this edition

ESO as a contributor towards food security in South Africa

Thomas de Ridder

Food security is simply put, about ensuring that the world has enough food to eat. Although commercial agriculture provides a large portion of food produced internationally, small producers play an extremely important role in seeing that they produce enough food. Food produced where the need is highest – in the rural areas. That, unfortunately, is not happening everywhere. Small producers must farm more successfully – they must increase their productivity - producing more food, more reliably. To this end, Extension Suite Online (ESO) supports extension advisors in their efforts to help farmers. ESO assists farmers to identify the best-suited crops and animals to farm with, in a particular area, climate, soil type, etc. Thereby increasing the probability of improved yields, and contributing directly to food security.

Food security is not only about the quantity of food but also the quality - it should also have nutritional value and be safe to eat. ESO provides extension advisors with information on responsible and efficient pest control measures, and the safe use of agrochemicals. From the system, an advisor will learn about optimal harvesting times, and other methods ensuring minimal loss of crop quality after harvest, thus leading to the production of healthier food.

Food security also requires sustainable food availability - ensuring that there is food readily available throughout the year

with the certainty of future availability. Here, ESO will assist with advice on multiple farming enterprises to enhance sustainability. The system also provides information on value adding, processing and food preservation, ensuring that food can be preserved and consumed long after harvest time. Another important dimension of food security is that food should be accessible to all people, including the poor. The system further promotes sustainable agricultural practices. Practices that include the optimal utilisation of resources such as land, water, agrochemicals and other farm input to attain high yields, while at the same time protecting the capacity of soil and other natural resources. These actions will help to sustain food production over the long term.

The main limitation on the role played by Extension Suite Online in food security is the extent to which extension advisors and other practitioners use and apply this agricultural decision-making system. The value is there for all to see.

Thomas de Ridder

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

Tips and tools for advisors

Jeanne-Louise Bekker

Leadership qualities

Extension Practitioners continuously execute leadership functions during daily work with farmers – either individually or in groups. They are required to motivate clients/farmers towards goal achievement, to inspire action plans and reveal the necessary skills to make others want to follow his/her lead - all functions of a good leader. In light of this, the following qualities should be concentrated on, in asserting yourself as a good leader:

- Always set the example – "Do as I do, not as I say."
- Speak to the hearts and minds of farmer/clients – try to understand them first.
- Think innovatively.
- Search for opportunities.
- Enable clients to act – motivate them into taking action.
- Strengthen others – empower clients/farmers to develop and improve themselves.

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 Louis Khomola** (**Limpopo** Department of Agriculture), the ESO National Top User for September 2015.

Louis Khomola

WHO IS A TOP USER OF EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE

Extension Suite Online® is an agricultural information system for governmental extension advisory decision making – helping to solve problems and provide production information.

Producers require information that is timely, correct, clear, and always available. In this regard, Extension Suite Online® plays an important role in the overall service delivery provision by the different provincial departments of agriculture.

Normally, advisors use the system to assist farmers with specific requests and problems.

But there are many advisors who study the enormous amounts of information on the system to enhance their professional knowledge base. They are the ones who help develop commercial farmers and food providers, leading to job creation and food security, by going the extra mile.

Users are rated in terms of their system utilisation - the number of visits to the system, the amount of time spent, and the number of pages visited determining provincial and national top users. ESO Top Users stand out from the crowd. We honour them in our Monthly Reports and Newsletters and they are mostly amongst those who receive awards and prizes during provincial summits and conferences.
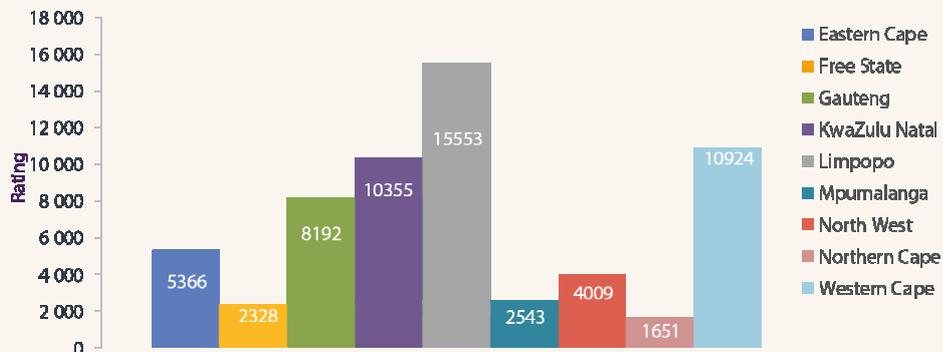
Top Users spend between 25 and 90 hours per month studying the system and looking for solutions to agricultural questions. National Top Users are constantly competitive and many of them remain in the national top ten rankings for years - proof of their diligence and consistency:

• Lesego Phakedi (39 times);
• George du Preez (29 times);
• Griffith Hadebe (26 times);
• Riaan Nowers (22 times);
• Vhuthu Gavhi (21 times);
• Sindile Magoda (18 times);
• Lucas Shabangu (16 times);
• Mompati Gabanakgosi (15 times);
• Louis Khomola (12 times); and
• Sifiso Mthabela (10 times).

EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE UTILISATION:
SEPTEMBER 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	Simphiwe Sintra
Free State	Setene Mooko
Gauteng	Sizwe Nzuza
KwaZulu Natal	Dumisani Nzama
Limpopo	**Louis Khomola**
Mpumalanga	Sinekhaya Benson Makukule
North West	Mompati Gabanakgosi
Northern Cape	Jacobus Sedrick Visser
Western Cape	Riaan Nowers

PEST TALK:
FEATURED PEST

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

Scientific Name: *Lygus hesperus*
Popular Name: Lygus Bug

Lygus bugs vary in color from pale green to yellowish brown with reddish brown to black markings, but can be distinguished by a prominent triangle in the center of the back. The lygus bug adult is about 6 mm long and 3 mm wide, flattened on the back.

Lygus Bug

ESO TIPS: The importance of viewing websites on your mobile device

Mary Mavengere

The phenomenal growth in mobile phone use in especially Africa since 2000 needs no introduction. To top it all, Informa UK's Africa Telecoms Outlook, projects 334 million African Smartphone connections in 2017 (1) - as much as 30% of the continent's population! It would be fair to say that many people in Africa will in future have their first encounter with the internet through mobile devices rather than by means of personal computers.

For businesses, website and app developers the message is clear – whatever you design, must be mobile-friendly, or you'll be left behind! The approach already is to design "up" – starting with limited real estate and design for bigger screens afterwards. For companies to ensure maximum exposure of their website based advertising and message delivering, the emphasis has therefore moved to mobile-friendly websites.

Amongst the factors driving the 'switchover' to mobile internet utilisation is:

As smart phones become more affordable, ownership of one has become more of a reality than ever. In the developing world with all its infrastructural challenges and constraints smartphones are affording communities and individuals in those areas, access to everything that the information revolution has given the developed world. It only makes sense for companies in Africa to develop sites that can be easily viewed on mobile devices;

Inexpensive option: As mobile screens differ in a number of ways from computer screens; site design needs to change accordingly. It is a relatively cheap process and not very time consuming either – making it easier for websites to move with the trend and become optimized for mobile;

Popularity of mobile internet: This presents a huge opportunity for businesses whose websites are optimized for mobile devices; and

The Use of GPS: GPS is used by many mobile users to find amongst other things, places of interest, directions. But nowadays, they also use it to find nearby services or

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.