

MAY 2021



EBENEZER MATOBO

NEWS



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We held two successful Selection Camps at the end of May, to which we welcomed a total of 100 candidates. The calibre of applicants was very high which made it incredibly difficult to select the 65 to whom we could offer places. Our hope is that all who attended had fun, learnt something new and were encouraged in the plans that God has for their futures.

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Another highlight of May was the annual marketing trip we run for our second years! They visited suppliers, farmers and markets in and around Bulawayo, giving them exposure to the poultry and vegetable value chains in which Ebenezer plays a part. It is always an eye-opening trip for our second years as well as a lot of fun.

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As well as the marketing trip, our second years also enjoyed a dairy field trip this month. Visiting Anglesea Dairy, about 40 km from Ebenezer, the trip was a great opportunity for apprentices to see an alternative set up to the Ebenezer dairy. They received a warm welcome and were invited to get stuck in, so it was all hands on deck at feeding and milking time.

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We are thrilled to welcome two “new” members of staff onto our team. Simanga and Fortune Ncube, are both Ebenezer graduates, and Simanga worked with us for several years before going to train as a teacher. She now joins our training team and Fortune has joined our Poultry team. We are delighted to have them back in the Ebenezer community, with their young son Gracious.

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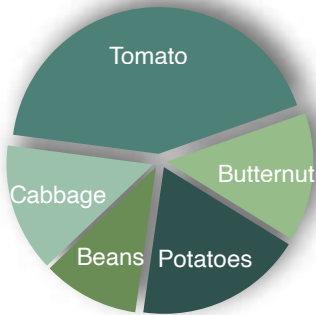
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It was a real treat in May to welcome back Ebenezer graduate Mgcini Mpfu with a team of students drawn from Bulawayo and from Michigan in the States where Mgcini is now based. The team have thrown themselves into Ebenezer life and we have so enjoyed having them work alongside our apprentices, help out at Selection Camp and prepare some delicious meals for the Ebenezer staff team!

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CROPPING

7 hectares currently under irrigation



Big news this month was the arrival of a new trailer for our tractor! This new arrival has brought joy not just to the cropping team but to the whole Ebenezer community - especially the soccer team who have been using it to travel to local matches!

This month we planted 1 200 tomato seedlings in green house A; it is great to be able to grow tomatoes throughout winter!

We were pleased with our tomato harvest of 53.8 tons which was above our targeted yield for the month. We also harvested 12 tons of butternut and silaged 4 hectares of maize.

Our tomatoes have faced some challenges with frost, but our team has risen to the challenge and we were delighted that we hit 100% Grade A on all tomatoes sent to the Hamara Markets in May.

Apprentices have planted one hectare of cabbage and are now preparing land for August planting. Second years in the demo plot have been growing beetroot from seed and have seen an excellent germination.





LIVESTOCK

May has been a month of good problems in our dairy. One has been that the silage being produced by our cropping team is of such good quality that our cows responded to it positively and produced so much milk, we had to reduce the amount we were feeding them! Another milk chiller will arrive in June - this increased storage capacity means the cows can eat more of this silage that they are enjoying so much and we should see milk production increase even further.



More good news from our dairy is that we have heard that out-grower farmers who bought bulls from our dairy two years ago are now producing 750 litres of milk every other day!



We had 33 cows producing milk in May. They produced an average of 16.7 litres per cow per day, which totalled 15,204 litres over the month, 14,202 litres of which was saleable.



Our poultry team was kept very busy in May moving birds between houses in preparation for the arrival of 18,400 new birds in June. Our layer birds produced a total of 333,870 eggs in May, with lay-rates in house 1 above target for the whole month! We also mortality in layer house reduce to 2% after debeaking the birds this month.

By the end of May our batch of 9500 broilers were 6 weeks old and about to go to market weighing an average of 2.75kg per bird.