

## HELP COLLEAGUES TO BECOME ESO USERS

The majority of people reading this article are currently active users of ESO, or at least one of the 2,555 registered officials of this internet based agricultural decision support system.

Theoretically speaking, this means that in every agricultural extension office in South Africa, roughly 50% of the officials sharing that space with registered users do not have access to South Africa's premium extension knowledge tool.

A huge responsibility therefore rests on readers' and ESO users' shoulders to encourage and assist fellow Extensionists to be registered as users and in doing so, encouraging co-workers to act in the interest of agriculture and all those who depend on it for their livelihood.

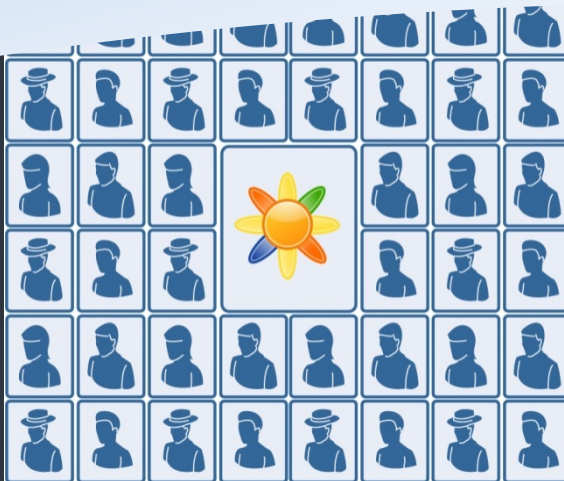
The simple process of registration involves providing provincial Extension Management or ESO System Administrators with the required personal information, who will then either register the official themselves, or request Manstrat to do so on their behalf, by contacting the Help Desk at [support@esuite.co.za](mailto:support@esuite.co.za) for an ESO password. Let us make an effort to help fellow Extension Officers become ESO users.

Thapedi Setshedi

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Don't let the fear of the time it will take to accomplish something stand in the way of your doing it. The time will pass anyway; we might just as well put that passing time to the best possible use."

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Earl Nightingale



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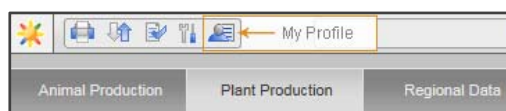
To receive the Extension Suite Online newsletter via email, register your details on:

[www.newsletter.esuite.co.za](http://www.newsletter.esuite.co.za)

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ESO USER PROFILE

A user profile is in essence a collection of data that describes a specific user in a specific system, and can therefore be seen as the digital representation of your identity as an extension officer on Extension Suite Online (ESO). The importance of accurately completing your user profile cannot be over emphasised, and forms an enormous part of developing the ESO expert knowledgebase.

During the first login a new ESO user will be requested to provide us with certain personal details as a prerequisite for becoming a registered user. Although only a few of the fields are mandatory to complete, it is always good practice to complete as much information, as accurately as possible, since we make use of these details to facilitate good communication between ESO and the user. The ESO registration process is in essence also the profile setup, which is conveniently divided into 2 easy steps. Step 1 allows the user to enter a *new secure password*, to choose a *security question* and supply an *answer* to the question. The purpose of this procedure is to assist with the authentication process during a forgotten password request. Further more ESO requires user's *contact details* and some personal details for communication purposes. Step 2, although not compulsory to complete right away, can later be completed through accessing the "My Profile" page of ESO, this page can be found by clicking the "My Profile" button in the toolbar in the top left-hand corner of ESO.



When accessing the "My Profile" page from inside ESO a user can supply us with information, such as *designation, qualifications, organizational details and additional contact details* this information will allow ESO to further communicate with a user on many different levels. There is also a section in the sidebar named "Field of expertise," the reason for this, amongst other things, is that it forms part of a users' digital representation on ESO. By collecting each user's specific expertise information an extended and accurate knowledgebase on the different types of experts in any given province that have access to the system, can be built. With time, experts on different levels can then be brought into contact with each other, this will in turn contribute even further to the development of an intelligent system, where relevant information can be exchanged between experts and information can be supplied to users, that is directly in line with his/her expertise and work field. Allowing the later completion of these profile fields does not however diminish its importance, and it must be emphasised that it forms an integral part in establishing an accurate identity for each user on ESO towards developing the expert knowledgebase.

Starting as off today and continuing through 2012 all ESO users are requested to complete their User Profiles to become part of the ESO expert knowledgebase. ***(We place high importance upon confidentiality, therefore all the information that we receive from you is strictly classified and will not be disclosed to any third party and your details are also visible to nobody other than yourself.)***

Jeanne-Louise Bekker, Johan Hoogenboezem and Vincent Victor

Remembering passwords can sometimes become quite a difficult task, since most of us have more than one password we need to keep in mind for different applications. Selecting a password with care can make remembering the word much easier. Fortunately Extension Suite Online (ESO) has a "Forgot password" tool where you are able to retrieve your password with ease, in case you have forgotten it. This tool can be found at the bottom of the ESO login page ([www.esuite.co.za](http://www.esuite.co.za)), named "Forgot Password." When you click on the link you will be requested to insert your email



address, please insert the email address that you have provided when you registered as an ESO user. Next you will be asked to give the answer to the security question that you have also selected when you first set up your ESO user account; this makes the system of password recovery more secure. The tool will then send a mail to the email address that you have provided when you registered on ESO, the e-mail will contain your login details. Using the autonomous password recovery tool is hassle free and available to everyone.

## NATIONAL EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE USER FOR OCTOBER 2011

By the monitoring of the utilisation of users in all provinces, Manstrat AIS identifies the country's top user monthly, through a ratings system. These ratings are ultimately used to select an annual national winner.

Congratulations to, **Lesego Phakedi** (Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development), who is the **ESO National User for October 2011**. As Lesego Phakedi is a **fourth time ESO National User** he receives the **Samsung Galaxy Tab** for his efforts.



Lesego has now won the title of the National Top ESO monthly user award 4 times during the 2011/2012 reporting period. During November, we at Extension Suite Online head office had the great opportunity to meet up with Lesego Phakedi where he allowed us to share part of his working day as an extension officer with him. We met up with him early one morning as he started his day in the office, preparing to go out into the field. His office space consists of a desk covered in research work, a laptop that has seen many a farm, a radio that plays softly in the background and from just outside the door one can here the soft buzzing of other Extension Officers hard at work. We started the interview with great excitement, but not even 5 minutes later questions from co-workers started flying in and farmers were phoning to get information from this enthusiastic Extension Worker. Lesego Phakedi lends a helping hand wherever he can, not only towards the farmers that he so righteously serves, but also to his co-workers. After a few necessary interruptions, Lesego started chatting away and gave us some insight into the world of extension. His week consists of meeting up with individual farmers, being present at study and community groups, and also an abundance of research work.

Lesego mentions that South Africa as a developing country needs a lot of Extension Officers that are well trained and equipped with the right knowledge – "When we give our knowledge to the

*emerging farmer we make a difference in equipping them in the business that they are in. We want to help to enable them to make informed decisions in whatever agricultural enterprise they might find themselves. This will help farmers to maximize their profit, but minimize their input cost."* Lesego understands the core of the agricultural business and wants to make it clear to his farmers that markets out there are looking for a quality product, the information that he supplies them with will therefore enable them to deliver a quality product that can fetch top prices, "because in the end of the day farming is a business."

He speaks highly of Extension Suite Online, and firmly believes that ESO is a tool that every Extension Officer in the country should start using. He says that he will not only recommend the system, but will also encourage each and everyone to incorporate it into their daily research activities. Lesego is very observant when it comes to his farmers, being an Extension Officer involves interacting directly with people, he says that working with human beings is an interesting business "give them the right information at the right time and they will develop trust and confidence in you." He believes that Extension Suite Online has done just that, "it provides you with information at your fingertips - if a farmer needs help I can give him the information he needs right now." He added further that farmers expect promptness, "the agricultural business is one enterprise where no one has the time to wait unnecessarily for information".

Lesego is not just an extension officer; he has passion for his work and shows great enthusiasm that is inspiring to all of us. Lesego therefore rightfully labels himself not only as an Extension Officer, "but as an agent of change and a developmental officer, a person ready to make a change in the world."

*Extension Suite Online Team*

## OCTOBER UTILISATION

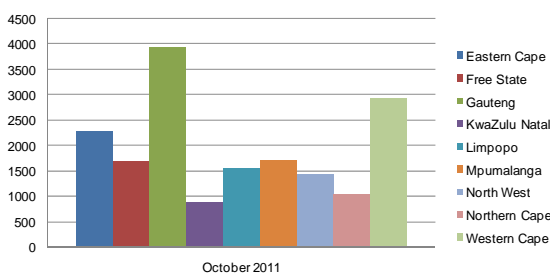
Lesego Phakedi from Gauteng Province is the ESO Monthly National User for the fourth consecutive month. He wins the Samsung Galaxy Tab from Manstrat AIS for this effort. Well done Lesego.

Utilisation of ESO in most provinces continues to grow. The combined average points rating of the National Top Ten of the nine provinces is over 2,000 points which is an indication that at least the top Extensionists in the provinces are getting good mileage out of ESO.

From February 2012, individual user utilisation will be measured against the national average instead of their provincial average as is currently the situation.

Provinces with overall high utilisation figures may thus end up having more than one officer in the National Top Ten, while provinces with weaker utilisation may not even have one in it.

PROVINCIAL TOP USER RATING



NAME OF TOP USER IN EACH PROVINCE OCTOBER 2011

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Sindile Magoda
Free State	Mamosebetsi Skhosana
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Langelihle Mjadu
Limpopo	Edgar Sebei
Mpumalanga	Matilda Gloria Sambo
North West	Kgosithebe Seolwane
Northern Cape	George du Preez
Western Cape	Antony Louw

Bye the way, Lesego spends an average of one hour per working day on ESO. Anybody out there to challenge him? *Keep on clicking.*

*Piet van Zyl*