



Lengau Agricultural Development Centre

Dr Léan van der Westhuizen

Overview

The Lengau Agricultural Development Centre's Agricultural Skills Development, Training and Mentorship Programme is an initiative aimed at being an engaged faculty of the UFS by utilising academic capacity and facilities to make a significant difference in sustainable agriculture to the region, country and continent.

The UFS owns three experimental farms to the south of Bloemfontein. These farms are used for training, research and community service. Some of the farms are earmarked for agricultural skills development and training of emerging farmers, farm workers and entrepreneurs in agricultural business.

The facilities are also earmarked for alternative natural and agricultural skills development opportunities in brick-making, construction, value-adding and compost production. The buildings, facilities and a portion of the land of the Sydenham Experimental Farm are allocated to the centre.

These facilities are utilised in an extensive manner to address the needs of newly settled and prospective emerging and commercial black farmers. Services range from livestock auctioneering, branding, dehorning, castration and primary herding. The centre also serves as a centre for the education of under- and postgraduates, mentors, farmers and black entrepreneurs in many aspects of livestock, crop farming and agri business.

The UFS, the Mangaung Local Municipality, the Free State Provincial Department of Agriculture and the National African Farmers Union (NAFU) have embraced the programme as partners in agricultural transformation.

The centre aims to undertake systematic small farmer training, tackle local development issues and enrich the curriculum in terms of research and training at the UFS, on a simultaneous basis.

Some of the projects undertaken at the centre include the training of community members of the Mangaung Local Municipality, particularly the residents of the informal settlement within the immediate vicinity of the experimental farms, and the training of emerging farmers who were recently allocated land under the land reform programme, but who are unable to make a success of their farming operations due to inexperience and lack of technical support.

Other projects are the developing and presenting of short courses in practical agriculture in line with dominant conditions encountered by the target groups; farm demonstrations; research to identify factors that enhance the competitiveness; strengthening of the practical aspects of the curriculum for on-going community service learning of the students on the three campuses of the UFS; an outreach programme through partnerships to extend the clientele through a "hub-and-spokes" framework to different parts of the country; providing a support facility to emerging commercial farmers where training and implementation assistance can be supplied to livestock and crop farmers; participating and assisting in Agri BEE initiatives, establishing of HIV and Aids prevention, care and support initiatives amongst farmers, farm workers and associated communities.

During 2007 the centre, in collaboration with several partners, achieved a number of outcomes. In conjunction with the ECIAfrica, the Free State Provincial Department of Agriculture, the Mangaung Local Municipality, the Mantsopa Local Municipality



Ms Doretha Jacobs from the Department of Microbial, Biochemical and Food Biotechnology is responsible for the skills development of the Mamello sewing project at the centre.

and Total Transformation Agribusiness, eight farmers' days were held in the Motheo District where project managers, project beneficiaries, farmers and farm workers were skilled in feedlot management, animal feeding, vaccination, branding, dehorning, castration and tick control. They also received training in animal breeding and bull selection for the improvement of their livestock.

Fifteen people were trained in broiler production skills at Thaba Nchu and at the centre. Approximately 1 200 head of cattle were handled and 68 people attended the sessions. Ms Doretha Jacobs of the Department of Microbial, Biochemical and Food Biotechnology at the UFS, in conjunction with the Department of Labour, trained 12 beneficiaries in sewing skills. The Mangaung Local Municipality funded the equipment. A variety of products were produced and marketed during 2007.

One self-employed black lady managed five cycles of the 250-bird broiler house. Sixteen emerging poultry farmers of Bloemfontein and the eastern Free State were trained in broiler and layer management. The five pig farmers, utilising the piggery facilities at the centre, and two commercial pig farmers from Tweespruit, were trained in piggery construction and management skills.

The four hydroponics units at the centre are functional and vegetable production skills were offered to 62 people in the Free State Province. The centre was contacted by the Free State Provincial Department of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study on six hydroponics projects and if favourable, to revitalise all or some of them.

CMW and BKB Louwid offered monthly livestock auctions for commercial and emerging farmers at the centre. BKB Louwid achieved a record turnover per auction of more than one million rand.

The centre, in conjunction with the Central University of Technology (CUT) and the national Department of Agriculture, trained 22 agricultural extension officers from the provincial Departments of Agriculture of the Eastern Cape, Free State and Northern Cape Provinces theoretically and practically in Integrated Project Management skills. The candidates implemented these skills afterwards in projects in their communities.

Three of the four black cattle owners who housed approximately 240 head of cattle overnight in the feedlot pen and who



Beneficiaries of the Maluti A Phofung hydroponics project in Qwaqwa. The tunnels are equipped with heating systems and thus make tomato and green pepper production possible during the cold winter months in the eastern Free State.



CMW and BKB Louwid are responsible for livestock auctions at the Lengau Agricultural Development Centre.

Staff

The following staff of the UFS are involved in the management and implementation of the project on a permanent or temporary basis.

Permanent:

Senior Lecturer: Dr Léan van der Westhuizen

Community Development Officer: Ms Lolly Mogoere

Temporary:

HIV/Aids Prevention, Care and Support Co-ordinator: Ms Estelle Heideman

Administrative Manager: Mr Mogale Mphahlele

Farm Assistants: Messrs Raymond Melusi, William Mosoeu

Farm Guards: Messrs Solomon Masikila, Peter Makiti, Esau Selepe

Project Co-ordinator, Agricultural Business Unit: Mr Challa Moahloli

Contact details

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were skilled at the centre in various aspects of cattle management, were successful in obtaining their own farms through the Land Reform Programme. Afterwards another two emerging farmers and their cattle entered the cattle incubator system for training. The veterinary services of the Free State Provincial Department of Agriculture used these cattle to demonstrate cattle health and vaccination, branding, dehorning and castration activities to emerging farmers of Bloemfontein.

The Lengau HIV and Aids Prevention, Care and Support Programme was officially launched in 2007. Information sessions were held regularly at the centre to introduce employees, emerging farmers and local sex workers to certain aspects regarding HIV/Aids. The programme also participated in the Free State Rural Development Partnership Project (FSRDPP) with particular focus on farming communities in the Trompsburg, Springfontein and Philippolis rural areas.



The centre presented a farmers day to emerging farmers in co-operation with the Free State Department of Agriculture and the Mangaung Local Municipality. The topics that were discussed were cattle breeding, cattle health and vaccination of cattle, and castration. Demonstrations on branding and dehorning were also done. Attending the farmers day are, from the left: Mss Angelina Nkoqa, farmer, Ms Jeany Motlogelwa, Veterinary Services Division, Department of Agriculture, Dr Léan van der Westhuizen, Head of the centre, and Mr Emanuel Mhlauli, farmer.