



ABUNDANT HARVEST

WESTERN CANA AGRICULTURE SUCCESS STORIES



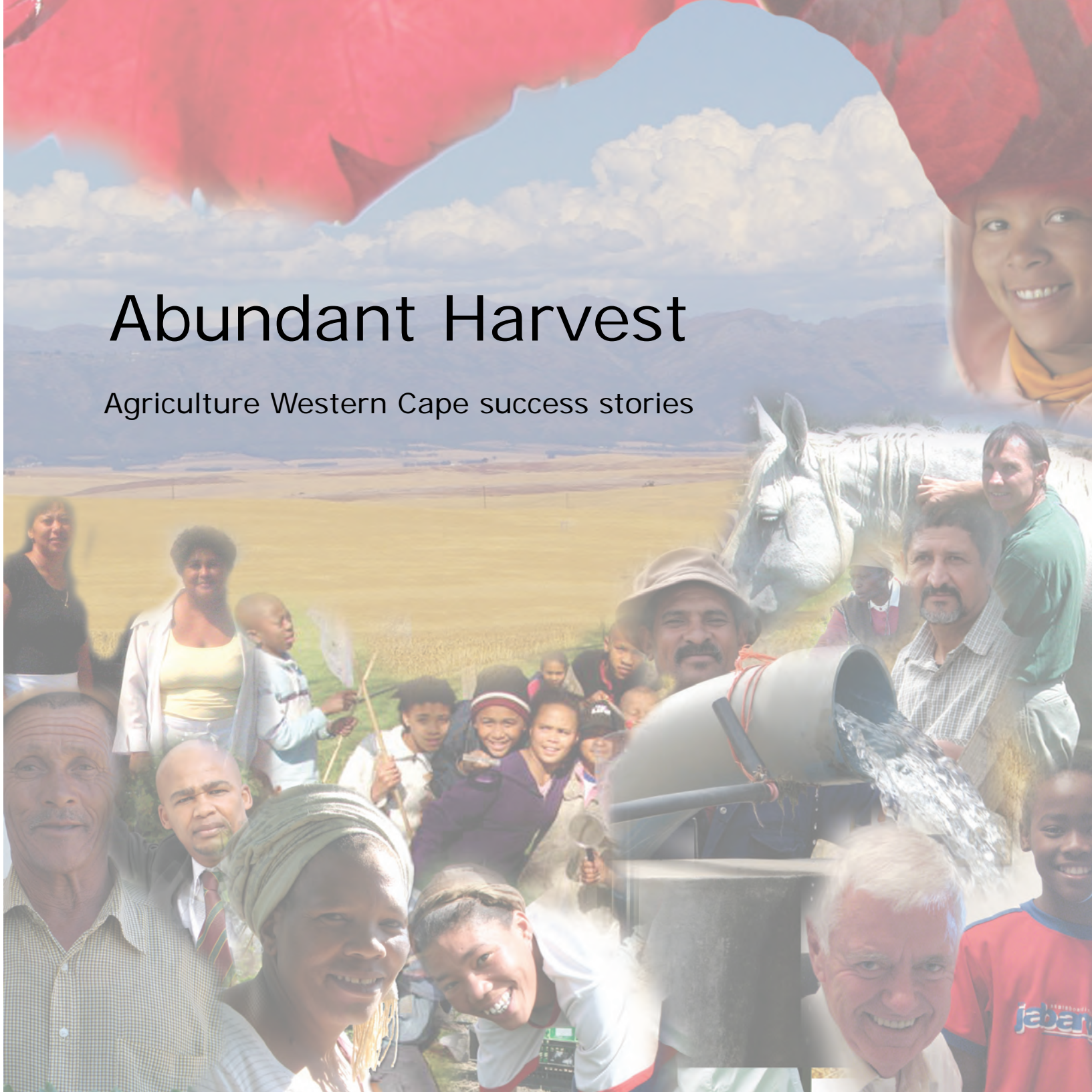
Western Grain
Community

2017-2018



Abundant Harvest

Agriculture Western Cape success stories



Author: Charlene Nieuwoudt

Design: Liesl Muller

Photography: Charlene Nieuwoudt, Gizelle van Wyk, Rudoph Roscher, Piet Louw, Edo Heyns
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Introduction



Joyene Isaacs, Head of Department

Abundant Harvest is a record or snapshot of successful agricultural endeavours. This is an effort to showcase the dedicated people in Agriculture, not only the farmers, but also the officials of the Department of Agriculture: Western Cape. This is also not the result of one year's investment but several years, and as such this is an attempt to share with a much wider audience the potential, ability and sheer determination of all involved to make farming work.

Agriculture is the backbone of the rural economy. Without a vibrant agricultural sector, there is no guarantee for food security. Two loaded statements, and yet so many people don't realise the importance of farming (agriculture) in their daily lives. 'Food maketh the Province go round?' Maybe...

There were dramatic changes over the last 18 months, in that a new government in the Province has signalled the importance of service delivery as well as the new way of doing proper government business. Ironical, or maybe not, the very same signals were received from National Government. Now for the Department of Agriculture: Western Cape the signals from the Provincial and National Government, meant and translated into an awareness of new ways of doing business in the future, understanding that no more working in silos, realising that the Department must deliver on hard targets, and ultimately ensuring good governance in all our activities and endeavours.

What does mean for our clients? It means working harder and smarter, reflecting on mistakes made and deriving lessons from this to improve even more. Ultimately, it is about good, appropriate and relevant services to a very wide range of clients. In both the Provincial strategic objectives and the national outcomes, agriculture has been highlighted in the fight against poverty, job creation, environmental protection and conservation, and increased food production. The challenge is to ensure that whatever is done and will

be done, will maintain the sustainability core of Planet, People and Profit. A challenge indeed!

The Department of Agriculture: Western Cape is involved in a number of initiatives that are geared towards ensuring the sustainability of the agricultural sector. This book (which started out as a booklet) highlights those people in the sector that at different levels showed absolute perseverance and commitment to making a difference. This is not about only the farmers, or the students or staff, but it is about highlighting the broader teams hard at work to ensure food security at different levels but also to bring to the fore the importance of partnerships, commitment, government at work, and the most beautiful people in the agricultural sector.

Abundant Harvest is as much about the people as it is the successes over years. The book is a celebration of the indomitable spirit of the people in Agriculture.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. du Toit', is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and a trailing flourish.

Foreword



*Mr Gerrit van Rensburg, MEC for
Agriculture and Rural Development*

Taking a snapshot of agriculture in the year 2010 requires a wide angle lense. Reading through this publication illustrates this in a vivid manner, as agriculture in the Western Cape encompasses such a diverse range of activities: food security gardens; black economic empowerment; cutting edge commercial agriculture, and all the support functions needed to sustain it. All these form part of what we so matter-of-factly refer to as 'agriculture' today.

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture plays a central role in supporting this diverse agricultural sector through its various programmes. In this publication you will read about our vets and the crucial work they do. You will read about ground breaking work done on crop rotation and conservation farming by our researchers. Agriculture

depends on research and technology in order to farm with less input costs while realising higher yields.

It is only profitable farmers who can afford to care for the environment. Our research efforts are therefore focussed on two crucial issues: How do we farm to be more profitable, and how should we farm in order to protect the natural environment? Environmental awareness is also promoted through our various Landcare programmes, of which you will also read in this publication.

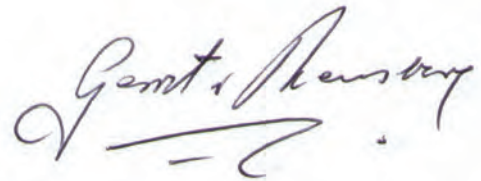
Agriculture is part of the global village, and this is no exception in the Western Cape. Our wine and fresh fruit sectors are predominately export orientated. Market access is therefore of great importance. But local and international market access is also needed in order for our new farmers to be successful.

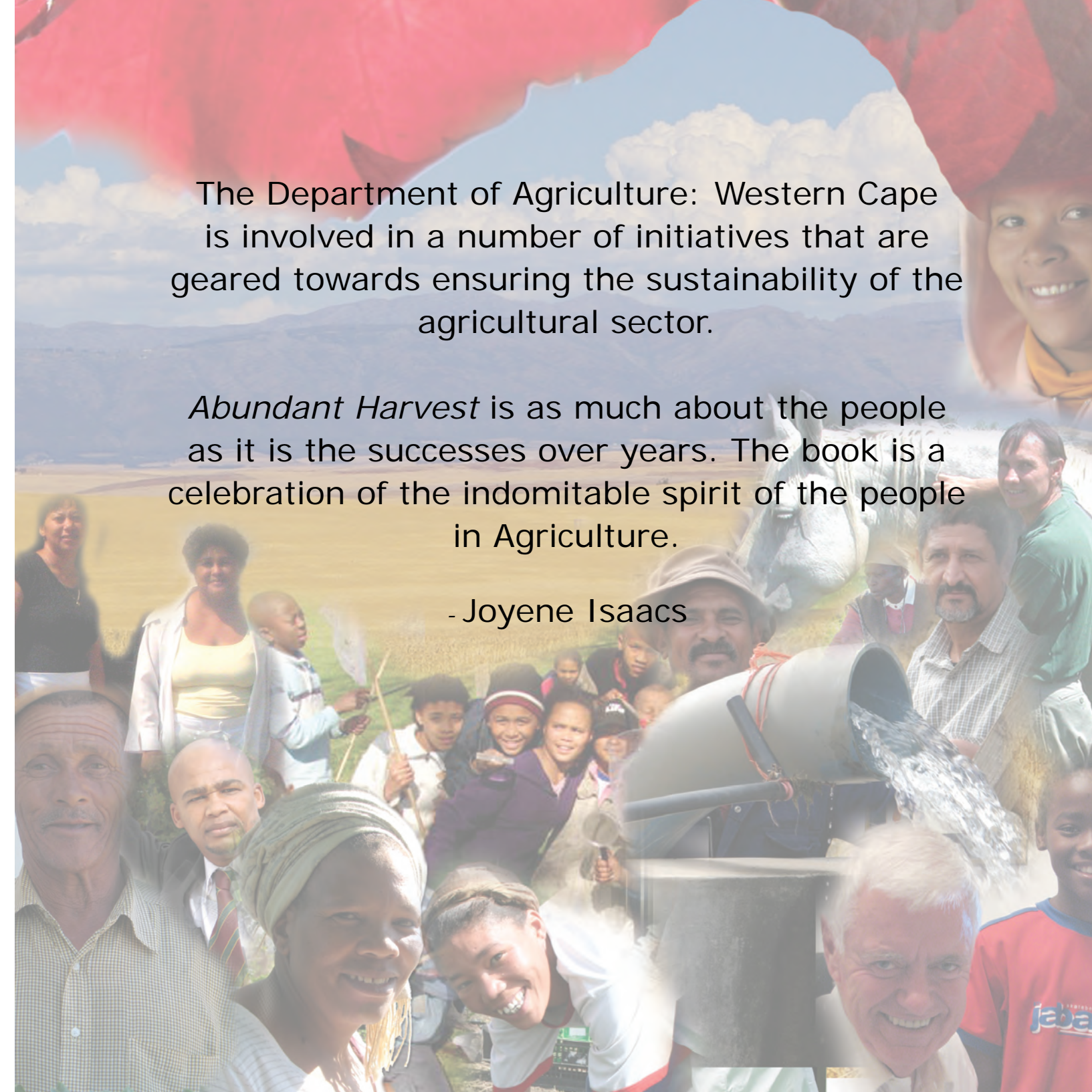
Read about our efforts in this regard, as well as the people who are driving the various initiatives. The saying that you can take a

horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink holds true here. The ladies of Eat Smart Organics have used the opportunities offered through our market access programme to propel their business towards success.

At the centre of agriculture are the men and women who till the land. We are proud of each and everyone who is contributing in this regard, whether it is the ladies of the Siyazama Project; the new farmers of Bronaar; or the initiatives launched by the likes of Chrisleo Botha, Paul Erasmus or Tjuks Roos.

They are examples of the top calibre people involved in the Western Cape agricultural sector. I salute your efforts and endeavours to work side by side with you in nurturing our abundant harvest.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Gerret Erasmus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.



The Department of Agriculture: Western Cape
is involved in a number of initiatives that are
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- Joyene Isaacs

Seeds of life



Peter Love

Ebenhaezer, a quiet mission town about 40km from Vredendal in the Olifants River, is steeped in rich history but sadly also in poverty. Decades of unemployment has crippled the community and driven young people on to a better life elsewhere.

However, for more than 50 years the farmers of the community, although poor in resources, have remained to resist the difficult circumstances and continue to carve out a living for themselves.

Community members were awarded 1.8ha plots that are irrigated from the Olifants River irrigation scheme and in general enough water is available for crop production. Although these pieces of land enable some of them to earn a small income and to be self-sufficient, the ideal has always been for them to join their commercial counterparts.

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture intervened with a proposal to one farmer, Niklaas le Roux, for a three year seed production project which would enable him to enter commercial production, thus creating a successful

small business.

"We approached Niklaas because he is a dedicated farmer who has the enthusiasm and dedication to work hard," says Marius du Randt, the local agronomist at the Department of Agriculture. "Hybrid vegetable seed is a high

value crop that can be produced on a small piece of land making it possible to move to new soil each year in a four year cycle." Niklaas explains proudly that he has been farming ever since 1970. "Farming is in my blood," he says.

The major stumbling block was securing a seed contract from the international

Farming is in my blood.
- Niklaas Louw



seed company, Sengenta. Usually seed is exported to existing overseas markets. Fortunately the Department's negotiations with the seed company succeeded and a contract was awarded to Niklaas in the first year. The support of the Department to the farmer was set as a prerequisite for awarding the contract.

Working the land is hard, back-breaking work

"We have a winning project here and it is vital to note that the success of the project lies mainly in the commitment of the participating farmers"
- Marius du Randt.

During the first year Niklaas was successful with production in an open field. The Department supported him with the net structures, drip irrigation systems and production inputs, while the labour expense was for his own account.

Due to the success of the project a second producer, Hensel Love, joined Niklaas and they produced cauliflower seed under a shade netting structure on 3000m². Joining resources and land seemed to contribute to their success. Production under net with a



drip irrigation system was more challenging, especially with regards to disease control and although they were not able to harvest a bumper crop at the end of 2006, good quality

Marius du Rand gives advice



seed was produced and the work ethic of the farmers helped secure a third set of contracts for 2007.

During 2007 Peter Love was also awarded a contract. At the end of 2007 the farmers produced far in excess of what their contracts required and a firm relationship was established between the farmers and the seed company setting the stage for continued contracts and with that, financial security.

Over the three year period the Department spent close to R336 000 mostly in the form of capital costs. This investment soon paid off when the three farmers realised a turnover in excess of R280 000 in the 2007 season.

These farmers have not only developed their farms in such a way that they now produce on almost 14 hectares; they themselves have grown in such a way that they now handle all negotiations for contracts themselves.

"We aim to continue to grow," says Jeneke.

We aim to continue to grow.

- Jeneke

"But we know that we have to consider all the options carefully. Going bigger is not necessarily the best for us. For example we can hire additional land from outside the community but that would mean that we would have to pay much higher rates for irrigation water."

As part of the agreement between Government and the community in 1925 a lower water tariff was agreed upon.

The success of the project is creating considerable interest from the community and more people are becoming interested in commercial production. "We have a winning project here and we will continue to include more people if the budget supports that, but it is vital to note that the success of the project lies mainly in the commitment of the participating farmers," says Marius du Randt.

Food for thought



Food: Something that nourishes or sustains.

For most of us, something taken for granted.

Food Security: access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food by all the people at all times to meet their dietary requirements to enable them lead a healthy life.

Something that many South Africans do not take for granted.

In an era where unemployment levels are outrageously high, food prices have soared and people are struggling to make ends meet, the question of food security is not something to be taken lightly.

Fortunately Government has realised and accepted its responsibility towards the goal of food security for all. And the Western Cape Department of Agriculture is contributing significantly. To give an example, over the past year the Department has supported 36 projects in Khayelitsha alone, benefitting a total of 345 people - including youth, women and disabled persons – with an investment of close to a million rand.

There is an alternative to simply waiting for good fortune to come. It brings us, one garden at a time. closer to the objective of food security for all.



During a food summit in 2008 the Department of Agriculture, other government departments, Labour, Business and civil society united against the challenges of food insecurity. The Department's role was set out clearly:

- promote the concept of backyard gardens
- rehabilitate existing gardens to increase production

"One of the significant outcomes of our resolutions came in the form of household food production suitcases," says Mogale Sebopetsa, who heads the Department's food security programme. "In Khayelitsha alone we are delivering 100 of these suitcases to vulnerable families and thereafter providing the necessary advice and continuous support." Such a suitcase typically holds a family irrigation system, garden tools, seeds and seedlings, fertilisers and a wheelbarrow.

A visit to one of these community food gardens is a humbling yet inspirational

experience. The Siyazama project – the oldest food garden project in Khayelitsha - started in 1997 when 30 women from the squatter camp came together and with the help of a NGO called Abalimi Bezekhaya explored the possibilities of growing their own vegetables. "Most of the women followed their husbands from rural areas to the city and then sat at home with no prospects of a better life," says Nokwando Nkqayi, the co-ordinator of this group. "The Municipality gave us this piece of





“It does something to
your mind:
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the standards of the
people.”
- Nokwando Nkqayi

the project and they have divided the land in two sites – one for the commercial venture and the other for their own needs. They also have a nursery where they cultivate their own seedlings.

Back-breaking but rewarding work

land to use (it's almost one hectare) and we started to clear it, prepared plots for planting the vegetables. It was hard work but it kept us busy.” Today ten devoted ladies remain in

The produce from the commercial side goes to the market twice a week and together with produce from other similar projects about 200 boxes are made up on order by families in neighbourhoods such as Constantia and Rondebosch. The site and all the individual vegetable plots are neat and everything seems healthy and abundant – a small Eden right in the middle of poverty and destitution. The

group adheres as far as possible to organic principles and refrains from using chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture has been a friend of this project for quite a while and has assisted them with water tanks for the borehole, gardening equipment, seedlings and advice. "They've even supplied us with working uniforms and boots – it gives pride to the people," says Nokwando. What impresses most is the fact that these women are not simply focused inwardly – they share the knowledge and experience that they've gained with schools and even tertiary students. "The learners and students come here and we show them how it's done. They help us plant vegetables and when the vegetables are ready for harvest, we let them come back to see the results of their hard work," says Nokwando.

"Before the garden we were unemployed and now we are healthy and busy. It also does something to your mind: we look forward to

things and it has uplifted the standard of the people. Others have often thought you must be unskilled or uneducated if you work in a garden, and that you are wasting your time, but we are proud and we have food on the table."

"I love being involved in this mother of all food gardens," says Ayanda Obose, the Department's representative in this area. "They are so committed to what they believe in and they work so hard that you just want to continue helping them. And they are clever; they've listened to their markets: they do not wait for all the vegetables to grow big – they harvest the juicy baby vegetables and save on time and input costs."

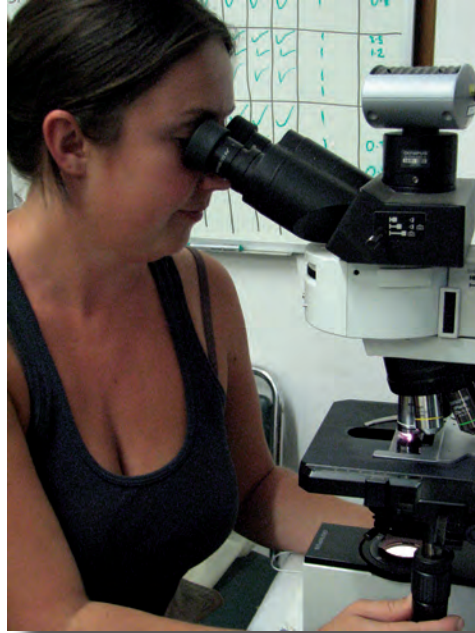
Yes, food gardens are about putting food on

"I love being involved
in this mother of all
food gardens"
- Ayanda Obose

the table. But maybe even more so, it is also about putting hope in the hearts of people who face hunger daily and have a dubious future. It shows outsiders that there is an alternative to simply waiting for good fortune to come.

It brings us, one garden at a time. closer to the objective of food security for all.

Centres for research excellence



Neil Armstrong said “research is creating new knowledge.” Others have said that “research is formalised curiosity.” It seems simple enough when research is viewed through the perspective of two short sentences. However, research means years of focused experimenting, decades of dedication to finding answers and different and better ways of doing it; it means extreme patience and creativity.

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture has become one of the last governmental vestiges of effective research in the current agricultural setup and its centres of excellence, one outside Oudtshoorn and the other on the Outeniqua research farm outside George, are internationally renowned for the high quality of the research that takes place there. Both centres boast breeding and research herds and flocks second to none and at both centres the research teams are acknowledged for their ground-breaking work by their peers.

Oudtshoorn: the ostrich kingdom

As early as the 1860s farmers in South Africa, and especially those in the Oudtshoorn region focuses their attention on the long-legged flightless bird, the ostrich. Feathers provided the main selling point and through the years this industry experienced a roller coaster ride due. The

increasing demand world-wide for ostrich plumes reached its peak in 1913. At that time, ostrich feathers became the country's fourth largest export earner after gold, diamonds and wool. However, poorly co-ordinated marketing, changing fashions, excessive supply of feathers and disruption of export because of World War I, caused a rapid decline and

collapse of the industry. By 1930 the ostrich population had dwindled from 770 000 to 23 000.

Today the ostrich industry remains one of South Africa's top twenty agro-based industries and ranks high



From the point of view of the ostrich industry, this research station is so much more than the experimental farm of old. This centre brings forth research results of international quality.

- Anton Kruger

for exports. To top this, South Africa is the world leader in the ostrich industry regarding production – 70% of all ostriches in the world are found in South Africa and consequently 70% of all ostrich products have their origin in South Africa. This position of leadership has been earned as a result of our climate, expertise gained through the decades and continuous investment in research.

According to the South African Ostrich Business Chamber (SAOBC) the South

African ostrich industry should be able to maintain its position of world leadership if certain conditions are being met. “Fruitful interaction with government, both national and provincial, is a prerequisite”.

Since the early 1970’s the Western Cape Department supports this important agricultural industry with research focused primarily on feeding and breeding. This centre of excellence is the only one of its kind in the world. It is also the only place where 150 ostrich breeding pairs are used solely for research. “From the point of view of the ostrich industry, this research station is so much more than the experimental farm of old,” says SAOBC CEO, Anton Kruger. “This centre brings forth research results of international quality.”

Current research performed by Prof Tertius Brand, Prof Schalk Cloete and Anel Engelbrecht focuses mainly on three areas which directly impacts on the profitability of the producer.

Prof. Tertius Brand, specialist researcher at the Department and associate professor extraordinary at the Universities of Stellenbosch and Pretoria, specialises in ostrich feeding aimed at decreasing input costs (feeding accounts for 70% of the producers' input costs) while at the same time ensuring that the birds' nutritional needs are being met. He has, amongst others, developed a computerised feed formulation model, as well as a model for the determination of the optimal slaughtering age. "Research on the feeding of ostriches has made quantum leaps in terms of the contribution to knowledge about the most economic and best biological approach to commercial ostrich production aimed at the highest profit margins," says Dr Derick Swart about Prof Brand's pioneering work. Prof Brand's popular Ostrich feeding: a scientific approach has succeeded in conveying his ground breaking results in a scientific yet reader friendly manner.

Effective breeding is of

It is now evident that producers understand the value of the research - Anel Engelbrecht

paramount importance in today's competitive environment. 90% of the total income from ostrich farming is derived from marketing of the skins and meat of the birds. It follows that as many as possible chicks should hatch and live till the optimal slaughtering age and that a selection should be made possible according to economically important characteristics. All of these objectives rest on research being done on breeding by Prof Schalk Cloete.



In comparison to the existence of information on genetic evaluations for other industries such as the poultry and small stock industries, the growth in research for the ostrich industry has increased in leaps and bounds over the past two decades but despite the relative youth of the existing research, producers are already benefiting from the results.

The annual ostrich auction is one of the success stories of this centre of excellence. For the buyer, the specific parameters and performance of each bird is supplied and in this way the total genetic pool of the SA ostrich industry is dramatically improved. "The auction is well supported by the industry because producers can expect ostriches of exceptional quality, complete with genetic records," says Anel Engelbrecht, agricultural researcher in the Department's Animal Production Institute. "It is now evident that producers understand the value of the research. At this year's auction the entire lot of 152 ostriches were sold at an average price of R4 000 per bird. The highest price

fetched for a male was R5 500 and R7 500 for a female."

Another main thrust in terms of research is towards increasing the success factor of hatching eggs as well as decreasing the mortality rate amongst young chicks.



“Part of the success of the Oudtshoorn centre of excellence lies in the expertise and passion of the team of researchers, the dedicated technicians as well as the ground staff who keeps the farm up and running,” says Dr Ilse Trautmann, head of the Department’s directorate for technology, research and

development. “The international standing of our researchers has drawn several researchers from as far afield as Poland, Australia and the UK to our centre of excellence. They have, in turn, added to our knowledge base and capacity for still more work to be done.”

Outeniqua:

white gold of the Southern Cape

The Department's research centre, based at the Outeniqua farm outside George, was established in 1953 and has since secured a similar standing in the world of research as well as amongst the producers who are dependent on the results as its Oudtshoorn counterpart. On the 300ha of land which includes dry land, pastures under permanent irrigation and some with supplementary irrigation, the research effort focus mainly on dairy and beef cattle research from planted pasture. "The aim of our research is to promote the profitability of dairy and beef cattle farming and the Department's institutes for plant and animal production co-exists in complete harmony to reach this goal," says Dr Philip Botha, specialist researcher in plant production.

This research institution possesses the

largest dairy cattle research herd in South Africa and is the only centre with a pasture/animal capacity for system research on a scale where research can be evaluated up to the final stage with animal production and economics as benchmark. Simultaneously they play a leading role in the field of pasture management, pasture systems and over-sowing of





existing pastures. "This is vital for the local industry as the pasture regions benefiting from Outeniqua's outputs contain the highest producing dairy farms in South Africa," explains Dr Botha.

Since the Jersey herd's registration in 1985 it has grown to include 400 cows in milk which is managed as a commercial dairy herd and which participates in a local dairy study group together with others from the industry. The herd has a high genetic merit and has twice been lauded for best genetic improvement by the Stud Book SA.

Dr Robin Meeske, another specialist scientist at the Department and associate professor extraordinary at the University of Stellenbosch focuses his research programme on optimising dairy cow nutrition on pasture based systems. Some of the invaluable results of his research have shown that cows grazing on high sugar ryegrass produce more milk per cow and per hectare and that barley can replace half of the maize in dairy concentrates and increase milk production.

Continuity is one of the mainstays of successful research and the research team of the Department has ensured that the

The Western Cape Department's research teams have succeeded in remaining relevant in an age where funding has become tight.

genius that currently resides in the few top researchers of the Department will be sustainable. A very effective post graduate student programme succeeds in increasing the capacity of research while simultaneously training young scientists and giving them the opportunity to gain experience in their field of interest. "Four to six MSc students from different universities are involved in the programme," explains Dr Meeske. "We have also signed an official agreement with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University at

the George Campus to support our initiative of capacity building." Prof Robin Meeske and Dr Philip Botha serve as mentors for the next generation researchers.

"Over many years dairy farmers have found themselves under increasing financial pressure as a result of their input costs rising faster than the producer prices received for their milk," says Phillip Muller, chairman of the George Dairy Study Group in answer to the question of how the producers benefit



from the research. "It is therefore critical that us as dairy farmers make informed choices in our businesses in our bid to survive. With the results from research trials done at Outeniqua Research Farm pasture based dairy farmers are in a position to make some of these informed choices which are so critical. The research programme at Outeniqua is focused on the needs of the farmer, in other words there is interaction between farmer and researcher and this forms a very sound basis. For instance, the farmers of the George Study Group meet with some of the researchers of Outeniqua on a monthly basis, and importantly, Outeniqua Research Farm themselves have their own commercial dairy herd which is used for the trials."

Research without the effective dissemination of the results is, of course, of little value to the producer. Towards this end the research team at Outeniqua employs several methods

to ensure that results reach those in need of them, including information days, courses and via publications such as the very well received agricultural supplement to the George Herald.

The Western Cape Department's research teams - for animal production and plant production, and including researchers and technicians and those keeping the farms in working form – have succeeded in remaining relevant in an age where funding has become tight, although the intent from official bodies and producers' organisations are positive.

The large number of accolades regularly awarded to various researchers and the Department's research resources such as the Outeniqua herd, proves that the level of dedication that prevails within the research directorate will ensure a continuous and exceptional research effort.

Against the odds



Sometimes the odds against changing the most obvious course of your life, reaching your full potential and consequently inspiring others are just too much.

After several years of coursing along the route of least resistance, Franco Williams reviewed his ambitions, talents and dreams and dared to change direction.

Born in 1974 as the youngest of 7 siblings to a mother who worked in the farm kitchen and a farm worker father, Franco's future seemed set in a similar mould.

Despite his love of nature his dream of studying after Matric while living in a hostel was made impossible by his background. Franco finished Matric and began working at a textile factory. For ten years this young man earned a salary (and security) while “doing what I had to and not what I wanted,” he says. And then his will

He was quickly identified as a student leader and became a role model for his peers.

- Henry Cook

to do more, to be more won and he began searching for opportunities.

During that time he met Ingrid Lestrade of the Youth Commission who heard of his frustrations and also his love of agriculture. She introduced him to the Western Cape Department of Agriculture’s Cape Institute of Agricultural Training (CIAT) at Elsenburg which changed his life. In 2006 he became a student living in a hostel – his dream realised, to study a learnership in Plant Production.

Franco thrived in this new environment and his warm personality, obvious leadership

Ultimate opposites: Franco, now Head Student of a traditionally white training institute, with a monument from the early days of the farm.



qualities and enthusiasm for agriculture soon earned the goodwill of fellow students. “Franco averaged over 90% from the outset,”

says Senior Lecturer, Henry Cook. “He was quickly identified as a student leader and even assisted in the evaluation of the NQF 1 learner practical tasks, and became a role model for his peers, assisting students with problems and motivating those who were under-performing.”

“I had lost my heart at Elsenburg. But no, it wasn’t always smooth sailing,” says Franco. “Quitting my job at the factory meant I gave up my salary. Fortunately I was able to buy a house in Worcester from money I received when I resigned, and could rely on the rental

income. But I was determined to look past the things that could distract me from the work at hand – I had to make the best of this

opportunity in order to give my future wife and family a head start.”

Douglas Chitepo was appointed Director Further Education and Training (FET) during 2006 and began the process of articulating learners from FET to Higher Education and Training (HET). Franco was amongst the first group to be part of

this process, and commenced study on the two-year Higher Certificate in Agriculture in 2007.

During that year he was chosen to serve on the House Committee. Franco is clearly at ease with his background: “Even though it was the

Farm workers often have no expectations of themselves or their future. I would like to convince them of the vital role they play as part of the bigger agricultural picture.
- Franco Williams

first time that a coloured student served on this student body, my peers saw what's inside of me; my attitude and positive and objective approach to issues." Franco graduated in 2008 and was awarded the Sikhula Agri Training: Best Agricultural Management Student trophy as well as The Old Mutual Award for the best student in Agricultural Management.

And still he reached higher: in 2009 he commenced his Diploma in Agriculture with the additional responsibility as Primarius (Head Student: CIAT). "I will lead by example and try to bring out the best in my fellow students," he says. "You have to look deeper to see more angles to each issue and that is within the other person." His message

Franco is Elsenburg's soccer coach and has made champions of the women's team and helped the men's team to move into a higher league after winning the hostel league in 2007. The CIAT believes in the development of the whole person and sport plays an important role.



for others: under no circumstances let background or colour limit you.

And his future? "I do not want to be a farmer. I want to be an agricultural extension officer so that I can help those who have the heart to farm but not the skills or knowledge. I understand the ambitions of the emerging farmer and even the farm worker and although I know that not every person is a farmer, I want to equip them with knowledge to be able to make the right choices."

"Farm workers often have no expectations of themselves or their future. They think that

they have nothing to offer. I would like to convince them of the vital role they play as part of the bigger agricultural picture."

Franco hopes to join the Department's programme for Farmer Support and Development for practical training and experience and thereafter maybe even a B.Tech degree.

With the assistance of CIAT and the various opportunities it offers to students like Franco, a better future awaits those who dream of a career in agriculture.

Finding markets



The three passionate and determined women of Eat Smart Organics

Agriculture, in this sense farming, has moved through a variety of stages in South Africa's history.

There are farmer families, mostly white, who have farmed commercially and successfully for centuries. Then there was a time when white men were given small tracts of land to assist them to recreate a living after the Great Depression of the 1930's; there were coloured and black people who have always been subsistence farmers and there are those who

has built a business from farming.

However, for these farmers the struggle for land and assistance has always been severe.

Like South Africa, the agricultural sector went through major transformations and democratisation brought about a number of significant changes. The improvement of emerging farmers' agricultural production and their increased participation in the mainstream of the economy were the pillars of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). This programme aimed to increase household food security and alleviate poverty, especially in the rural and communal areas where most of the emerging farmers are situated. Other policies such as the Land Reform Programme, market deregulation and trade liberalisation, Broadening Access to Agriculture Thrust (BATAT) and Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) have since been added to the increase the positive outcomes.

However, one of the smaller producers' (especially emerging farmers') biggest challenges often manifests as a direct result of an increase in production. The next step for any agricultural producer is to find suitable

markets for their products, including export markets for quality and niche products. This is also valid for agro-processors, in fact, for all in the agricultural value chain. Amongst other things these problems result from lack of reliable and timely market information, market infrastructure (e.g. storage and packaging facilities), transport facilities, production capital, credit and markets etc.

Also, emerging farmers are geographically dispersed with roads and telecommunications, which are usually of poor quality. Thus cooperation with large commercial farmers and other established businesses is a principal

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determinant influencing the depth of marketing methods, implying that the marketing expertise of large commercial farmers, if shared, could play a positive role. In other words, these problems cannot be ignored as the emerging farming sector in South Africa has the potential to become a major source of employment, poverty eradication, and subsequently yielding economic growth and political stability.

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture established a special division for agricultural marketing to address these issues. One of



These trips are also about the exposure to an export situation as well as personal growth and confidence in themselves and their products.

- Bongiswa Matoti

the main objectives is to facilitate market access for 25 emerging farmers or others in the value chain in the domestic market as well as 10 export contracts. In 2008 the Department took several beneficiaries who already had a product suitable for exports on a trip called AgriMatch, to Europe (Austria and Belgium) to introduce them to potential buyers, importers, agents or retailers. They also received export readiness training through collaboration with the SA Agri Academy (SAAA), an NGO specialising in market access training

for emerging farmers.

“At this stage we’ve already helped 30 people through this process of exposure,” says Bongiswa Matoti who heads the Agricultural Economics programme. “These trips are not only about getting contracts, but also about the exposure to an export situation as well as personal growth and confidence in themselves and their products. It does not necessarily

happen that all of them gain contracts on the first trip, but it helps them to better prepare for actual dealings.”

One of the inspirational successes of this programme is **Eat Smart Organics**. They are currently the only food manufacturer to produce ECOCERT certified organic pre-cooked

and packaged meals for the convenience market. This unique concept was initiated by three Western Cape women with a passion for organic food and a desire to make a meaningful difference in the convenience food market. As consumers, they could not find any healthy organic meals on shelves and hence the concept of **Eat Smart Organics** was conceived. Their signature product is the Smart Stack, a 500g meal comprising three separate bowls (designed and patented by these smart ladies) each containing the carbohydrates, vegetables and

“I often work 14 hours a day,” says Bronwyn, “but I don’t mind – I simply love what I do.”



protein neatly packaged as a three stack meal in one – a nutritionally balanced, healthy meal.

The company CEO, Juliette du Preez, is a business leader with extensive experience in the strategic leadership and execution of corporate and retail strategies. Juliette stepped out of the banking industry to start the business with René who is the Director for Innovation and Product Development and Bronwyn Hugo, the company Production Director. “We all came from a previously disadvantaged background and we believe that success in life is determined by old fashion hard work irrespective of one’s beginnings.”

“The ethos of **Eat Smart Organics** is rooted in making a difference to the lives of ordinary people who eat our food and all along the value chain to the workers on the farms from where we source our organic produce. We believe that organics should be accessible to



all.” **Eat Smart Organics** recently launched its exclusive soup range into 24 Checkers stores in the Western Cape. This is clearly no easy feat: “The research and development of the soup range, which always starts with what is available from the land has been in the making for the past year and a half,” says Juliette.

“Organics is not easy,” says Juliette. “Our biggest single challenge is to secure authentic supplies. We’ve started investigating obtaining our own farm which will produce for

our ranges. The farm will be fully owned by those who work it, thus creating wealth for more people. We have the passion and the energy because we do what we believe in." She also feels strongly that organics should not necessarily be expensive. "We need to weigh up the cost of eating healthily against the expenses of doctors' accounts when our bodies fail us because of unhealthy eating habits."

"The help we got from the Western Cape Department of Agriculture was invaluable to our growth," she says. "They introduced us to

overseas markets and the process of making your products exportable. And we're now in the process of developing an ambient product which would have a shelf life in order to be able to export. We don't have a contract yet but saw this trip as a fact finding adventure."

The three women, and their staff component of 17 people, are set to take on the future and enable more people to adapt a healthy lifestyle. "Failure is not an option, and anyway, being in business is all about having fun – and that we have."

African Horse Sickness vs Vets



The Western Cape Department of Agriculture's programme for veterinary services has often been heralded as amongst the best in the country and possibly Africa.

One of the industries for which they act as watchdogs, is the equine industry with its thousands of race horses, sporting horses and work or cart horses. And the enemy

against which they keep their vigil is African Horse Sickness (AHS), a deadly disease with a mortality rate of up to 95%.

The South African equine industry is a definite eye brow raiser when considering that it employs an estimated 250 000 people including the service, technology and agricultural sectors; it earns about R350

million in bloodstock sales per year; the Durban July, the country's biggest horse racing event annually contributes R150 million to the economy of KwaZulu Natal. Furthermore, around R8 billion in combined betting turn-

Exhilarating moments - Jay Peg winning the Gr.1 Dubai Duty Free worth \$5 million. He was quarantined at Kenilworth Quarantine Station and certified for export by Chief State Veterinarian, Dr Gary Buhrmann.



over contributes roughly R400 million in taxes to the Government and the approximately 300 exports of horses per year amounts to foreign revenue in the region of R250 million. South Africa's 3 500 foals produced per year amounts to 3% of the world's thoroughbred

population. With 7 000 horses in training and another 6 000 in pre-training, this is an industry to be reckoned with.

African horse sickness (AHS) is a serious insect-borne disease of horses, mules and donkeys which is spread by a virus. "It is endemic (occurs naturally) to the African continent, and is characterised by respiratory and circulatory damage, accompanied by fever and loss of appetite," explains Dr Gary Buhrmann, Departmental veterinarian responsible for export certification. "AHS does

An outbreak in 1999 resulted in the loss of the African Horse Sickness free status of the Western Cape and an embargo on the export of horses to the European Union.

not spread directly from one horse to another, but is transmitted by midges, which become infected when feeding on infected horses. It occurs mostly in the warm, rainy season when midges are plentiful, and disappears after frost, when the midges die. Most animals become infected in the period

from sunset to sunrise, when the midges are most active." The disease has the potential to spread very rapidly to other horses.

There is no effective treatment for the disease and medicine to treat the symptoms is very costly. The Western Cape Province is free of this major trade-sensitive disease and has the only AHS free zone in the country from where horses are accepted for export world-wide. This free zone is buffered by a surveillance zone and then a further protection zone. The surveillance area act as an early warning

system for the free area and horses are therefore normally not vaccinated against the disease in accordance with the export protocol negotiated with the European Commission.

When this industry is hit by this feared disease the impact is severe to say the least. An outbreak in 1999 resulted in the loss of the African Horse Sickness free status of the Western Cape and the embargo placed on the export of horses to the European Union were enforced for a period of 2 years resulting in

a substantial loss in foreign income for the racing industry in South Africa. In February 2004 this worst case scenario hit South Africa again and crippled the equine industry for 32 months. During that time the South African economy lost R125 million due to the embargo against exports.

The heroes in this horror story of an outbreak are the officials of the Department's veterinary services together with the private veterinary practitioners of the Province. After

an outbreak has been confirmed by lab reports they spring into action in order to curb the spreading of the disease. "The first step is to immediately start vaccinating horses within a radius of 20 km surrounding the outbreak," Gary says. "Horse owners in the near vicinity of the outbreak are advised to



The sad sight of a once proud animal dying of African Horse Sickness.

The heroes in this horror story of an outbreak are the officials of the Department's veterinary services together with the private veterinary practitioners of the Province.

stable their horses overnight from 2 hours before sunset until 2 hours after sunrise while the midges are active. Horses should also be treated with insecticides twice daily. During this time no horses are allowed to move into or out of the affected area while owners of horses bordering the risk area are cautioned to restrict unnecessary movement of their animals out of the area." After it becomes

evident that the spread and occurrence of the illness has been stopped in its tracks (resulting from tireless dedication on the side of the vets), the European Commission once again determines whether export status may be reinstated and especially the racing industry can breath again.

"We enjoy a rewarding, co-operative and transparent relationship with State Vet Boland and are deeply appreciative of their efforts on behalf of South Africa's equine export business. Given the resource constraints that affect Veterinary Services as a whole we are fortunate to be working with the calibre of veterinarian such as Dr Buhrmann to name but one of the team," says Peter Gibson, CEO of Racing South Africa, representing the South African horseracing and breeding industry.

BEE CAN work!



Stepping into the offices of **Bronaar** in the Ceres/Op-die-berg area, you are greeted with a sign that speaks of the vision of the farm and its workers: Bronaar makes agriculture a career with a future.

Another successful venture where owner and employees have grafted a special relationship and a working partnership is **Blue Mountain Berries** on the outskirts of George in the

Southern Cape.

One of the biggest stumbling blocks similar projects have experienced since the beginning of the Black Economic Empowerment drive has been the issue of trust. How to protect the interests of all involved, while keeping the focus on the long-term objectives of the business.

Bronaar/Themba Trust:

source of much pride

O p-die-Berg has always been a farming community and with the opening of the Ceres Fruit Grower's (CFG) cooling facilities in the 1930's more jobs were created in the area.

Unfortunately the majority of the work was seasonal. This has the effect that a lot of people had an uphill struggle to survive and to provide food that is sufficient for the family during those months when there were no pears and apples to harvest.

In 2007 the Van der Merwe family, owners of the farm Bronaar, took the first steps towards the empowerment of their permanent workers. "It simply was time to do the right thing," says Fanie van der Merwe, managing director.

"Our workers were part of the success of the farm and they had to share in the profits. It was extremely important to us that they had to be empowered by becoming part of a successful farming enterprise and not left to fend for themselves on a new piece of land or farm." Bronaar is an exporting farm with 211ha fruit trees and 100ha vegetables.

The farm workers formed the Themba Trust in 2007. "Themba means "hope" in isiXhosa and

Members of the Themba trust



It simply was time to do the right thing. Our workers were part of the success of the farm and they had to share in the profits.

- Fanie van der Merwe

about half of the members of the trust are Xhosa," explains Jafta Galant, who has been working on the farm for the last 25 years. "The workers themselves drew up criteria for inclusion in the Trust, such as disciplinary record, service record, etc, and thorough training and information sessions were presented to ensure that workers understand the process and the long term nature of the transaction." Through a successful Land Redistribution and Agricultural Development (LRAD) transaction, 149 permanent farm workers (including women and youth) of the Themba Trust bought 33,3% of the farm towards the end of 2007 – this number decreased to 113 permanent trust members



over the past two years. The Western Cape Department of Agriculture was involved in this process from the start. The directorate for Farmer Support & Development formed part of the project management team that did the initial investigation into the sustainability of the project.

One of the first priorities identified was the building of a packing facility for onions

with infrastructure that would ensure more efficient and accurate grading and packing of onions. The traditional fruit enterprise is complemented with vegetables (onions and potatoes) in order to ensure a longer packing season and thus create a prolonged income period for the workers. The Department of Agriculture was able to contribute approximately R500 000 towards the completion of the packing facilities and a further R15 000 for training.

Happiness in the packing shed.

“It is not a fast and easy process,” admits Jafta. “Our main priority is to pay our debts so the members have to understand that they will not immediately see the difference to their pockets.” According to Fanie one of the reasons for the success of the partnership is the openness between them. “All matters of finance are completely transparent and this enhances feelings of loyalty and trust.”

One of the lessons the Department of Agriculture has learnt through its involvement in similar empowerment processes is that the

development of people does not solely rest on financial empowerment and land ownership. “The Trust is also there to improve the lives of our people in other ways,” says Jafta. “For example, give attention to moral and social issues and the improvement of life skills.” The owners of the farm, together with the Trust,



have established a daycare centre as well as clinic facilities on the farm.

Another contributor to the personal growth of the workers has been the Department of Agriculture's Farm Worker of the Year competition. "We have our own internal preliminary rounds on the farm," explains Kathy Januarie, who serves on the Trust and herself has been a regional winner in the junior management category in this

competition in 2005. "Over the past couple of years we've seen increased participation in the competition and the confidence of our people has improved noticeably.

Themba Trust has been a true example of how an equity farming partnership can be successful. And trust, loyalty and courage will remain; with trust being the greatest.

Blueberries boost employment in George

Another successful venture where owner and employees have grafted a special relationship and a working partnership is Blue Mountain Berries on the outskirts of George in the Southern Cape. One of the biggest stumbling blocks similar projects have experienced since the beginning of the Black Economic Empowerment drive has been the issue of trust. How to protect the interests of all involved, while keeping the focus on the long-term objectives of the business.

Chrisleo Botha, with his engineering and commercial background, was wise enough to accept the offer of a joint venture with the IDC (Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa) and a company with shareholding opportunities for his own family trust, the workers and the IDC was formed. The decision

to produce blueberries was based on a very real need as well as the potential of an export contract with Eurofruit to England. What impresses is the clear-cut and transparent way in which the shareholding agreements as well as the management of the farm have been stipulated.

With real ownership
comes pride; with
openness and honesty
comes loyalty and trust;
and from loyalty and
pride hard work follows
as the next logical
step. Thus you have all
the ingredients for a
successful project.

The worker's trust was established in November 2006 and six trustees were chosen by the beneficiaries. It has been decided to limit the number of beneficiaries to 70 people and people are added as the company grows.

To qualify as a beneficiary, an applicant's years of service, his or her post level, performance appraisal and absenteeism record are considered and special information sharing

Chrisleo Botha and Richardo Kleinhans in one of the vast berry tunnels

and training takes place to assist newcomers to the trust. Shareholding is divided in the following manner: Sinksa Trust (C Botha and family) = 34%, IDC = 33% and the Bessie-plaas Werkerstrust = 33%. Although the workers bought the shares with a loan from the European Investment Bank, they have already started paying back the loan with financial assistance through governmental grant money from the CASP package and LRAD funding.

"Our team understands the long-term nature of this investment but we do annually pay out the accrued interest of the housing security investment as a bonus," says Chrisleo. "We have also agreed that a part of the LRAD funds will be utilised for housing arrangements for the workers. Although there is no immediate financial



gain for all involved, this project has changed the lives of many people.”

According to Richardo Kleinhans from the Department of Agriculture, who assists this project, the impact on the George community will grow exponentially as the project comes into full production. “In season this project will employ between 1 000 and 1 500 people. We are also happy to see that special attention is given to the development of the workers through training in soft and other skills.” Training programmes include tractor driving and maintenance, NQF 1 for 9 learners, “soft” skills such as communication, conflict management, motivation, leadership, meeting procedures and life skills.

At the moment 23ha of the 75ha has been planted with berries and 56ha is under shade cloth. “The current size of the business necessitates 67 permanent people but we will have 150 permanent employees once the full 75ha is planted and an approximate 900 tons of blueberries are harvested,” explains Chrisleo.

It is clear: with real ownership comes pride; and with openness and honesty comes loyalty and trust; and from loyalty and pride hard work follows as the next logical step – and thus you have all the ingredients for a successful project.

Do something – the Junior LandCare way



Do something.

Much is being said and written about saving the earth and, fortunately for those who come after us, more and more is being done about it. One of the pillars of the vision of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture is being, farming and working “in balance with Nature”.

The fact that farming and conservation has to go hand in hand has for long been thoroughly

understood and although often an uphill climb, a group of dedicated people live and work towards making this a reality. Programmes and projects to teach farmers and communities to save water on various levels and to preserve precious soil against erosion and other degrading farming practices sit high on the priority list. One such a programme, driven by a group of enthusiastic officials, is the very successful national LandCare programme which took off in 2003.

The objectives of the programme focus mainly on poverty relief and infrastructure development, while optimising productivity and the sustainable use of the natural resources to ensure food security, job creation and a better quality of life for all. The process is community-based and community-led but Government assists in identifying the primary causes of natural resource decline and help, as part of a bigger partnership with other government and private institutions, to address these issues effectively.

And where better to start than with the next generation who will have to make do with the resources we leave them with. One of the most significant and successful approaches that has paid dividends right from the start is the focus on creating awareness of our sensitive resources and the sustainable use thereof amongst previously disadvantaged children.

Not only does the programme make them aware of the value of our natural resources and the danger of disregarding the fact that

it is being depleted, LandCare also actively trains children to think and act in a sustainable way in terms of for example water usage. LandCare has found a creative and exciting way to reach children – completely different from the routine classroom lecture – and the feedback from the almost 34 000 children who have participated in these



Do something.
Pay your rent for the
privilege of living
on this beautiful, blue-
green, living Earth.
- Dave Foreman

activities over the past 4 years, has confirmed the success of the approach. Through two and a half day camps and specially created puppet shows by talented actors, children are being inspired, informed and changed.

One of the areas where this project was drastically needed is the Central Little Karoo area of the Succulent Karoo hotspot - one of the 9 geographic priority areas that need an urgent biodiversity conservation effort. This area is plagued by various social problems, severe poverty and an alarming loss of natural resources, biodiversity and water resources. Unemployment reigns and HIV figures show the same trend. The LandCare challenge was to explain the concept of

biodiversity, the special relevance of the specific areas resources and empower people to "pay the rent" – complex concepts which even adults often find difficult to grab hold of. The group targeted was intermediate phase learners (Grades 4 to 6) as well as their teachers in the Little Karoo priority area. The geographical boundaries were drawn between the Swartberg in the north; the Outeniqua Mountains in the south, Ladismith in the west and Uniondale in the east.

The success of partnerships is indeed evident in the results of this specific project. No less than four government departments took hands with various environmental bodies and local business individuals and farmers.

The community took ownership of the programme and helps to determine the content of the veld camps, and help with camp organisation, food, transport, etc. LandCare do the main funding and scheduling, as well as some lessons; Education helps with organising schools and to see that everything goes according to Departmental



conservationists plays a vital role in the accomplishments of this programme."

"The way in which it focuses on the big picture around biodiversity and conservation, and not on one or two important aspects, sets it apart from similar projects," he explains. "The way in which it brings people together to be proud about their unified heritage and common goals, makes it a model for others

standards; CapeNature supplies fauna and flora information and are responsible for guidance in this respect. "The way in which this project builds bridges between all facets of the community and enables people from different backgrounds to sit around a campfire and talk about their personal interest and views, especially around natural resources, is unheard of," says Francis Steyn, the provincial LandCare coordinator. "The partnership-formation in this project between society, government officials and various

The way in which
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- Francis Steyn

This project aims to develop the young conservationists of the future who may choose biodiversity-related vocations such as field guiding or nature conservation, reserve management, botany and tourism.

to follow. The most outstanding message of this project is “appreciation for the one and only environment we have been given”.

Of course it is sometimes difficult to measure the true and long term impact of a puppet show or camp. But from questionnaires and feedback from principles, teachers, learners, parents and all others involved, has shown that the message is getting through. It is envisaged that the learners growing up

within the Little Karoo environment and their teachers, will be more aware that the biodiversity of this region as well as the rest of South Africa is unique and considered of great significance on a global scale. This project also aims to develop the young conservationists of the future who may choose biodiversity-related vocations such as field guiding or nature conservation, reserve management,



botany, tourism, etc. Concurrently the aim is to improve the skills base of local teachers to enable them to inspire learners to an appreciation and sense of custodianship of the unique living landscape.

“We also envisage secondary LandCare camps which would take smaller groups of Grade 6 learners for more intensive training,” says Steyn. “Learners will receive lectures on their natural environment, the indigenous plants and the medicinal values of it, how to take care of it and what difference they can make. The final outcome could even be a tertiary

qualification.”

The puppet shows, called Veldkerjakkers, has received the same positive feedback. The kids of Murraysburg Primary, a small town about 100km from the nearest Karoo town of Graaff-Reinet, have little or no experience of biodiversity or conservation and definitely no experience of live theatre. “For the more than 1 000 children from a very wide feeding area and used to limited resources, the puppet shows opened a new world,” says Paul Eilers, puppet master. “The teachers were really captured by the concept and one

even suggested that we create a new puppet, a riverine rabbit, which is one of the endangered species from their specific environment.”

LandCare is unwaveringly facing the present day conservation challenges and will continue to entice learners with their unique approach and empower them with knowledge to be the change and pay the rent.



Klein Eikeboom – huge potential



Oom Paul Erasmus with one of his “adopted” grandchildren who, because of the project, have a brighter future.

Sakhumzi Magoswana was a security worker. That was his life, seemingly his only option. Until he met the brother of one of the directors of the Klein Eikeboom Trust and found employment on this empowerment farm outside Wellington.

“I love the cows,” says Sakhumzi. “We had cows in the Transkei so I know about them, but I would like to learn still more. The best thing I want is for the farm is for it to be successful.”

Since 2008, when one of the original directors died in a motorcar crash, Sakhumzi is a director in the trust who manages the everyday running of the farm. "We work well together because everyone just wants the farm to work. We realise the success depends on ourselves and our hard work."

It is told that an official of the Department of Labour recently visited the farm, which lies between Wellington and Hermon, and reported that the "workers" worked too long hours. "We all had a laugh," says Oom Paul Erasmus as the other shareholder and mentor is affectionately called. The shareholders replied with a firm: "We are not workers, we are owners."

This inspiring story of gratitude, courage and hard work begins with Paul Erasmus (77) and two black boys from the Transkei who had no real future. Paul Erasmus once served the Rembrandt Group as a director in charge of business in Canada. After his retirement he

He who does not believe
in miracles, is not a
realist.

- Anton Rupert

lived in Cape Town and built a cottage in his back yard for his gardener whose two young cousins also came to live there. When the gardener unexpectedly died, Paul adopted the two black youths, Alan and Sydney Lusani. This seemingly natural course of events changed all of their lives in years to come. When Paul became seriously ill with no clear indication if he will ever recover, the brothers refused that he be transferred to a nursing home, but offered to care for him at home – a good deed prompted by their gratitude for his earlier compassion.

"One day as I lay in bed and realised how dependent I am on them, I vowed that if I would ever be able to walk again, I would give everything I have to give them a fair chance in life," muses Paul. "When the doctors



eventually found a treatment and I could walk again, I immediately called the two young men and their families (they were now

both married) to ask what they would want to do. They came back with a sure answer: we want a dairy farm close to Cape Town so that they could deliver milk and receive premium prices."

And so Klein Eikeboom (116ha) was bought in 2002 with mostly Paul's money and a little help from the Western Cape Department of Agriculture. "It has not been easy," he admits. "The 15 project shareholders work very hard and we had to overcome great difficulties. In the beginning we supplied milk to the townships but we realised that it is more secure and cost effective to secure a contract with a buyer and now our milk goes to Vasco Dairies." Paul is the financial director and mentor, owns 49% shares in the project. He is definitely seen as the father of the project and as a grandfather figure for the Lusani family. "The poorer I get, the happier I am," he smiles. "I have a family."

Sakhumzi Magoswana: from security worker to co-owner of the Klein Eikeboom farm.



We are not workers, we are owners.

Not only is this a story of healthy relations and trust and gratitude, it is also one of hardship and personal growth and real agricultural development and the Department of Agriculture played an vital role in this regard. Specialist researcher in animal production, Carel Muller, has served the project with technical advice since 2004. "One of the reasons for the failure of some economic empowerment projects is the beneficiaries' lack of technical knowledge and experience of their specific farming activity," says Carel. "It is often difficult to change incorrect management practices but this team is so receptive of sound advice." They have

experienced significant improvements in their dairy as a direct result of input given by Carel. "At first they produced 1 300 litres milk per day from 130 cows in milk but by means of corrective measures in terms of their calving programme they now produce 2 400 litres per day from 150 cows in milk." According to Paul they've "received tremendous help from

The dairy has currently 150 cows in milk but needs pastures to help cut their input costs



Elsenburg.”

Their most pressing need at the moment is to decrease input costs by establishing pastures and to slowly but surely grow their herd to 250 cows.

The LRAD grant they applied for might just help them in this quest. “This farm could be a model empowerment farm and a model

dairy farm,” says Paul. “But our aim is not only the survival of the farm; it is to build up the people on the farm and give the children a brighter future.”

From the outside, the success of this project seems to rest in the endless ardour of all involved, their pride in the farm, the range of skills growth that has taken place, and their absolutely impressive attitude.



A pipeline becomes a lifeline



How much difference can a 5,7km pipeline make to the lives of a small farming community in the Matjiesrivier valley beneath the towering Swartberg Mountains, you ask?

This pipeline enabled 29 farmers and their families (counting about 153 people) to enjoy clean drinking water - previously they had to make do with water from open earth furrows where up to 75% of the water from the fountain in the mountain simply soaked away in the thirsty earth. Also, as a result of the increase in water, the farmers now have more water available for irrigation.


Not much can be found about the history of this small community who has held fast against adversities of farming life through several centuries – it seems that the full history of this community is held safely in the memories of those who live there. What we do know is that generations of small farmers (therefore not fitting the description of emerging farmers) have grafted a living at the foot of the Swartberg Mountains after pioneers originally followed this water-rich vein into the interior of South Africa in the 1700's. Jerry Strydom is one of the farmers - a fifth generation local, who has lived here the whole of his 51 years and who took over from his father in this valley with the fertile red-brown soil.

"For years drinking and irrigation water was transported from the mountain along earth furrows to our properties. But there were

Water was transported via ground furrows such as this one – no wonder that so much water simply sank into the dry earth. 27 households received water tanks for storage.

enormous losses especially in the dry summer months and then the production on our farms suffered terribly," explains Jerry. "The open furrows also created health problems because the water was never clean when it reached us." Jerry farms with a few dairy cows and sheep, raises ostrich chicks and plants a little





tobacco. According to him it has definitely become drier over the years. "It must be the climate change thing," he says. "The dry conditions make farming here extremely difficult but fortunately my dairy gives me a continuous income. Now the irrigation water helps me to have feed for the cows when grazing is poor."

The Department of Agriculture launched a project to replace the earth furrows with pipe lines to increase agricultural production. "Although it is not our Department's mandate to provide drinking water of acceptable quality to communities, the project has done just that," says André Roux, director of the Department's Sustainable Resource Management programme. "During the first phase of the project the Zuurhoek-Wes and the Hotnotsrivier furrows were replaced with pipe lines which are both supplied with water through a common supply pipe line and earth furrow from the same fountain. The original planned pipeline was to be 960m, but this was extended to 5,7km with a concrete

Although it is not our
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- André Roux

reservoir for additional storage capacity." Due to environmental considerations, this being a very sensitive ecological area, the first 900m of the pipeline was constructed in the existing earth furrow.

Originally only 5 farmers would have benefitted from the project, but after completion it was extended to 29 farmers. Not only does the pipeline now bring clean mountain water to the households, but 27 families who earlier had to collect their water from the earth furrows, also received a 10 000 litre water tank for storage of their precious water. For

those families who do not get water directly from the pipeline a solar power pump was installed to pump water to their properties.

"The project really has changed their lives," says André. "The water savings have

made more water available for irrigation of additional crops and 50ha of lucerne have been established on the properties of 12 land owners. We've helped them with soil preparation and provided various implements which the community shares. A total of 6,7km main irrigation lines were installed. Sprinkler irrigation systems were installed for 20ha to ensure the optimal and efficient use of irrigation water. The deterioration of agricultural land due to water logging from the earth canals has been reduced and this land can now be used productively again."

In addition to the practicality of laying water pipes, the Department forged partnerships with Cape Nature, the Matjiesrivier Farmer Association, individual land owners and the Swartberg Game Lodge to obtain guidance on conservation aspects, permission for access

The Department's involvement with this community did not end here – the farmers will continue to receive the benefits of extension services. Here André Roux gives advice.



to individual properties, approval to construct the pipeline on their properties and for the operation and maintenance of the scheme.

“We also trained members from the community for some of the work on the pipeline,” says Andre. “Johan Wicomb, Koos Jonas, Gabriël Joseph, Andrew Josephs, Abraham Gentle, Jeremy Strydom, David Everts and Francois de Kock received training for concrete work and pipe laying as well as basic first aid –

skills which they can use in future for further employment.”

And a future is what they definitely have. A future of farming in a slightly hidden and unknown but beautiful valley. And it was water that gave them this future.

Research benefits land and purse



Conservation and farming have often been seen as direct opposites and even enemies. However, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, and specifically Dr Mark Hardy, a specialist agricultural scientist in the Plant Production Institute, begs to differ. And he's convinced many a farmer that it is indeed possible to farm and at the same time look after the earth.

"Conservation farming practices, and the application of no-till, reduce the environmental impact of crop production

and potentially maintain or improve soil health," says Dr Mark Hardy, a leading grassland scientist who has gained recognition as a specialist in cropping systems research in the Western Cape Province over the past 10 years. "Unfortunately no-till, conservation farming was not well accepted by producers due to factors such as the fear of the unknown and the perceived high costs of attaining the correct equipment."

No-till farming means that you plant with the minimum disturbance of the soil, retaining stubble and planting directly among the residue of the previous harvest. "Against that background not even 5% of the farmers used no-till in 1997."

Mark was committed to demonstrate the benefits of this method of farming and started trials at the Department's Langgewens research farm between Malmesbury and Moorreesburg in the Swartland. He attributes the success of the research program to building partnerships and the combined efforts of the researchers and field managers. The success of their initial research and presentation of the extension message to the Swartland farming community led directly to a request by the private sector funding bodies that he should expand the research to the Southern Cape. These bodies provided the additional funding required and the Southern Cape long-term crop rotation research programme was initiated in 2002. The trials had a particular impact in the Riversdale area where the local

Unfortunately no-till, conservation farming was not well accepted by producers due to factors such as the fear of the unknown and the perceived high costs of attaining the correct equipment
- Mark Hardy

"Wintergraanbedryfskomitee" assisted in identifying the research needs.

In the first year of the experiments the committee organised a farmers' day and they started with 35 farmers attending – today almost 200 people attend the Riversdale Information Day where results are shared, questions raised and answers searched for. "The farmers have taken ownership of the project and a large part of the success lies

in the very fact that it is community driven in partnership with the Department. Our Information Days provide producers with new ideas that they can adapt to the unique soils and micro climates of their farms."

There are four major research sites spread over the southern Cape and Swartland from which a great deal of information that is directly applicable to farmers has developed. Over the past four years he has presented and discussed results of the trials at 40 information days, 14 study group meetings and 38 technical information meetings.

In addition to the no-till concept Mark and his co-workers have demonstrated the advantages of crop rotation. "Crop rotation is the practice of growing

a sequence of plant species on the same land from one growing season to the next," he explains. "The favourable effects of crop rotations have long been known: crop rotations increase yields relative to monocultures and there is ample scientific evidence which indicates that planting alternative crops in a crop rotation system is potentially economically and biologically more sustainable than the alternative of using a monoculture approach."

Currently (2009) it is estimated that

Farmers at a information day in Riversdale listen with interest.



approximately 65% of farmers in the southern Cape apply some form of conservation farming that includes no- or minimum-till practices. There can be little doubt that the long-term crop rotation research conducted by Mark and his co-workers has made a major contribution to this change in production by farmers. "The ever increasing financial

Side by side means more success – canola and wheat share space.

constraints and higher input costs have contributed to the change of opinion," Mark says. "After the initial capital costs required to implement no-till practices, the continuous input costs are lower than conventional farming methods. Other benefits are that the soil retains moisture in the early season and the farmers are better able to use the small planting window optimally." Rands and cents matter. "To give you an example: let's say



a Swartland farmer has a 1 000ha farm, all planted with wheat at R3 500 per hectare – this means it will cost him about R3.5 million a year to harvest a crop. Assuming suitable soils and climate, if this farmer had established the farm to annual legume pastures (medic and clovers) and was managing the farm as a wheat/pasture rotation, the 500ha of wheat would cost about R1.75 million for a harvest of wheat and less than R500 000 for input costs for the sheep and maintenance of the pastures. He will have decreased his annual input costs R2.25 million, thus minimising his risk should he experience a disaster year for wheat.”

The fact that the Department has independently and continuously demonstrated the value of crop rotation and no-tilling in a scientific and repeatable manner over the years has convinced farmers that this is the way to go. “At Langgewens we showed that wheat production in rotation with medics can yield up to 35% more than in monoculture,” he enthuses. “Together with the ARC-Plant Protection Research Institute we’ve shown

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that this system encourages fewer diseases in the wheat.” He also commissioned, with the Agricultural Economics Department: University of Stellenbosch, a detailed study into the long-term economic implications of various crop and crop/pasture rotation systems for the Swartland that showed quite clearly that livestock played an important role in ensuring economic sustainability of farm production systems. This information was provided to

farmers before the major wheat price crisis that started in 2003 and the knowledge gained by farmers who accepted Mark's research results was pivotal in supporting many of them through the crisis.

Special equipment for minimum or no-tillage farming

But conservation farming is not only about less financial risk for the farmers, it is in its essence also about the improvement of the health of the soil; about farming sustainably in order to save the soil for generations to come. And conservation farming is an effort to reduce energy as well as harmful chemical inputs. "I've always felt that I'd rather do something that makes a contribution to my



fellow human beings than simply try to make as much money as possible,” says this winner of the 2007 Agricultural Writers’ award for the agriculturalist of the year. “I want to contribute to the understanding of things and I enjoy developing and building new projects to achieve this – it’s been a very good ride.” Part of the success of this particular research is that it has been done on a long-term, large-scale basis which has provided a field-scope opportunity for detailed research by other researchers on topics such as micro biology, soil mineralisation and weeds and water studies.

His research results in short:

- Crop rotation systems which include legumes and wheat, and/or crop rotation of wheat, canola and lupins, are more economical than wheat monocultures.
- Farmers can buffer the effect of drought conditions by distributing the risk be-

tween crops, rather than relying only on wheat as a monoculture.

- Wheat planted after legumes resulted in 30-35% higher production than wheat planted after wheat.
- Wheat planted after canola resulted in 25% higher production than wheat planted after wheat.
- Effective weed control was obtained by rotating wheat with canola and lupins.

As a result of Mark’s long-term commitment to his line of research, as well as his contribution as supervisor and examiner of post- and under-graduate students at the Universities of Natal, Pretoria, the Free State and Stellenbosch, he received the additional honour of being made associate professor extraordinary at the University of Stellenbosch.

A better future through new skills



“The farm workers who have been part of the training programme at the Graham and Rhona Beck Skills Centre has not only received training; they have been given self respect and self worth; they have been exposed to the dynamics of groups consisting of different races and people from different backgrounds. They have gained pride in themselves as individuals,” says Myra Hoffman, manager at this centre outside Robertson.

Skills development has been identified as one of the most important focuses for economic growth and poverty alleviation in South Africa. This is also valid for the agricultural sector where factors such as increased mechanisation, market and foreign exchange ups and downs, and increasing pressure on the profit margins of producers due to rising input costs, have impacted negatively on employment levels.

Farmworkers are a vulnerable group, often as a result of their limited range of skills.

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture created a sub-programme to focus on the various needs of this group. Apart from creating platforms for them to voice their plight, this subprogramme, under the leadership of Danie Niemand, has acted as facilitating body for a concerted effort by relevant partners to address the prevailing social issues that plague this group, for example substance abuse.

The farmworker competition initiated by the Department has grown exponentially since its inception and today twelve regions in the Western Cape take part. "The competition has given the participants the opportunity to understand the real value of their work," says Danie Niemand. "They have come to recognise their place in the bigger scheme of things and I have been amazed at the strength of character, knowledge and insight

Our initial aim was to supply technical training for evicted farmworkers or to provide an alternative to unemployed farmworkers who live on farms in the area.

- Danie Niemand

these participants have displayed during interviews and in their acceptance speeches at the award ceremonies."

Taking hands with other organisations has been part of the success story of this sub-programme. One such a partnership is with the Graham and Rhona Beck Skills Centre outside Robertson. The well known owner of one of South Africa's best known wine farms, Graham Beck, wanted to give back to the community which has served him and his

enterprise well over the years. Employment in the Robertson valley, including towns such as Montagu and Barrydale, is low and due to the seasonal nature of the local agricultural industries, many farmworkers experience semi-unemployment for large parts of the year. To address this problem the concept of a skills centre was proposed and Graham Beck agreed to sponsor the building and contribute to the establishment of the training programme.

According to Hoffman Graham Beck wanted the centre itself to

inspire
people
and
deemed
it vital that
the training help

develop the person in his/her totality. The Department of Agriculture saw the potential of latching on to this venture and a partnership was born that has already benefited several farmworkers from the area. The main areas in which services are delivered at the centre include facilitation of training programmes by accredited service providers (in this case Boland College), analysing and addressing training needs specific to the area and vocational guidance and programmes to youth in the area, including career guidance to those who has undergone skills training.

“Our initial aim was to supply technical training for evicted farmworkers or to provide an



GRAHAM & RHONA BECK SKILLS CENTRE

alternative to unemployed farmworkers who live on farms in the area,” explains Niemand. “Initially the Department’s contribution in 2008 went to equipping the work stations for training in masonry and welding. After the official opening of the Centre in November 2008, 16 farmworkers completed the building course and 15 the course on welding. The annual financial contribution of R500 000 from the Department will

There can be no contentment for any of us when there are children (people), who do not receive an education that provides them with dignity and honour and allows them to live their lives to the full.

- Nelson Mandela

in future be extended to training in five additional directions on value: organic farming, electrical training, global warming (a farm issue), training regarding the water chain (irrigation etc) and conservation.”

“Although Boland College provides the training and although the trainees receive a SETA accredited certificate at the end of the course, we decided to keep the training unthreatening by not having strict examinations,” says

Hoffman. “For many of the attendants simply walking through the doors of this impressive building is intimidating. Although they do not walk out as a fully qualified builder or electrician, they can, however, present potential employers with the certificate as proof of their newly





acquired skills. They could of course also start an own business.” One of the women who completed the building course did so for the sole reason of taking over the family business. She continued her studies through Boland College in order to be prepared for the management side of things as well. “It is difficult to give feedback regarding

employment figures as a result of the training,” emphasises Hoffman. “Work in these fields is often project-based and takes place on a contract basis. But we have extended their horizons. We have given them alternatives to being unemployed and we’ve given them a sense of accomplishment.”

Our previous president, Nelson Mandela, once said: “There can be no contentment for any of us when there are children (people), who do not receive an education that provides them with dignity and honour and allows them to live their lives to the full.” This centre, and the partnership in which the Department of Agriculture plays an important role, will take us a step further towards attaining the goal he set through the above saying.

From shop assistant to Director



Bongiswa Matoti

A career in agriculture, be it farming or on the academic or professional side, has always been seen as something for those among us with the strongest physique – in other words men. Furthermore, the scales in South Africa were largely tipped in favour of white males. In addition, a professional career in agriculture wasn't all that favourable in terms of the perception about job availability and market related earnings.

For these reasons the Western Cape of Agriculture was experiencing extreme difficulty to find equitable employable professional agriculturists in various subject fields; especially agricultural economists, veterinary staff and agricultural engineers. In 1999 this predicament found a solution in the visionary **Young Professionals Programme**.

This innovative programme has given numerous South African citizens from historically disadvantaged communities the opportunity to proceed towards a Masters degree and consequently find relevant employment.

Candidates have to be in possession of an applicable Honours degree and be intent and able to follow a career in agriculture; and special attention is given to the recruitment of women. The programme stretches over a three year period and consists of three phases: in-service training where candidates are exposed to a wider field of expertise, conducting an independent research project and the development of life skills. Candidates function under the mentorship of a senior researcher and research projects are worked on in conjunction with one of the local universities. The final aim is for candidates to complete a Masters degree from the relevant university, which would enable them to find employment more easily. A definite win-win situation.

This highly successful programme has achieved exactly what it set out to do. To date 25 candidates, of which 16 women and 9 men, has been accepted on the YPP programme in various subject fields: 8 in Agricultural Economics, 10 in Animal Production, 5 in Crop Production, and one each in Sustainable Resource Management and Human Resources. The follow-through of the programme has materialised in the employment of the candidates: eight with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDA), one with the Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, three with the National Department of Agriculture after a stint at the WCDA, two at the University of Stellenbosch, three in the private sector and one each at the Department of Trade and Industry and the National Agricultural Marketing Council.

"This programme is extremely successful as a structured approach to developing capacity while simultaneously enhancing the equity structure of the Department," explains Dr

Dirk Troskie, a former director of Agricultural Economics who was part of the initial process. "This programme has come full circle as some of the successful candidates have even already been mentors to some of the newer candidates."

One such a candidate, who has benefited from the programme and then turned around to repay the favour, is Bongiswa Matoti. Born and bred in the small town of Cofimvaba in the Eastern Cape, Bongiswa finished her schooling with a Matric in 1992. Unable to join a tertiary institution due to severe financial restraints, she became a shop assistant.

"Even though I was working as a shop assistant I still visualised myself as a student in some tertiary institution," she says. "The gap year was unplanned but it gave me the

opportunity to think more clearly about what I wanted to do with my life." With her family's agricultural link through subsistence farming, Bongiswa decided to combine agriculture with further studies at a college of education and become a teacher.

However, teaching was not what she was meant for. "My mind was made up for me when I was awarded a bursary by the Public Service

Commission under the Transkeian Government to study the Bachelor of Agriculture degree at the University of Fort Hare," she explains. "This was a major breakthrough towards furthering my

studies." In 1994 Bongiswa enrolled for the degree and was capped for completing it in 1996. Still she had not had enough to satisfy her thirsty mind and registered for BSc Agriculture as a second degree with a quest to understand the subject field better and to specialise.

Umntu ngumntu
ngabantu - you are
who you are because of
others.



Upon completing her bout in the Young Professionals Programme, Bongiswa applied for, and succeeded, in being employed as an agricultural economist at the very same Department. “I moved through the ranks – first on the Programme, then agricultural economist, then principal agricultural economist and a finally a manager - and learnt a lot from each level as they all deal with diverse issues,”

She used her years well and in 1999 joined the University of Stellenbosch to pursue an honours degree. “The decision was based on a need to be exposed to commercial agriculture and since the Western Cape is well known for its contribution to agricultural production in South Africa, I could not think of a better place to be. It is during this year that my interest to specialise grew even further and also wanted to be more involved in research.”

she says. “It is through the YPP programme that I recognised the responsibility and felt the need to mentor and encourage others to join the subject field and to effectively use the opportunities afforded to them.”

“Umntu ngumntu ngabantu - you are who you are because of others. The highlight of my career was when I was appointed as the acting Director for the Agricultural Economics programme and the subsequent appointment

as Director for this programme towards the end of 2007."

In Bongiswa Matoti the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's Young Professional Programme reached its full potential. 'Umntu ngumntu ngabantu' – and now others will benefit and develop through her input.

Elim a place of progress



Walma Killion and Jane Speelman

Walking the quiet streets of Elim which lies on the dirt road between Napier and Gansbaai, any stressed city dweller might take in only the old world charm, the quaint white washed thatched cottages and fig trees lining the main road and the imposing church which forms the centre of the town and its activities. You might envy the locals their peaceful life off the beaten track.

But that would mean being blind to the struggles the residents experience due to being far from larger towns and employment opportunities and the consequent financial security and development it brings. Elim knows hardships aplenty.

The town was first established as a Moravian Mission station in 1824 and German missionaries brought the Gospel and taught the people various skills and trades. Of these trades, the art of thatching has given them a strong hold and thatchers from Elim are still considered as being superior in craft and quality workmanship. Unfortunately high unemployment levels have crippled the economy of the town despite the fact that they are doing all they can to encourage tourism by, amongst others, opening a tea garden in the historic water mill (built in 1833 with the largest wooden water wheel in South Africa), hosting a bi-annual wild flower show and restoring the museum.

Several years ago the Elim community identified the need to better utilise their natural and human resources and approached the Western Cape Department of Agriculture with the idea of establishing a dairy on the outskirts of the town. In order to ensure the sustainability and growth of such a venture, a partnership was forged between Government,

commercial farmers, organised agriculture and private institutions (full list of institutions at end of article).

Following a dedicated and detailed planning process two business entities saw the light: one would be the dairy itself and the other the hiring in of cows – both entities have complete management structures.

On 6 September 2007 the community welcomed the first cows and the project got under way. “We presented the community with 30 Jersey stud cows to the value of R76 050 from the Department’s Outeniqua herd,” says Ilse Trautmann, director of Technology, Research and Development. A further 40 cows

However, one must understand that establishing a dairy is not just about getting cows and milking them
-Malcolm Temmers

joined the Elim herd and today the project boasts with 112 cows in milk. "The project has impacted on the wellbeing and coherence of the whole community," says Malcolm Temmers, the town's executive officer. "Some of the women raise the calves and the children have the responsibility of bottle feeding them in the evenings. For a short while we could

buy the milk, but the law states that it is illegal to sell unpasteurised milk. We really hope that Government can help us with the process of pasteurisation as the people really benefitted from having fresh milk." Walma Killion and Jane Speelman, trained chefs who run the tea garden in the historical mill building, are some of those who miss the access to fresh milk: "You should have tasted the milk tarts we made from our own milk," boasts Jane. The milk is now sold to Parmalat and the income derived ploughed back in the project.

"However, one must understand that establishing a dairy is not just about getting cows and milking them," explains Malcolm Temmers. "The Department of Agriculture followed through by building the dairy worth R920 000 and installing a milking machine worth a further R160 000. But cows need to eat and pastures need water and our people needed training." Consequently the Department installed irrigation equipment to the value



of R400 000 and an additional R950 000 was granted for the establishment of the pastures, building storerooms, calf cages, implements, etc. Where training is concerned the Department's Cape Institution for Agricultural Training assisted two residents to complete the National Certificate in Junior Farm Management, while four people received training in dairy production. The total financial contribution of the Department is in the vicinity of R3 500 000.

The view of the Department is that the real value of the contribution does not lie in the

It is about empowering those who were never allowed or enabled to be part of the commercial agricultural landscape.

amount of money spent, but it is rather about helping a community to rise above the challenges they face every day. It is about empowering those who were never allowed or enabled to be part of the commercial agricultural landscape. This project is a perfect example of the execution of Black

Economic Empowerment (BEE) as Government

Restored traditional Elim homestead. Despite the town's charm, the residents have experienced much hardship over the years and the dairy has brought possibilities and new opportunities for growth.





The milking parlour was designed and built by the Department of Agriculture to best suit the needs of this community driven dairy.

envisaged it for agriculture." Through the facilitation of specially structured loans from banks, the emerging community can now purchase their own cows and their long term goal is to eventually have 360 cows in milk. Commercial farmers are also given the unique opportunity to be part of the empowerment process by renting cows to the project and employers of dairy farmers can rent cows to the project through a donation or loan from the employer.

Currently project has 23ha of irrigated pastures in use but to support the proposed

360 cows they will need 420ha of which 300ha will be dry land and 120ha irrigated land. "Water storage is one of the challenges we face at the moment," says Temmers. "We need a new dam to provide sufficient water to sustain our long term goal."

This is what progress is all about: a community's dreams about a better future and the initiative to act on that dream and then the helping hands of those more fortunate. The Department of Agriculture, together with the other partners, will surely continue to support this community and make

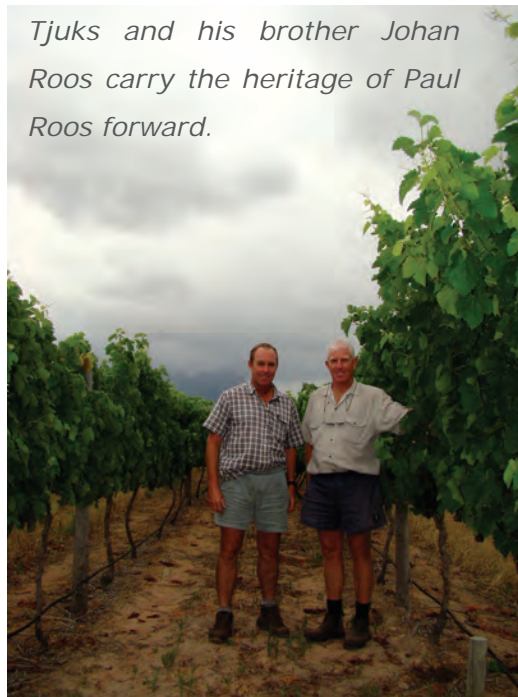
a difference to their lives.

List of involved partners:

- Elim Community
- Western Cape Department of Agriculture
- Agri Mega in facilitating capacity
- Overberg District Agricultural Association
(representing commercial farmers)
- Milk Producers Organisation
- CENDEL (supplying a mentor)
- Suppliers: Overberg Agri – Agri Business
support, Meadow Feeds, Terrason Chemicals,
Omnia Fertiliser, Erasmus Petroleum
for fuel and Cape Gate for fencing.

Rugby legend scores a try for empowerment

Tjuks and his brother Johan Roos carry the heritage of Paul Roos forward.



Rust en Vrede (directly translated as Rest and Peace) is a grape farm on the R44 between Stellenbosch and Somerset West where tranquility and peacefulness resides not only in the name, but is also reflected in the relationships on the farm. Since 1817, five generations of the Roos family has farmed here and there are worker families who have shared in the ups and downs of the farm for four generations. And now this relationship has been cemented

for the future through an empowerment project which has already paid dividends - not by means of immediate financial returns, but by winning the Vinpro block competition.

Tjuks Roos, the main thrust behind the project tells that his father (Gideon Roos) died when he (Tjuks) was still in the army and that three of the farm workers managed the farm with his mother until he could return to the farm. "I grew up with many of the current workers and have really realized and appreciate the vital role they play in the success of the farm," he says. "The farm has always cared for its workers – for example the workers' houses all had electricity as early as 1973 and we've had the crèche since 1983. Our responsibility towards the workers came naturally and true empowerment was the logical next step."

After attending a *BEE in the Wine Industry Conference* in 2003, Tjuks was confronted with the possibilities and responsibility surrounding BEE. "Initially I was hesitant to change the status quo and experienced the whole BEE movement as a threat, but after the conference (and heavy conversations and differences in opinion) I realized that it is not only my responsibility but also an

You can see it in the winning block but also in the way that everyone, even the young shareholders who do not work on the farm, came back to help with the harvest.

- Tjuks Roos

opportunity. You must remember that at one time it seemed that it was the worst thing possible to be a white farmer in South Africa. But I decided that if I do it, the empowerment transaction should be able to stand on its own legs – it will not be forced and it will not be window dressing. It is useless and unfair to give your workers your marginalized blocks." He admits that the input of experts such as the Departments of Agriculture and Land Affairs, his lawyers and BEE specialists contributed towards the continued success of the transaction.



The Paul Roos empowerment farm was established – named after Tjuks’ great granddad, the well known rugby player after whom the Stellenbosch boys’ school was named – where the Rust en Vrede Community Trust has 70% shareholding and the Rust en Vrede Trust 30%. Tjuks sold 13.5ha to the trust and 40.5ha municipal land was also ceded to the empowerment farm.

Martin Februarie en Ricardo Adams share a love of the farm.

Martin Februarie (46), one of the Paul Roos trustees, is the son of one of the three managers who carried the farm after the death of Tjuks’ father. “I didn’t do much by way of school training,” he says. “But staying and working on the farm has given me a good life. And now with the empowerment project, even if it is a long-term process, my children will also benefit.” Martin started out as a general worker and today he is in control of the farm digger loader and even does work for surrounding farms. “Sometimes it feels

unreal that we now own something but it changes something inside you – it changes that part of you that always felt left out in the past.”

According to Tjuks the project has changed the workers’ attitude, ardour and sense of responsibility. “You





can see it in the winning block but also in the way that everyone, even the young shareholders who do not work on the farm, came back to help with the harvest."

Ricardo Adams' (32) dad is currently one of the managers on the farm and although Ricardo finished his matric, he chose to come back to the farm as a fourth generation worker. "It is good to know that the farm and the trust and all the development opportunities will give our children an even better future," he says. "This project lights something in your insides. And we are proud because we got publicity and now the people of the neighbouring farms watch us."

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture

joined the process as part of the project management team called together by the Department of Land Affairs who made the finances available for the purchase of land (shares) for the workers trust. "A part of our responsibility is to make sure that the project is planned according to sustainable agricultural principles," says Jan Theron, who, from the side of the Department, was part of the team. "We also have to act as the advocate for the workers to ensure that they get the best deal possible in terms of low risk and guarantees built into the process to protect them." Since the conceptualisation and start of the agricultural BEE process the

Department has learnt some valuable lessons regarding the recipe for success or the signs of probable failure. "We have identified the prerequisites of a potentially successful group as a combination of the following: realistic expectations, communication, transparency, credibility and integrity, mutual trust, training and exposure to new opportunities but also responsibilities. Workers in such a situation need to experience that they are effectively part of the decision making process and that they can make a valuable contribution to the workings of the farm."

And does it only take hard work to get that head start which eventually wins you a competition like the Winetech & Vinpro vineyard block competition? "A definite no," says Jan. "What becomes evident here is that the producer did not give the workers the poorest non-performing part of the farm – he actually gave them top class vineyards to work with." According to Johan Pienaar, convenor of the judging panel and vineyard consultant for Vinpro in Stellenbosch, this is

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responsibilities

the first time that an empowerment project won this competition.

Although the workers have not received dividends, they did receive a major salary increase and the grapes of their first harvest are in the cellar. "The plan is to market the wine as a Paul Roos wine – a white and a red," explains Tjuks.

Today the rugby legend (and headmaster), Paul Roos, lives on in the lives of all involved in the Rust en Vrede farm and the Paul Roos empowerment farm creates a dream for those who has been part of the heritage of this proud farm for so many years.

The Department of Agriculture: Western Cape is involved in a number of initiatives that are geared towards ensuring the sustainability of the agricultural sector.

Abundant Harvest is as much about the people as it is the successes over years. The book is a celebration of the indomitable spirit of the people in Agriculture.

