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Supporting Youth in Agriculture

Colleen Janse van Rensburg

We cannot talk about the future of agriculture and food security without including, talking about our youth. South Africa's current population of 54 million is largely made up of young people – 66 % are younger than 35 years old. It is estimated that by 2035 the total will have grown to 82 million people. Furthermore, the average age of commercial farmers in South Africa is 62, thus making it even more important to focus on the youth and their future involvement in agriculture. For various reasons, very few young people in our country, and in fact Africa, see a future for themselves in agriculture.

Urban life and the promise of job opportunities still attract many rural youths, and despite a youth unemployment rate of 51.4% for the period 2013 to 2016, in urban and rural settings, the agricultural sector remains unattractive to these jobseekers.

One of the main challenges faced by the youth is insufficient access to knowledge, information and education. Without a good education (or when access to education is insufficient), productivity and the acquisition of skills are low and the development of entrepreneurial ventures limited.

Limited access to land and formal financial services is another challenge. An added pressure is the failed land reform programs which have made it difficult to start a farm. The young also lack access to credit, financial services and productive resources that are necessary for agriculture. Limited access to markets and job opportunities, as well as labour unrest, negatively impacts on the attractiveness of a future in agriculture.

Since the average age of commercial farmers in South Africa is relatively high, a generation often less likely to adopt the new technologies required to increase agricultural productivity sustainably, it is important to draw young people into farming while retaining those already in the agricultural fields.

The main driving force behind most farmers, however, is passion. Farming is hard work with many uncertainties and risks involved. Those who try to farm without their heart in it may easily lose sight of their goals and give up – increasing the need to reignite this passion for farming in our youth.

Stimulating an interest in farming should start early. Schools should be encouraged to establish food gardens and practical training programmes. Practical education like repairing and maintaining farming equipment, together with subjects like farm management, production expertise and information technology programmes can be added to secondary-level school curricula. Existing agricultural colleges should also be revitalised to increase the number of skilled-labour training centres and research institutions can collaborate with organised agriculture to create jobs.

When the youth have an interest in farming and their skills levels are improved, their employment opportunities will increase. Providing youth with a supportive environment will attract them to the agriculture sector where they will see a future in contributing to their societies and communities.



Colleen Janse van Rensburg

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

Conflict resolution at work

Portia Phahlane

Where ever people work, live and play together, conflict is unavoidable because people are unique, with different views and expectations. There are bound to be differences in work goals and personal approaches, making disagreement and eventual conflict inevitable. Conflict resolution can differ from situation to situation. Below are some guidelines to help Extension workers and involved parties to resolve possible conflict situations:

- Acknowledge the existence of a conflict;
- Accept that there are emotions involved;
- Identify facts on both sides of the argument;
- Establish points of agreements and disagreements;
- Invite parties to propose solutions;
- Negotiate solutions to suit both parties;
- Propose an implementation plan and follow it up.

Provincial ESO Top User

Portia Phahlane

Our ESO provincial top user for this month (June 2017), is Anikie Sebenzile Khoza from "the place of the rising of the sun" - Mpumalanga. She is originally from the Ntunda Trust Area in Nkomazi Municipality, a rural area where one of the main community activities is farming.

Anikie works for the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) as an Agricultural Advisor (crop production expert). She has been working for the department for four years at Umjindini municipality, Ehlanzeni District under the supervision of Mr MP Ngomane (Supervisor), Mr JJ Mokoena (Municipal Manager) and Ms PNZ Mpangane (District Director).

Anikie was introduced to Extension Suite Online® by her supervisor in 2016 and started using and benefiting from the system since then. She explains that the system assists her to address problems and challenges faced by her farmers – 200 of them, comprising of 150 individual farmers and 50 community groups/cooperatives. Her clients farm in the vicinities of Sheba, Norcamp and Alkmaar.

Anikie's areas of interest in Extension Suite Online® focus mainly on the Plant Production module - vegetables, fruits and grains. She frequently checks the production schedules of crops, crop maintenance, soil fertility and economics section (mainly market prices and enterprise budgets).

She concludes that Extension Suite Online® is an excellent tool that helps Extension Officers with dynamic and relevant information about agriculture and that she does not hesitate to recommend using the system to her colleagues.



Anikie Sebenzile Khoza

National ESO Top User



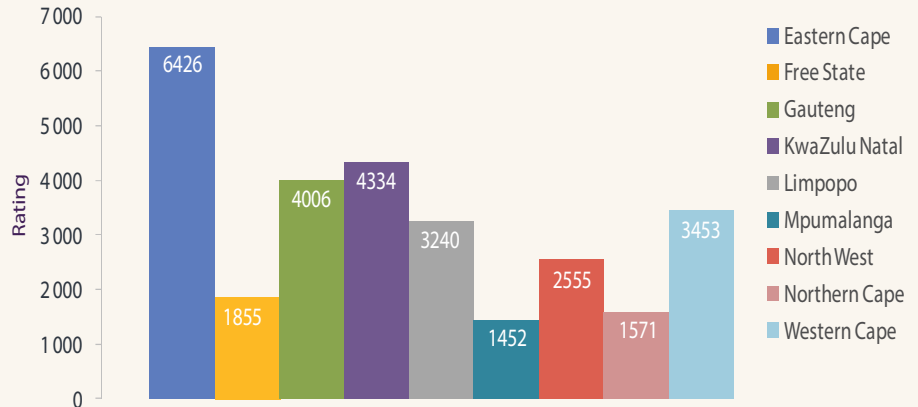
Congratulations to **SINDILE MAGODA** the ESO National Top User for **June 2017**.



EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE® UTILISATION: June 2017

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



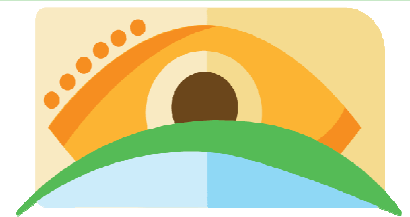
ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USERS

Province	Name
Eastern Cape	Sindile Magoda
Free State	Motsoari Noe
Gauteng	Vhuthu Gavhi
Kwa-Zulu Natal	Dumisani Nzama
Limpopo	Louis Khomola
Mpumalanga	Sthembiso Mbuyane
North West	Tsholanang Molosiwa
Northern Cape	Eugene Matutu
Western Cape	Riaan Nowers

CLIMATE WATCH

Issue #17

May started off with rainfall over the Eastern Cape during the first week, while the rest of South Africa remained dry with mild temperatures. During the second week of May the first major cold front of the 2017 winter season made landfall. In comparison, the first cold front in 2016 made landfall in April while in 2014 and 2015 the first cold fronts made landfall only in June.



Read the full article on the Manstrat AIS website.

www.manstrat.co.za - Climate Watch

ESO TIPS:

The importance of having a private email

Thulani Zengele

Irrespective of which free email services account one prefers, it is important to have an email account besides an existing work email address. Many employers discourage the use of company email facilities for private purposes, and don't forget - your employer can spy on what you send and receive with or without your knowledge or consent.

Having a personal account not only allows one to send and receive emails but other significant advantages - contact details, pictures and banking information - are immediately available outside the office.

Contact information (phone book)

One of the key advantages of having such an account is to store one's mobile phone contact details, ensuring that if the device is broken, stolen or lost, stored information remains retrievable.

Personal pictures (gallery)

Another advantage is saving pictures in the Cloud that is provided by providers, free of charge. Immediately after taking a picture one can "share" the picture and save it to available cloud services like Dropbox and Google Drive.

Bank information (teller contact and services)

Another significant use of a personal email account is for communication with financial service providers and banks for account related services and banking outside office hours.

The best thing of course, is that these accounts are free and easily accessible.

When setting up a new phone or smart device, create a personal email account and allow it to synchronise with your phone. After that, saved information should auto-populate to your device, for your convenience.

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.

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