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## Extension Practitioners and Agricultural Marketing. How can ESO assist?

Portia Maibelo

Farmers are often inclined to concentrate more on production or the operational stages of farming, and in some instances to neglect other important things such as marketing for later. The result is neglect of the "business" side of farming - often with disastrous effects. The production of agricultural produce requires effort and financial resources. It therefore makes little sense, to even think of producing while not having much of an idea of what happens to it after harvesting. From experience, we know that this is often the case with small-scale producers. They don't know in advance where they will sell it, who their potential customers will be and what they will ask for their produce. If this knowledge is not available in advance, the size of the yield and the quality of the produce will not matter. Without markets, production will be wasteful and futile, and farmers should therefore spend as much time and effort on marketing, as on production. Farmers must know who their customers are, how much they are prepared to pay for what (**quantity and quality**), and how often (**consistency**). The market unfortunately, is the final adjudicator of all processes of production.

Extension practitioners play an important role in ensuring that farmers gain access to reliable market prices and marketing information through their usage of Extension Suite Online (ESO). The system provides information on markets and market prices, and information on value-adding and the marketing of produce. ESO further offers information on the different marketing channels that farmers can use through the **Economics Information Option** on the Sidebar, under

the **Business Models** Information Sub-Item. The Sub-Item also contains helpful information on co-operatives (group marketing) and contract farming (direct marketing). Extension Practitioners will also find other marketing channels available on value chains under the **Economics: "Adding Value"**: Information Sub-Item, to assist farmers. The value-chain chart maps the different marketing channels for commodities available on the system and includes; farm gate marketing, hawkers, informal markets, National Fresh Produce Markets, exporters, etc.

The value-adding (another form of marketing) consists of practices such as proper harvesting methods, handling, grading, packaging, and storage methods, etc. Value-adding is important for a competitive advantage as it makes products more appealing to consumers, and introduces new markets to producers and with possible higher profit margins. Marketing needs should be directing production in accordance with what markets require. Efficient agricultural marketing stimulates production, increases profit margins as well as the competitive advantage in the market.



Portia Maibelo

## ESO WALLPAPERS

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE  
DESKTOP WALLPAPER TODAY!

Liven up your computer's desktop with an Extension Suite Online wallpaper. Download wallpapers directly from the ESO newsletter e-mail or on the ESO media website: [media.esuite.co.za](http://media.esuite.co.za)



## Tips and tools for advisors

Jeanne-Louise Bekker

### SWOT analysis as a helpful planning tool

Every successful plan is based on sufficient information gathered around a set goal. One effective method of gathering information is through a SWOT analysis.

A SWOT analysis is done by gathering information as described below:

- **Strengths:** Attributes that are helpful towards achieving the set goal.
- **Weaknesses:** Attributes that are harmful towards achieving the set goal.
- **Opportunities:** Positive outcomes that can be reached when a goal is met.
- **Threats:** Negative outcomes that can lead to the goal not being met.

## TOP NATIONAL ESO USER:

The monthly national ESO user will receive the following prizes: First time National ESO User 2015: **4 Gig USB memory stick**, second time National ESO User 2015: **Digital Camera**, third time National ESO User 2015: **Nokia Lumia 520**, fourth time National ESO User 2015: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

Congratulations to **Mr Riaan Nowers** (Western Cape Department of Agriculture), the ESO National Top User for April 2015.



Riaan Nowers

"As an agricultural economist, responsible for agricultural statistics, much of my daily focus is to supply clients with demand-driven data and information. From these enquiries, selected databases are designed that require dedicated data capturing. In the past, searching for accurate data and then capturing it required lots of time and effort.

With the advent of Extension Suite Online (ESO), data availability was simplified and at the reach of my fingertips. I capture ESO data into my own longer term databases which I then disseminate to a range of clients, including our Department's own extension officers and training personnel. Other target groups receiving these graphs include farmers, commodity organisations and the Western Cape MEC for Agriculture's office. The dissemination takes place via PowerPoint presentations that visually demonstrate any possible trends developing within specific commodities.

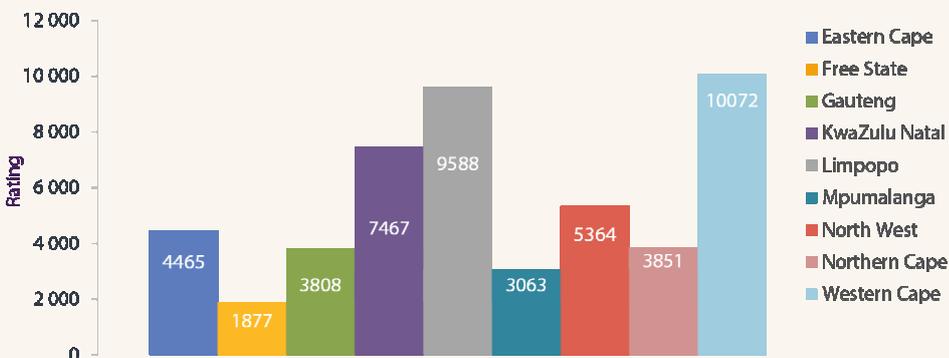
In terms of improvements to future versions of ESO, I would personally like to see a range of game species statistics, as there is a definite need for this. In addition I would also suggest that some ESO users from each province annually attend a workshop/mini-conference where issues of mutual benefit can be discussed as well as possible ways to improve the system. I also think the ESO system has great potential to be rolled out to our African neighbours who may open up potential new markets and cooperation ventures between southern African countries.

Besides information coming from ESO, I think that at provincial level more effort should be put in into it by ourselves to populate certain statistics/data for own use. In this manner we will prevent the possible loss of important agricultural knowledge and intellectual property when officials leave the government service. In essence there is heaps of potential in expanding our information system(s) to the benefit of ourselves, our agricultural sector as well as our broader communities."

## EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE UTILISATION: APRIL 2015

Extension Suite Online (ESO) utilisation is determined through monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces and by attaching values to Visits, Pages Visited and Duration of Visits; a rating is calculated to establish the ESO National Top User of the Month.

### ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USER GRAPH



## ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USERS

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Mzuthule Nobadina
Free State	Griffith Hadebe
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Thandiwe Sima
Limpopo	Louis Khomola
Mpumalanga	Fanyana Moses Shongwe
North West	Mompati Gabanakgosi
Northern Cape	George Du Preez
<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>Riaan Nowers</b>

## PARASITE TALK: FEATURED PARASITE

Further information on all featured parasites can be found on ESO.

**Scientific Name:** *Bovicola ovis*,  
*Damalinia limbata*  
**Popular Name:** Lice

Lice are usually found around the neck and head or the inside of the legs. Infested livestock may be seen rubbing and scratching on fences and other objects. Severely infested animals may develop raw areas on the skin due to constant rubbing. Their hair may be thin and matted and scabs may develop.



Lice

## ESO TIPS:

### The Farm Information System on ESO

*Kabelo Malatetja*

Any extension practitioner who has ever worked amongst producers will know that farm information and record keeping is one of the biggest challenges that farmers face on a continuous basis. Because of a lack of historical data farmers often make incorrect decisions regarding their animals and crops. Communal farmers for instance, on one hand seldom know (or remember) which cow was covered by which bull, or when they need to plant what, in order to rest or invigorate their soil. All this contribute to low productivity and eventual low profitability, making farmers struggle to survive or even take a step up.

Extension Suite Online (ESO), in order to assist

extension practitioners in helping farmers to manage their enterprises better, created and included the **Farm Information System (FIS)** in ESO.

The FIS allows extension practitioners to keep record of each farm they are involved with, in terms of the following:

- General farm information
- Infrastructure
- Farm field information
- Machinery and equipment
- Monthly farm targets
- Problem Solving

All an Extensionist needs is to access ESO and the FIS module, and the necessary information can be entered and saved on the system for easy access, adding and updating in real time, on the farm.

**Do you have any technology related questions?** Send them to [newsletter@esuite.co.za](mailto:newsletter@esuite.co.za), with your name, province and the question and we will answer them in a following newsletter edition.



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