

MIC CALL CENTRE

The Call Centre is one of the three pillars of the Manstrat Information Centre with responsibilities focused around queries received from users of Extension Suite Online.

These user queries can be divided into subject related and IT related queries. Subject related queries include plant and animal, economical, and GIS queries.

Communication from users is received via the Manstrat Helpline (telephonically) or electronically at support@eso.co.za.

The responsibility of a Call Centre operator is to receive a query and to ensure that it is properly logged and put into the system for attention by the relevant experts and specialists.

The Call Centre is currently being manned by Suzan Bendo, Portia Maibelo and Thapedi Setshedi.

Article: Piet van Zyl

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"Let every individual and institution now think and act as a responsible trustee of Earth, seeking choices in ecology, economics and ethics that will provide a sustainable future, eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, awaken the wonder of life and foster peaceful progress in the human adventure."

John McConnell, founder of International Earth Day



This issue

An African Development Team **P.1**

Plants in ESO **P.2**

Technology Tips **P.2**

To receive the Extension Suite Online newsletter via email, register your details on:

www.newsletter.esuite.co.za

An African Development Team

A university Professor once asked me where we bought the core of Extension Suite Online™, and to his surprise, the answer was – “we developed it ourselves”. What about the knowledge base and intelligent search engine, answer - “we developed it ourselves”. The dynamic menu system – “ourselves”, the Geographical Information System - “we developed it ourselves”, and what about information contained in the system, again - “we collected and reworked it ourselves”.

Who else can do this job better than a development and support team that was bred and born in Africa? Who is better to understand the needs, constraints, priorities, fears and expectations of Africa better, than an African Development and Support Team? Who understands the challenges of an African Extensionist better than another African Extensionist? That is why Manstrat Agricultural Intelligence Solutions has given serious consideration to the appointment of African professionals, why we have forged partnerships with African universities and why we have spent considerable resources to understand the specific needs and requirements of Africa.

We firmly believe that ESO is, and should remain, an African product - developed and maintained by Africans, for the benefit of agriculture in Africa. It is amazing what you can do if you believe in the resilience of Africa and its professional people, even where we do not have the knowledge and skills, it can be developed in a relatively short period, since

our people are eager to learn and even more eager to make a contribution towards Africa's development.

To ensure the long term sustainability of this strategy, we have embarked on an internship programme, more than five years ago. This programme is supported by the National Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Each year we enrol between six and eight interns in various agricultural disciplines and to date have had a 90% placement rate. To encourage people to grow even further, Manstrat provides a number of post graduate bursaries each year, assisting our personnel to obtain higher degrees and to enrol for courses that will help them to do their work better.

Apart from formal training efforts, Manstrat also provides its personnel with opportunities to learn from each other by forming intelligent project groups where different disciplines are combined in such a manner that participants are co-dependant and that appropriate results can only be achieved when the group teaches each other.

Extension Suite Online is a true “Africans for Africa” product and we are proud of it. It is a product that allows other African countries to benefit from the South African ICT backbone and infrastructure and it allows users access to African experts right there, where they need it – on the farm.

Article: Dr Roelof de Villiers

Extraordinary plants in Extension Suite Online



The oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) is today the most produced vegetable oil in the world. It originates in West Africa in tropical conditions with high rainfall. It is still grown there but most production now comes from East Asian countries. It is remarkable in its productivity of oil yielding on average 3.66 tons/hectare/year compared with soybean which produces 0.36 tons, a tenth. Palm oil accounts for 35% of the world's vegetable oil followed by soybeans, 30%. However this 35% is produced on 4.8% of the land area (under oil crops) whereas soybean uses 29.8% of the area (soybeans does however contribute significantly to other food products). Palm oil is so versatile it is present in many everyday products such as cooking oil, margarine, milk

replacer and cocoa butter substitute, while palm kernel oil is used for making soap, detergents, toiletries and cosmetics. Currently its oil producing properties are being exploited to provide stock-feed for bio-diesel production.

Pyrethrum is a natural insecticide derived from *Chrysanthemum cinerariaefolium*. The flowers and some of the stem contain the six pyrethrin compounds with insecticidal properties that are used in certain household aerosol sprays. As an insecticide the pyrethrin is environmentally benign, breaks down under sunlight and is approved for organic production. Kenya produces 70% of the world's pyrethrum through a network of 200 000

small scale growers and self help groups throughout the central highlands. Synthetic pyrethroids, with a molecular structure and biological activities similar to the natural pyrethrins, were developed in the 1970's (cypermethrin, permethrin and deltamethrin) for use on open field crops where natural pyrethrins break down rapidly in sunlight. This impacted on the pyrethrum industry by reducing demand for the natural compound.

However, sectors of the market have supported the pyrethrum production business, notably S.C. Johnson manufacturers of Raid® and Baygon® sprays. This has sustained and recently, ensured the growth of the industry in Kenya.

Article: Dr John Lapham

G8 Summit June 2010

At the G8 summit held in Toronto during the last week of June 2010, G8 leaders renewed their commitment to food security. They stood by their pledge made last year at the L'Aquila summit in Italy to spend (US) \$22 billion for sustainable agriculture by 2012. To date approximately \$6 billion has been allocated and there was a re-commitment made that by 2012 the balance will be delivered.

Regarding the question of how the money should be spent, the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) said it should be distributed and managed via CAADP for investment in agricultural infrastructure, trade routes, and technology -- investments that will build the human capacity that's required for a food security region. In this regard it was indicated that Africa is producing less than one-third of its potential yield and what is missing is the technology and skills to improve productivity together with trade routes that will allow the movement of food between surplus and deficit areas."

Article: Jantus van der Linden

TECHNOLOGY TIPS by Francois van der Merwe

PDF documents:

With the vast amount of information provided in Extension Suite Online, there are a variety of methods used to relay this information to its users. The most common method of displaying information in ESO is through the use of normal web pages. There is a massive amount of information displayed by using the PDF (Portable Document Format) file format. PDF's are a type of document that one is able to view, but without the appropriate software, you are unable to edit



it. When a link is clicked to view a PDF document, the whole document will be downloaded for viewing, which means, the more information in die PDF, the longer it will take to load. It is also possible to download a PDF for later viewing; right click on the link of the PDF and select "Save target as", this usually does the trick, otherwise the opened PDF can be saved from "file" - "save as".

Manstrat

Manstrat cc
Manstrat Agricultural Intelligence
Solutions (Pty) Ltd.
Manstrat Consulting (Pty) Ltd.

P.O. Box 2752
BROOKLYN SQUARE
0075

www.manstrat.co.za