect and respond.** If you notice a spike or an increase in AIS's you should act fast. Employ the best suited practices to deal with the problem and constantly check up on the progress. You should aim to "nip the problem in the bud" as they say. If AIS's are allowed to become established then it can be a big challenge to get rid of them later, in some cases virtually impossible.

You may be wondering what some of these methods are that you can use. The most common and most effective ways to get rid of AIS's is by using: mechanical methods, chemical methods or an integration of both. Mechanical methods involve physically removing plants by hand, slashing, ring-barking and cutting down. These are most effective when plants are still at their seedling stages.

Chemical methods involve application of herbicidal poisons, either in the form of pellets or liquids that are sprayed or painted onto the plants. It is usually very effective if applied correctly, but it can also be expensive, this is why an integrated approach is often preferred. Because of the cost involved I recommend working in partnership with the other farmers in your area who have similar issues. You can share the costs and have a bigger labour force. I also recommend getting into contact with local government as occasionally the department of environment; agriculture or water affairs are working on AIS eradication projects and could help you for little if any cost if they are working in or near your area. If you do choose to use the chemical methods of eradication, please do take care to only use ecologically safe and registered brands of chemicals.

Always remember that nature and the environment is living and breathing and what we do with it and in it has consequences. When farm management and environmental management work hand in hand then the negative consequences such as climate change can be kept to a minimum. Be responsible in terms of how you treat the environment on your farm. It will be sad if we leave a broken and degraded environment for our children to deal with.

GAVIN MATHEWS, BACHELOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, UKZN
 PHOTO SOURCE: SOUTH AFRICA DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS
 AND FORESTRY 2002/2003 ANNUAL REPORT

Let's select strong foundations and build on these

OLIVER TAMBO WHO WAS A COMMITTED CHRISTIAN ONCE COMMENTED ABOUT THE HISTORY OF LAND OWNERSHIP IN AFRICA. THE CONTENT OF HIS REMARK WAS THAT EUROPEANS BROUGHT THE BIBLE TO AFRICA. DURING PRAYER SESSIONS ATTENDANTS WERE ASKED TO GRASP THE WORD WITH BOTH HANDS AND CLOSE THEIR EYES. WHEN THEIR PRAYER SESSION WAS OVER THE EUROPEANS HAD THE LAND AND THE AFRICANS HAD THE WORD.

Our president, Mr Zuma, was recently quoted in a newspaper expressing himself on medical services, retirement homes and also the impact it had on the culture of the African people who tended for the aged themselves. James Monangyane once discussed the "African Wisdom" we as Europeans find difficult to understand, ultimately leading to poor decision making by government. The outcome of many discussions between different groups has not offered solutions to many outstanding problems that remain unsolved.

Looking closer at the examples mentioned and looking at the land struggle in South Africa there seems to be a common denominator through the history viz "wars" (battles) ethnic struggles – Europeans waging battles against cattle raiders. Then came the "Boer War" where "Brit and Boer" fought land issues in the late 1890's. Diamonds were discovered and gold and other minerals started to create wealth. African farmers left farms to go delving for the riches of the country, offering better income opportunity than that of subsistence farming. Numbers in population growth followed. Needless to say medical services were in demand as outbreaks of different diseases necessitated these services as the people flocked together.

Food had to be produced on a commercial scale to feed the multitudes that came to barter their labour to the mines and industries which were developing. On farms, production systems were primitive but food was sufficient at reasonable prices. Labour was a huge component of the production process. Reaping was done mostly by hand labour. There was a labour shortage at times but labour from neighbouring countries filled the shortages.

On farms technology progressed at an alarming pace – but later less labour was applied in the production process.

Fortunately the industry development could absorb the influx from neighbouring countries. During these decades, policy concerning land ownership deteriorated to a point where only whites could own farm land for the purpose of food production, which in itself was a poor foundation on which to build the future.

Democracy came in 1994 and with it much confusion surrounding land issues. The "foundations" were not strong thus complicating the land issue. How to redistribute land to Africans who did not have much more to offer than "African Wisdom"? They spent decades on farms working for white farmers. The majority had a brick or two in hand but very few were able to plan, manage and complete the building process due to lack of education systems that did not focus on the need to educate future farmers (youth).

The skill transfer on farms was poor and very limited. Returning to out-dated habits and practices would not secure food security and health programmes. Poor thinking caused agricultural schools (Mr

Let's select strong foundations and build on these

James Manengyande is an Agri teacher in Clocolan) and colleges were to close down. Knowledge was being limited not to mention practical skills.

Poor circumstances and relationships caused the development of young Africans to avoid agriculture as a career. We have a weak foundation to build on.

The perception does exist that farm work is an inferior task and career. Why are so many of the current agricultural projects failing to get airborne? There are numerous reasons that can contribute, that need discussion. Agriculture has four main production factors viz land, labour, capital and management. These are the building blocks.

Too many of these projects land was passed on to farmers expecting to supply the labour component. Unfortunately, capital and most important, management, were left out of the equation. Never must we expect a passenger who has flown on a plane to be able to fly the plane that is suicidal. No vehicle can run without fuel, likewise a business cannot function without capital and good management.

Something we tend to forget is the fact that the majority of developing farmers are first generation producers. Being a retired white commercial farmer, I am the eighth generation in our family involved in agriculture in this country. Knowledge and skill cannot be ascribed to genetics; what I do understand is transfer of knowledge from generation to generation has great value. I would suggest that the foundation in most cases is well reinforced via this route. A natural selection was taking place and continued to develop hardworking people with skills. Can this huge generation gap be filled and cured? The answer is not an easy one. Training and passing on skills takes a decade or three.

The majority of institutions like Grain SA and other commodity organisations, agribusinesses, government efforts and most important commercial farmers should be involved in supporting our developing farmers.

The schools programme of Grain SA is cultivating a huge interest in agriculture. The image of agriculture is at stake. We cannot use agriculture for political gain in any way. Development and change have come to stay. We need to enhance opportunities with special reference to our youth.

Our focus must be to select strong foundations and build on these. A master plan is important if we want to avoid famine. We have never had good agricultural policy in our country. The intolerance prevailing does not make for good progress. We must pick the brains and advantages commercial farmers possess and pass these on to future farmers.

Last but not least there is no substitute for hard work. Sometimes conditions are not good and yet at times the unpleasant is made up for by the beauty of a good wheat crop or a newly born calf. Polishing and revitalising our work ethics is extremely important for transformation. Fat, lazy oxen will not draw the plough.

We must admit however that old fashioned and outdated production practises will fall short of feeding a nation. We must focus our developmental efforts on sound modern production practices.

Irrespective of our different religions, we need to live and believe in a relationship with the Creator. In tough times and in good times we realise the daily grace we receive as agriculturalists. Take up ownership, have faith and let us feed our precious nation.

JAN DE VILLIERS, A RETIRED FARMER



Samuel Moloi's recipe for success

HARDSHIP AND CIRCUMSTANCES OFTEN LEAD TO GREAT CONFUSION AND SUFFERING. THE SOTHO LANGUAGE HAS A GOOD DESCRIPTION FOR SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. "AN ANIMAL WITH FOUR LEGS SOMETIMES STUMBLES AND FALLS, HUMANS ONLY HAVE TWO LEGS TO STAND ON." (IT IS THEREFORE EVEN EASIER TO FALL AS A HUMAN). THE SECRET HOWEVER IS TO BE ABLE TO STAND UP AND CONTINUE WITH LIFE IRRESPECTIVE OF HISTORY — WE DO NOT HAVE YESTERDAY OR TOMORROW, WE ONLY HAVE TODAY.

Samuel Moloi was born in Fouriesburg where his parents worked on a farm for Linde du Plessis. From a very young age Samuel was fascinated by agriculture, ploughing, planting and reaping was his passion. He had no time for playing and loved watching the production systems on the farm. This was his foundation whereupon he would build his future.

Having completed his schooling he worked for the state for a couple of years but found it very boring. Never did he give up to live his passion. The problem he faced was to "start". Listening to Radio Lesedi he heard a talk by Jane McPherson from Grain SA where she passed on information about courses and study groups that were being presented by Grain SA. Samuel's prayer was answered.

David Exley a young farmer from Fouriesburg heard about his plight. He soon caught up with Samuel and offered him 30 hectares of arable land, his tractors and implements all for "mahala". He planted 30 hectares of white maize and the yield was more than 5 ton/ha. "I was so thankful for this opportunity", Samuel says. This was the beginning of greater things to follow.

Samuel was fortunate to lease high potential land from the local municipality and again David assisted him and he planted 30 hectares of wheat with a good yield. OVK assisted farmers with financial facilities to plant maize. Johan Kriel from Grain SA also assisted him. Samuel had a bumper crop and his enthusiasm had no limits. He leased another 320 hectare from a group of emerging farmers who were only interested in the grazing. "Agriculture keeps one humble", he says.

The sunflower crop was poor and the maize crop was a fiasco because of poor prices. This is where the going got tough. A wheat crop saved the day and the business continued. Prices for commodities were not good and budgets indicated that he needed to be extremely cautious in his decisions and planning. Soon the situation became complicated.

No-till practices on wheat proved successful during the previous production season. Loans were approved late and this practise was an option. Rain came late in spring and seed germination was poor and for this reason no insurance was approved. The Farmer of the Year was devastated. "I was alone and found company and people very irritating. I could not even answer the phone. I was like Job literally in ashes."

Being Farmer of the Year made him very proud and in some ways humble. Flying to Cape Town to meet up with Me Tina Joemat-Pettersson (Minister of Agriculture) and Minister W. Nkwiti (Minister of Land Affairs) was overwhelming. The discussions were fruitful and it seemed as if government had taken note and the seeds planted germinated. Developing farmers need mentorship and capital. They still need guidance in their farming practises.





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 Sesotho sa Leboa, Zulu and Xhosa.

Our aim is to produce the best publication possible. Please direct any comments on the editorial content or presentation thereof, to Jane McPherson.

Samuel Moloi's recipe for success

Samuel is sure that in a decade or two he will be able and capable to compete with his commercial neighbours. He is learning and so is government. Agriculture is a multi dimensional and complicated science.

In spite of passion, success and failures Samuel's name is not on a single hectare of land. The ambition and challenge to own a farm is huge. Presently he can do no long term planning. Land is very expensive to buy and not having sufficient capital will lead to more debt. Market related prices and production value do not warrant the risk. Winning the lotto might help pay a deposit. It does seem like government is slow to understand the importance of sustainable food production. Assisting agriculture in times of need is important. Farmers are price takers and not price makers. Commercial farmers know the problems of managing labour. This area of business will soon challenge farmers to become better managers of their human resources.

"The tax-man (SARS) is knocking on our doors. Many procedures have become complicated and professional help is an unavoidable cost. My financials are with a credible firm in Bethlehem. At least I can sleep at night on this issue." It is a dream to possess my own herd of cattle. Sad to say, but theft and crime on our borders is delaying this decision. Hopefully it is not going to remain a dream." Samuel says.

For farmers transport has become a night-

mare because of poor roads. Markets are difficult to reach and the maintenance bill is rocketing daily. Having a registered workshop Samuel does most of his own maintenance. It is also a good secondary enterprise complementing the farm.

"I would not like to see land passed onto unknowledgeable and unskilled citizens. A selection of capable people must be empowered to produce good and enough food. Too many farmers are wasting the land and precious time. We need a common goal as agriculturalists. Our problems and aspirations are not different whether black or white. For too long politics and politicians have been using agriculture as a football for own gains. We do not need different unions to survive as farmers. Dividing our negotiating powers does more harm than good. Let's not pollute our beautiful land and future of our nation."

Samuel is extremely thankful to all who assisted him in good or bad times. He would like to thank those who were prepared to help him, knowing that he had no collateral to offer. He is very positive about agriculture in South Africa and realises that he has a responsibility to feed the nation.

"I dream of owning my own land. I would like my two sons to be so proud of their father that they will be second generation farmers."

JAN DE VILLIERS, A RETIRED FARMER

On the radio

Do not miss these interesting programmes on radio, which covers issues of interest for developing farmers.



Radio	Weekday	Presented by	Time
Zululand FM	Saturday	Jurie Mentz	06:10
Ligwalagwala FM	Thursday	Jerry Mthombothi	05:10
Umhlobo Wenene FM	Tuesday	Lawrence Luthango	04:30
Alfred Nzo FM	Monday	Ian Househam	19:00 - 20:00