

JANUARY 2020



EBENEZER TRUST

NEWS



The New Year at Ebenezer got off to a great start with a gift exchange for all apprentices on site. 79 presents were wrapped and exchanged in the 'present game', something of an Ebenezer tradition now where participants can steal other apprentices' presents in exchange for their own. The most popular present this year was, unsurprisingly, a solar torch which changed hands 3 times!



After a busy few weeks focused on harvesting, our apprentices returned to lessons at the end of the month as we commenced our 3rd training block of the Ebenezer year. We're excited this block to implement the use of 'Farming Forward', our tablet-based game, in our agribusiness lessons.



We loved having friend of Ebenezer, Martha Nobela onsite for a few weeks in January. Martha is a student in Bulawayo with a passion for cooking, so we appreciated her input in our kitchen where she came up with some new and cost-effective healthy menu plans for us!

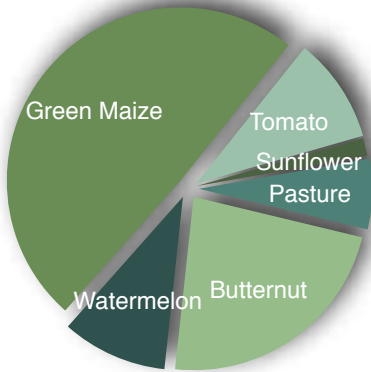
With the start of a new block, we have also started a new Family Night series asking the question, 'Why Work?'. It has been interesting to hear from the apprentices about what they think constitutes work, what the purpose of it is and what kind of work they think carries the greatest importance.



January has been a disappointing month in terms of rainfall, of which there has been very little this whole summer season. We are still praying for rain to come, it is too late for many people's crops but it would be good to at least see dams and rivers replenished. We were quick to capture on camera the one downpour of the month!

CROPPING

30.5 hectares currently under irrigation



Summer planting has continued in January with 9 hectares of maize being planted as well as 4 hectares of butternut and 1.5 hectares of watermelon.

There has been a bit of a yield reduction in our tomatoes, with 43,060 kg harvested in January. We also harvested 20,479 kg of butternut and 9,114 heads of watermelon.

We have seen an outbreak of fruit fly and fall army worm this month which is posing a threat to some of our curcubitacea crops like watermelon and butternut.

There has been a real atmosphere of joy amongst our apprentices involved in cropping and we're pleased to see that a greater number of them are hitting their harvest targets, an encouragement for them and us!

Pecan seedlings which were planted in September are developing nicely and January has been a time of bud grafting on our older trees, readying them for sale later this year.





LIVESTOCK

In January, many of our cows gave birth and started being milked, which means we have more calves and more milk! Per week milk production jumped up to 4,200 litres from 3,800 litres due to our continuing increase in per cow production. We're also pleased that our cows' body condition continues to be good.



In January we had a visit from a dairy consultant who works with dairy farms across the United States. He gave us excellent input into our nutrition and we look forward to continuing to benefit from his expertise.

Our dairy produced 17,254 litres of saleable milk in January. We were pleased that our main customer, Dairibord, increased their price this month - a welcome move in the current economic climate.



9,528 Ross broiler birds were sent to market in January. Their average live weight was 1.97 kg per bird, there was a 5.2% mortality on the batch and the final food conversion ratio was 1.91, a bit higher than we would have liked.

Our layer birds produced 875 boxes of eggs in January, of which 790 were sent to market.



Apprentices have continued to engage excellently in the layer houses. The lay-rate in house 3 was slightly below target, but in layer house 1, lay-rates were trending at 5% above target!

Exciting plans are underway to start building layer house 4 which will house 20,000 birds and double our production!
