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## THE ROLE ESO PLAYS IN URBAN AGRICULTURE

*Sabhinah Ncongwane*

Under Urban Agriculture we understand growing crops (fruits, herbs, ornamentals and vegetables) and raising animals within and around the city. It is incorporated into the urban economic and environmental system. Urban agriculture provides fresh food for residents, creates employment in the city and surrounding neighbourhoods, and re-uses urban waste (organic waste as compost); it has direct impact on urban ecology and becomes part of the urban food system.

This farming program competes with other urban centres, such as industrial and retail areas, for land use planned and governed by city's policies. In this respect, there are restrictions in many cities on the raising of animals for hygienic reasons (smelly coops, fly problems and transmission of diseases). However there are many other types of urban farming centres in the cities, such as institutional gardens, commercial farms, community gardens and farms.

The production of crops in this urban setting can cover the complete spectrum of sophistication from small open-air plots irrigated manually, to high-tech production in custom-built structures with automated watering, feeding, heating and cooling systems. Obviously the principles of plant growth are constant the world over whether in a rural or urban setting - consequently the various sections on "Plant Production" on ESO are a critical information sources for any urban agriculture project.

In many African cities community gardens have become a significant source of fresh vegetable produce; this is the most common and accepted form of urban agriculture in African cities. On ESO there is detailed information on 71 vegetables crops, many of which could be grown in the urban setting. Furthermore specific details on the most appropriate irrigation systems for small plots are described. For example, drip technologies have been modified recently to facilitate their use by small-

scale farmers. This means marginal quantities of water can be utilised efficiently to cultivate small areas of crops for family food needs and for trade from areas of 100 to 1000 m<sup>2</sup>. It operates by water gravity from a tank placed at 1 to 1.5 meters high. The system is suited to open fields, low-tunnels, and can be installed in the backyard of houses; tens of thousands of these systems are used in urban and rural areas in East Africa.

Furthermore information on small-scale greenhouses is available under "Controlled Environment - Small Scale Greenhouses". Crops in these greenhouses can be irrigated using the family-drip-system described above, or by using simple, but specifically designed, troughs which need watering only once every few days. A small scale greenhouse project was initiated some years ago in the suburban areas of Maputo, Mozambique.

However, it must be noted that the shortage of inputs and environmental health risks remain paramount obstacles to realising the full potential of these vegetable projects and urban gardens. Nevertheless, community gardens do increase access to food and do improve household food security, diversity of diet and contribute immensely to poverty alleviation among urban households.



*Sabhinah Ncongwane*

## ESO WALLPAPERS

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### Tips and tools for advisors

*Portia Phahlane*

#### Selecting a viable farm enterprise

The difference between "successful" and "unsuccessful" farming enterprises more often lies in the initial decision making about which commodity to farm with.

The following are some of the factors to consider when selecting a farm enterprise:

- Assess the environmental factors and land capability of a farm;
- Identify the soil type and its suitability for the chosen enterprise,
- Identify the climatic conditions of the region (temperatures, rainfall etc.),
- Identify water sources and capacities available on the farm, and
- Determine topographical aspects.
- Match the land capabilities with the selected enterprise production requirements;
- Identify all potential markets, value adding opportunities and prices offered at the different markets; and
- Determine whether the farm enterprise will be profitable by developing an enterprise budget.

## 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 **Lumia 535**, fourth time National ESO User 2015: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

Congratulations to **Mr Louis Khomola** (Limpopo Department of Agriculture), the ESO National Top User for July 2015.



Louis Khomola

When an Extension Suite Online user continuously manages to maintain scores in excess of 15,000, winning the National Top User award becomes a matter of ease. And that is precisely what Louis Khomola has once again achieved during July. Congratulations and well done to him and his province, Limpopo. During the latest interview with this exemplary agricultural advisor, we asked Louis what he enjoys most about his work as an extension advisor. "I like to work with communities in Agriculture because they relate their problems to me, and I can solve their problems immediately. I am also learning new things every day while working with farmers as they have practical experience of working in the field on a daily basis."

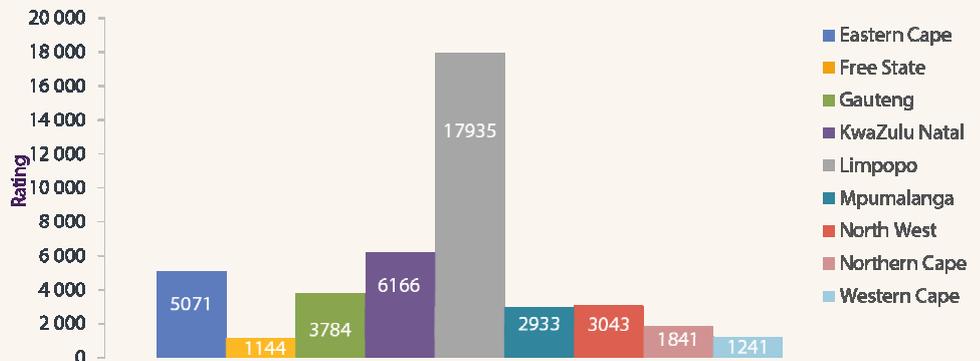
Louis gave us an example of a client that he helped with the assistance of ESO. This specific farmer farms with goats in the Mukondeni area, Mahkado municipality. His goats were suffering from fleas. Frustrated and after trying everything he knew, the farmer contacted Louis, as he could not get rid of the fleas. Louis accessed the Animal Problem Solvers on Extension Suite Online®, and was able to advise the farmer on the best method to get rid of the fleas. Following the advice that Louis gave, the farmer confirmed later that the remedy suggested by Louis seemed to be doing the trick. Of course, this is what every good advisor wants: to give good advice; to have it listened to, and followed; and to hear that it had worked!

Asked about the highlights of using Extension Suite Online, Louis was impressed that ESO helped him so much in answering questions that he would not otherwise have been able to solve as quickly and effectively. Louis concluded by saying that the Discussion Forum is also invaluable as it assists him and his colleagues as extension practitioners. It is here that they to discuss issues in the industry, and in the process, helping each other in finding solutions to these problems.

## EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE UTILISATION: JULY 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	Motale Jacob
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Dumisani Nzama
<b>Limpopo</b>	<b>Louis Khomola</b>
Mpumalanga	Sinekhaya Benson Makukule
North West	Mompoti Gabanakgosi
Northern Cape	Boitumelo Joy Mothibi
Western Cape	Lundi Delano Kama

## DISEASE TALK: FEATURED DISEASE

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

**Scientific Name:** *Haemorrhagic septicaemia*  
**Popular Name:** Fowl cholera

Fowl cholera is caused by the bacterium *Pasteurella multocida* or *Pasteurella aviseptica*. It is an acute disease, characterized by watery diarrhoea. Swollen wattles are a common lesion with the chronic form. In the acute form, mature birds may be found dead with no lesions or have a severe yolk peritonitis.



Fowl cholera

## TECH TIPS:

Internet safety - keeping you computer safe while browsing

Mulalo Mudzusi

### Things to consider before browsing the internet:

- Make sure that virus and spyware protection is installed as it will help protect your computer against viruses, spyware, and other unwanted software.
- Make sure that your Windows Firewall is turned on as it will prevent hackers from gaining unauthorised access to your computer.
- Make sure your browser is up to date.
- Scan your computer for viruses daily and make sure your antivirus is up to date.

- Never access your bank and other sites from a link address that you are not familiar with.

### Steps one should consider while browsing the internet.

- Do not open links and pop up messages that you do not know.
- Take note of the security feature installed in your browser that displays a red warning message informing you that the opening site may cause a security risk.
- Ignore web pop ups that state you have won a price - especially the ones that say your computer has a virus.
- Use a different password for every site (especially personal sites like banks) to prevent someone getting hold of your password and then gain access to all the sites you visit.

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



**Editor:**  
Jeanne-Louise Bekker

**Publishers:**  
Manstrat Agricultural Intelligence Solutions (Pty) Ltd.

**Correspondence:**  
newsletter@esuite.co.za | +27 12 460 2499



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