

OCTOBER 2020



EBENEZER TRUST

NEWS



At the beginning of October we celebrated our Foundation Graduation as our first year apprentices completed their first 3 months at Ebenezer. 62 apprentices graduated and 60 have remained with us for the Intermediate Course. Usually we invite parents to this graduation and to a day at Ebenezer to see all their children have achieved, however restrictions this year meant this wasn't possible. We nonetheless had a fantastic celebration at Shalom Campsite and were very happy to have George and Sipi Mlilo with us as guests of honour. The Mlilos were on the Ebenezer team many years ago and have remained close friends of Ebenezer and amazing champions of our apprentices and graduates.

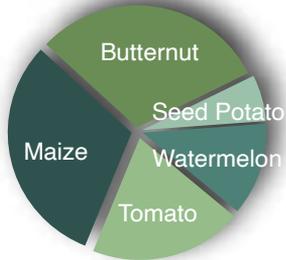
Following graduation we had a boost week before the restart of lessons and the start of the Intermediate Course. Once again apprentices did not travel home due to COVID precautions. Instead, we gave the week a different flavour with lots of fun activities between farming. There was a noisy spelling bee and an exciting morning of sports and games including hurdles, relays and a tug of war! On Thursday we spent our Family Night at the dam, watching the sunset and enjoying a bonfire with songs and icebreaker games led by different staff members.

Our lady apprentices have been continuing the active theme with some fun netball matches against local community teams. They are yet to secure a victory but they have been having a lot of fun regardless!

We have been working on lots of exciting projects this month, including the repair and grading of the roads leading to and around Ebenezer, in preparation for what we hope will be a bumper rainy season!

CROPPING

32.5 hectares currently
under irrigation



This month we planted 3 hectares of tomato, 4 of maize, 1 of watermelon, 1 of butternut and 2 hectares of potatoes. We are seeing our planting standards improve with most of our crops hitting 80% germination which is good news.

We harvested 900 kg of onions and 1,100 kg of tomatoes.

It was fantastic to receive some good early rain during the first weeks of October. This has meant good growth for our crops as well as reducing animal pressure as the bush veld is now green and there is more for animals to eat.

We were pleased in October to begin building stands for the solar panels that will power our main water pump which feeds our entire irrigation system.

The demo garden is coming back into greater production with green peppers being harvested and spinach being planted. The demo garden team have also enjoyed growing more of their own seedlings. Plans are afoot to expand the garden so that by 2021 the majority of our relish will come from there.

The pecan trees we planted in September at Ebenezer and with our out-growers are doing well and have started leafing.





LIVESTOCK

This month we sent 10,336 broilers to slaughter at 52 days. The batch had a 6% mortality rate and an FCR of 1.92.

In our Layer section, in October we sold 7000 off-lay birds and placed a new flock of 7762 birds in layer house 3. In total our layer birds produced 494,480 eggs this month.

We are delighted with how our birds in layer house 1 are doing. These are the birds that we grew from chicks and they are now hitting hyline standard lay-rates!

Building work continues on layer house 4. Good progress has been made with the roof now in place, but there is still a lot of work to be done for birds to be placed by the end of November!

Our dairy is enjoying working with the cropping and poultry teams as we graze our herd on the grassy areas around Ebenezer, among the pecan trees and by our chicken houses. We have installed a new electric fence which has given us access to, and control of, new areas. The cows love the lucerne grass coming from our pecan fields - they wait for it eagerly and stop eating the rest of their feed in protest if it is late!

Other good news from our dairy is that our milk quality improved over October with a reduction in bacteria count which means our milk is A grade!

In total our dairy produced 15,052 litres of saleable milk this month. 6 cows were dried off so by the end of the month 34 cows were in production. However, in what looks to be a busy few days, we are expecting 7 of our cows to calve in the next week!

