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Editor-in-Chief: Dorethea Samaai, Email: Dorethea.Samaai@drdlr.gov.za,
Cell number: 083 441 9946

Editor: Piwe Mbiko, Email: PiweM@dalrrd.gov.za, Celnr: 072 937 2337



Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development



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Risks associated with rabies

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) wish to alert members of the public on the risks associated with rabies.

Since the beginning of the year the number of confirmed rabies cases are thirty-three (33) in animals. The department is saddened to report that one human fatality has been reported from KZN (10-year-old boy). Both entities would like to assure members of the public that, although rabies is an unfortunate reality, but it can be prevented.

Rabies is a fatal viral disease that affects all mammals and is transmissible from animals to humans. The virus is transmitted in the saliva of infected animals through licks, scratches and bites. Dog mediated rabies in humans is fully preventable and this is why the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have committed to eradicating dog mediated human cases by 2030. We only have nine years left to achieve this goal, and it is indeed achievable if

we all take the responsibility to have our pets vaccinated.

“A person dying of rabies is an unnecessary death,” says Dr Nomsa Mnisi, Vice President of the SAVC, “the disease is preventable purely by vaccinating animals, we therefore should not be seeing people, especially the most vulnerable like children, dying.” This statement was published on 28 September 2020 for World Rabies Day.

“It is the responsibility of each pet owner, in terms of the Animal Diseases Act, to ensure that their pets are vaccinated against rabies. By doing this, you will not only be protecting your beloved animals, but you will also be playing your part in the bigger picture; protecting the lives of fellow human beings, especially children” said Dr. Mpho Maja

DALRRD and SAVC wish to urge all dog and cat owners to please take their pets for vaccination.

Rabies occurs in domestic and wild animals across South Africa, DALRRD and SAVC encourages communities not to touch or pick up unknown or stray animals, especially dogs and cats.

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Report any rabies symptoms in animals immediately to your nearest State Veterinary Office and notify them of any possible human contact with suspect rabid animals. Humans that have had contact (lick, scratch or bite) with a suspect rabid animal must wash the wound well with soap under running water and immediately seek medical assistance to receive preventative treatment. This is of utmost importance because post-exposure treatment must start immediately to prevent infection from rabies.

This year, in September, will be

celebrating the 15th World Rabies Day. We urge all South Africans to be part of the global community and join in the global fight against rabies. Have your pets vaccinated against rabies and use an SAVC registered professional to ensure best practice animal health care of your animals. Veterinary Services can be relied upon to provide valuable information and quality vaccines. Don't hesitate, vaccinate!!!

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development in collaboration with South African Veterinary Council appeals to all dog and cat owners to ensure that their animals are vaccinated against rabies.

The SAVC and Government Veterinary Services (<https://www.gov.za/world-rabies-day-2020#> and <https://www.dalrrd.gov.za/Branches/Agricultural-Production-Health-Food-Safety/Animal-Health/information/pamphlets/pamphlet-main>) run regular awareness campaigns and will gladly supply more information. Watch this short video about Akanyang Ngakane, the Animal Health Technician employed by the Gauteng Veterinary Services, where she explains the importance of why Animal Health Technicians play a crucial role in the fight against rabies and how they create awareness in areas where rabies is more prevalent.

Khosouthopa nursery produces great seedlings

By *Samuel Kgatla*

Khosouthopa Seedling CC is the place to go for real seedlings. The 2 ha seedling farm was started by the energetic William Mohale. The nursery is based in Jamela Village along the R81 road from Polokwane to Giyani in Limpopo.

Mohale specialises in various vegetables seedlings; his nursery boasts 18 permanent employees, the majority of which being youth. He works closely with his four children and he said they are the future of the nursery. He began with 100 trays of seedlings and everything started coming together

after Absa bank loaned him R140 000. Currently, the farm has almost 14 million seedlings in his 15 nurseries. Mohale sells his seedlings to the people at a market-related price even though his are more affordable.

William has worked for other nurseries for 28 years where he learnt everything before starting his own in 2006. His plan began in 2005 and it came into fruition the following year. He asked for the land and the chief provided it. He started buying materials and started with the nursery. In 2012, he added his nursery structures to make them 15.

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From left is Mr William Mohale and his daughter with Mr Tebogo Thobakgale, the agricultural advisor.

Khosouthopa nursery produces great seedlings

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He is a philanthropist because he donates money and some of his seedlings to clinics, hospitals, schools and for government functions. Local people also benefit from his nursery. Mohale can be seen displaying his good work during government events.

“It was not easy at the beginning, but I soldiered on and it is working out. I want to tell you that getting Permission

To Occupy (PTO) done is the main challenge and I have been struggling. I needed assistance to get it done. I plead with the government to help me,” he said.

His hard work and perseverance seem to have paid off as he now has bigger plans for his nursery. He is looking at having a reservoir, three equipped boreholes, revamping the old nursery structure to be the best and improving his fence.



William Mohale of Khosouthopa Seedling in Limpopo.

Umhlabawethu Community Trust

By Innocent Mhlanga

In 2005, the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights settled a claim for six farms to the extent of 2 091.9 041 ha for households. These farms are located at Bhekeshowe Reserve, in uMlalazi Local Municipality within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal.

The area is between the towns of Empangeni and Eshowe along the P230 road. One of the farms was a game ranch known as Kwabhekithunga Lodge. The settled land was transferred and registered under the Umhlabawethu Community Trust. A strategic agreement was reached between the previous landowners and the Umhlabawethu Trustees in 2005 after the claim was settled. Those arrangements resulted in the registration of a company called Bhekeshowe (Pty) Ltd.

The intention of the agreement was to ensure continuity of production on the farms and skills transfer from previous landowners to the new owners. The main objective of the agreement between the previous owners and Umhlabawethu Community Trust did not materialise fully and that resulted in liquidation of Bhekeshowe (Pty) Ltd, repossession of the assets from Umhlabawethu

Community Trust, non-repayments of the loans and poor production yields on the farms.

In 2010, Tongaat Hullet was approached for funding by the Bhekeshowe (Pty) Ltd directors but they did not approve request and instead suggested to lease the farm. An agreement to rent out 630 ha of sugar cane to Tongaat Hullet for a period of 10 years was reached and it was also agreed that the trustees will manage the citrus farms.

Forward to 2019, the community were uncertain with the management of the citrus and mango orchards; community conflicts resulted in the resignation of the farm manager; a fire broke out in the mango orchards due to the dissatisfaction of some community members and trees were burned down.

That very same year, Tongaat Hullet approached Umhlabawethu Community Trust with the decision to terminate the contract due to government's imposition of low sugar prices, so sugar cane was no longer economically viable and were running at a loss. Tongaat Hullet took their equipment and handed over

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the property keys to the traditional leadership. Because of the lack of management and security on the farms, looting and vandalism occurred.

The community chose to seek support from their strategic partners, which are Umhlathuze Trust and Capespan, respectively, to assist them in the management of the farms. The Umhlathuze Trust represents the previous landowner, who holds 13% shares in the joint venture company, Umhlabawethu Community Trust holds 74% shares and Capespan 13%.

The Umhlathuze Trust has invested R2,4 million, a Restitution Discretionary Grant of R219 000, a settlement planting grant of R105 000 and CASP funding. This project has created opportunities for the local people and training is provided by the Citrus Growers Association. Farmers provide support through mentorship and skills transfer to the claimants. The Department of Agriculture provided fertilisers and the Regional Land Claim Commission purchased movables for the farm through grants provided and additional support is being mobilised from DAED.

Capespan provided assistance with regard to exportation of citrus and the provision of training on citrus production. Tongaat Hullet provided technical support by providing Extension Officers and production input. The DRDLR assisted the community with the purchase of a pack house for citrus. The farm has a potential turnover of R23 million.

The land use comprises sugar cane, citrus fruit and mango production; there is a lodge on the farm that employs approximately 180 permanent staff and 80 temporary staff, including beneficiaries. During an engagement with the members of the community a number of challenges was noted, which include the decrease in citrus production due to old trees that needed replacement and also the decrease in sugar cane production as a result of the lack of an irrigation system. This means there is a need to resuscitate about 200 ha of sugar cane and 29 ha of citrus.

For the rest of the article and photos contact Innocent Mhlanga at email: innocentm@dalrrd.gov.za and cellnr: 063 693 0353.

South African citrus celebrates record-breaking export season with 146 million cartons of fruit

Ten months ago, in March 2020, the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) predicted a bumper citrus export season, estimating that export volumes would reach 143 million cartons of fruit. "Now that the final export figures are in, we can announce a record-breaking 2020 export season that delivered 146 million cartons of South African citrus to the rest of the world."

These figures indicate phenomenal growth within the South African citrus industry, which remains the second-largest exporter of fresh citrus in the world after Spain. This achievement is the result of close collaborations and partnerships within the industry and with government and is testament to the quality of South African citrus fruit which is in demand all over the globe.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza (MP), congratulated the citrus industry on the record exports they made. Citrus is one of South Africa's most important subsectors in the agricultural sector that provides a significant contribution to job creation and economic activity in our country's

rural communities. "The industry has expanded notably over the past decade, and we thank the farmers for showing confidence and increasing the investments. The industry's investment is starting to pay off, as the Citrus Growers Association reported this morning that South Africa exported a record 146 million cartons of citrus in 2020; which means we are still the world's second-largest exporter of fresh citrus after Spain," said Minister Didiza.

Minister Didiza said that, "The challenge going forward was ensuring that, as a government, we open more export markets for the industry, as the estimates suggest, there will be roughly 300 000 tons added into the current volumes in the next three years that require an export market. As a government, we commit to working with the industry and other stakeholders to expand the market access to destinations such as the United States, China and India, and the European Union and other countries that already enjoy the South African citrus. In the process, we will work with relevant stakeholders in improving logistics for export activity."

Roadmap for the country's management of its water resources

On 10 February 2021, Minister Sisulu and the senior management of the Department of Water and Sanitation met with stakeholders in the agricultural sector to discuss the National Water and Sanitation Master Plan (NWSMP). The NWSMP, set to be accepted by Cabinet soon, provides the roadmap for the country's management of its water resources.

It covers vital topics such the future mix of water sources, a strategy to meet future demands from various industries and crucial infrastructure issues. Critically for the agricultural sector, the NWSMP also touches on the regulation of water use entitlements including controversial proposals to end the recognition of existing lawful use rights, adopting a 'use-it or lose-it' approach and banning the trading of water rights. These proposals are formulated to allow the department to meet its targets surrounding the reallocation of water rights to previously disadvantaged groupings.

Amongst inputs made by representatives from Agri SA and SAWUUA, Agbiz noted that there may be unintended consequences should these policy proposals be put into action in their

current format and that a transitional arrangement should be debated that promotes transformation and allows reallocation but still allows security of supply to entities that meet the transformation requirements.

Agbiz also noted that the mechanisms in the NWSMP were largely centralised and placed a huge burden on the state. Mechanisms should be explored whereby the objectives of the NWSMP can be taken forward on a public-private-partnership basis to increase capacity and buy-in from all affected stakeholders. Representatives from both the department and private sector endorsed the proposal to host a 'scenario-planning' session to explore all the possible avenues that can be followed to give effect to the objectives of NWSMP as far as the regulation of agricultural water use is concerned. The meeting was certainly a step in the right direction and all the stakeholders must be commended for their pragmatic approach and Agbiz looks forward to actioning the scenario-planning session to find inclusive and practical solutions to some of the challenges facing agricultural water use.

Source: Agbiz

The Witte Wijnappel

The very first apple picked in the Company's Garden, Cape Town on 17 April 1662 can be tasted again for the first time in centuries.

The Witte Wijnappel is recorded in the diary of the first Dutch governor, and is growing again on South African soil thanks to Tru-Cape Fruit Marketing and Hortgro, who found the lost variety. It is bearing fruit in the Tru-Cape Heritage Orchard at Oak Valley Estate in Elgin



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Dorethea Samaai	083 441 9946
Piwe Mbiko	072 937 2337
Lerato Mofokeng	012 319 7927
Samuel Kgatla	066 084 6653
Innocent Mhlanga	063 693 0353
Rony Moremi	066 084 6192
Mercia Smith	060 973 3816

Dorethea.Samaai@drdlr.gov.za
PiweM@dalrrd.gov.za
LeratoMOF@dalrrd.gov.za
SamuelK@dalrrd.gov.za
InnocentM@dalrrd.gov.za
RincertM@dalrrd.gov.za
MerciaS@dalrrd.gov.za