

APRIL 2020



EBENEZER TRUST

# NEWS



Life at Ebenezer has continued to be impacted by the global coronavirus pandemic, with Zimbabwe's original 3-week lockdown being extended to 5 weeks. We are glad to report that we have all remained well and healthy on site, and we have been able to keep production running throughout this period.



With the majority of our apprentices on site during what would usually be their Easter vacation, plenty of fun and games have been instigated to keep spirits up and enjoy time together in this season. Spelling bees, dance-off competitions and brain teaser challenges have had many staff and apprentices scratching their heads and laughing together as we compete between our families.



Easter was a particular time of celebration. In efforts to maintain social distancing at Ebenezer, most activities have happened in our family groups and at Easter we had an especially fun time cooking special lunches in our families!

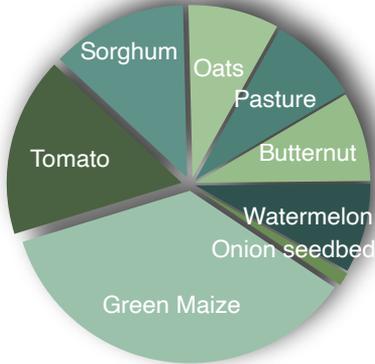


Second year apprentices have been getting stuck into a new business training initiative - the Ebenezer Triple i Challenge! Family groups have been given 1000m of used drip tape and a small financial investment to start and run their own small businesses, which will be judged for innovation, implementation and inspiration. It has been fun to see the creative ideas the apprentices are coming up with!

We are glad that thatching work has been able to continue on our Dining Hall as our thatching contractor was on site as the lock down commenced! Work is now on hold until businesses reopen and we can purchase more thatching grass.

# CROPPING

31 hectares currently under irrigation



An exciting new endeavour in our cropping this month has been the planting of lucerne among our pecan trees. This grass can be harvested over a 5 year cycle and will not only provide great feed for our dairy but also attract bees to our pecan trees!

Our onion seed beds continue to do well and we will be transplanting them in May.

Congratulations to Field Coach Nomqhele Sithole who has overseen her first tomato crop which is inches away from achieving an excellent yield of 100 tons per hectare! Not only has this crop produced a great yield, over 80% of the tomatoes have been Grade A quality!



We've been some of our best green maize crops for a while - larger cobs are being sold as green maize while smaller cobs are being silaged for our dairy cows. So far we have silaged 3 hectares and this crop has become a favourite with our apprentices



Fruit fly has become a bit of a problematic pest, attacking our butternut and watermelon crops.



# LIVESTOCK

Our dairy team have been learning a lot about what we are feeding our cows and how it all comes together so that we can have milk for our tea! We are looking forward to more conversations with nutritionists and other dairies as we continue to learn more about our feed.



This month our dairy produced a total of 13,292 litres of saleable milk, an average of 10.8 litres per cow per day.

Our layer birds produced a total of 412,153 eggs in April.

For the first time in several years, we have placed layer chicks at Ebenezer. 4300 birds arrived in April and growing them to be point-of-lay birds will be an excellent training experience for our apprentices, as well as slightly reducing our layer costs.



We have also pegged out the plot to build our new layer house which should hopefully be going up soon and which will house a further 20,000 layer birds!

We closed a batch of Ross broiler chickens in April, with 12,298 birds going to slaughter and a mortality of under 5%. Lockdown led to a lack of market which meant we kept the birds longer than usual, however this turned out to be a good thing as our birds grew heavier and we made a profit on the batch.



This month we constructed a new chicken house to house 300 SASSO chickens - these are the birds which can serve as both broilers and layers. This demo house will show our apprentices and TMG farmers visiting Ebenezer how these birds can be farmed at home. And at Ebenezer our kitchen will benefit from the steady supply of meat and eggs!