

JUNE 2021



EBENEZER MATOBO

NEWS



On the 18th June we celebrated our 14th Ebenezer graduation! For the second year running we were unable to invite family and friends to celebrate with us due to COVID restrictions, however we had a joyous time nonetheless. This year saw us graduate 53 first years and 43 second years. Many of our graduates are keen to establish their own farming enterprises and we look forward to continuing to journey with them practically and spiritually.



With some sadness we bid farewell to our poultry team leader, Mncedisi Banda. Mncedisi has been heading up our poultry team since May 2017 and was himself an apprentice from 2013-15! Mncedisi will be starting his own farming enterprise in cropping and poultry and we wish him every success!



Our second year apprentices have been busy in their Agriculture lessons undertaking lots of projects which have enabled them to apply what they have been learning in lessons. As well as visiting other farmers to observe different methods and practices, they have been getting creative this month designing posters aimed at teaching our 1st year apprentices various aspects of dairy farming. As well as helping them consolidate their learning and think through how they would pass it on, this exercise has offered some valuable experience for both first and second years in how to give and receive constructive feedback!

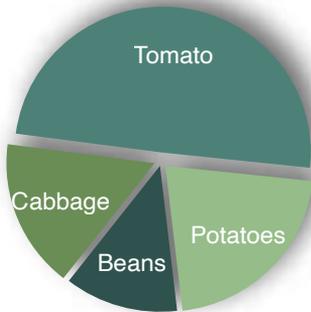


Ebenezer feels very quiet in the weeks following graduation, with graduates gone and new arrivals yet to appear. Many staff and apprentices are taking the opportunity to have a short break and re-energise for the new year starting on 12 July!

This month we have welcomed 3 attachment students to Ebenezer. Mary Wishes Nyonie is an Agricultural Economics student at Midlands State University, Clinton Ndlovu is studying for a diploma in Agriculture and Nkosikhona Ndlovu is studying Biochemistry in Bulawayo.

CROPPING

6 hectares currently under irrigation



Cropping news to celebrate this month is that our tomato harvest in the Eden plots has been hitting 90 tons per hectare! In total we have harvested 120 tons of tomatoes this month.

We have also finished harvesting butternut with a final 4.4 tons harvested this month. At the very end of the month we have begun to harvest some of our potatoes.

There has been no planting in June but plenty of land prep for our summer planting in August. 6 hectares of land to be irrigated by our pivot is at the final stages of preparation and we hope to plant potatoes and lucern grass there in August.

We have harvested 28 crates of pepper from our green house and our green house tomatoes continue to thrive. We look forward to planting more pepper in the next 2 months.

Soil samples from 6 hectares of our land have been collected by the biochemistry department of the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Bulawayo and we look forward to receiving the results.



LIVESTOCK



With the departure of Mncedisi, we have welcomed Fortune Ncube to lead the poultry team. He has been kept busy in his new role, as this month we placed 10-week old layers into our largest layer house, layer house 4. They seem to be settling well.

There has also been the arrival of some much appreciated new equipment in layer house 4 including 2 feeding trollies which have made feeding times much more efficient! We are also working hard to get all the mechanised manure removal belts in layer house 4 working.

Our layer flocks produced a total of 348,333 eggs in June.

The dairy team have had some fun this month as we have started mixing our own feed for the first time! Using our new donated feed mixer we can now buy raw ingredients to mix rather than the more expensive finished product. Not only will this reduce our feed costs but will also help our apprentices learn about the raw ingredients and the nutrients they provide. This is vital for apprentices who want to keep livestock profitably.

In June we had 28 milking cows producing an average of 16.8 litres per cow per day. In total we produced 12,985 litres of milk, 12,131 litres of which was saleable.