

MARCH 2020



EBENEZER TRUST

NEWS



Along with every individual, community and nation, big news for Ebenezer in March has been the global coronavirus pandemic. At the end of the month the Zimbabwean government imposed a 3-week lock down. Thankfully they have recognised the importance of keeping food production going, and so we at Ebenezer are endeavouring to do just that! Our apprentices were given the choice to remain onsite or head home and the majority have chosen to stay. With measures in place to protect ourselves as much as possible, we are seeking to serve God and our nation with our farming skills!

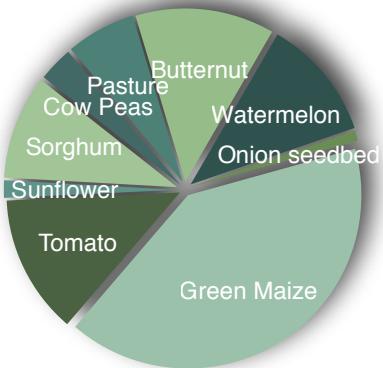
Earlier in March our second year apprentices had an excellent marketing trip into Bulawayo. This annual excursion exposes our apprentices to many links in the value chain in which Ebenezer plays a part, including seedling nurseries, retail stores, chicken hatcheries and a dairy processor. As well as helping them understand the bigger picture of the agribusiness industry, the trip gives our apprentices ideas and links for their own enterprise or employment beyond Ebenezer.

Another March highlight was our annual Graduate Reunion. We were delighted that over 50 graduates joined us for a weekend of fun and fellowship, catching up on news, encouraging one another and of course challenging our current apprentices to a soccer tournament! There was a wonderful atmosphere throughout the weekend and so much joy in reconnecting with old friends.

We have had over 100 applicants for our courses starting later this year. Our application deadline came at the end of March and now we will consider how we move forward to make selections in the current situation.

CROPPING

31 hectares currently under irrigation



We started our winter planting in March with 3 hectares of sorghum going into the ground as well as a third of a hectare of onion seed. We are pleased to see the onion seedbed well established.

This month we harvested 6,320 kg of tomatoes. We're really pleased with how our tomato crops are looking and apprentices have been busy trellising 3 hectares of tomatoes this month.

We also harvested 9,203 kg of butternut in March and 6,240 cobs of green maize.

The partnership between our cropping and dairy teams continues to be beneficial on both sides, with one hectare of harvested green maize being silaged this month to be used as dairy feed.

We were excited this month to receive a grant to install two green houses at Ebenezer! We are hoping to build these as soon as possible in order to plant a winter crop of tomatoes!



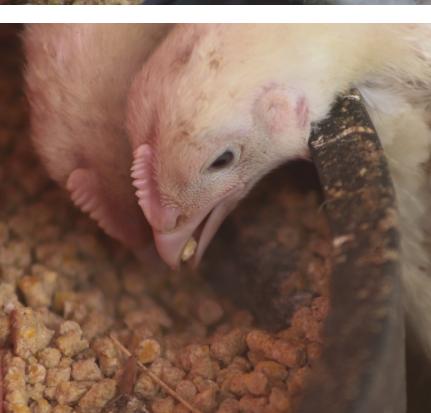
LIVESTOCK



Our layer birds produced a total of 426,064 eggs in March. We are especially pleased with the lay rate in Layer House 3 which is 1% over target at 92%.



We've been glad to welcome a new team member into our layer team. Malvin Sodinda who graduated from Ebenezer in 2015 has returned to be part of our graduate trainee program and it's been good to see him work with our current apprentices who are growing in maturity as they think more about planning and preparation for the future.



The batch of Ross broilers which we placed in February are continuing to grow well. We are seeing our broiler team of apprentices being motivated by love for what they do and it's good to see their passion for their work!



Our dairy produced 16,519 litres of milk from an average 46 milking cows this month. That's an average of 12.7 litres per cow per day.

We were excited to welcome a new staff member Sibakululi to the dairy team in March. He has been doing a great job of speeding up infrastructure improvements such as working on our fencing.

As the dairy and cropping partnership continues to develop, we're delighted that the cropping team have received oats to grow for the dairy this winter. It's a new crop for Ebenezer and more green stuff for our cows to enjoy! We're also pleased that the cropping team has planted cow peas for the dairy. As a protein source it means we'll need to buy less protein. This will bring down cost of production and mean more profit for Ebenezer - quite a milestone!