

SEPTEMBER 2023



EBENEZER MATOBO

NEWS



September has been an exciting month, especially for our first year apprentices, who have been approaching the end of their 3-month Foundation Course. They have all enjoyed experiencing work in each of our Productive Learning Areas and there has been lots of comments about the muscles they have grown and their adjustment to the early morning lifestyle of a farmer!

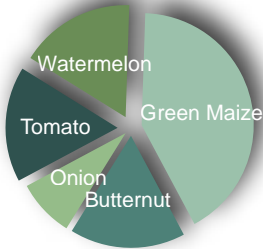
The first years can be particularly proud of their achievement in preparing and planting a Pfumvudza plot as part of their Agriculture lessons. Translating as "New Season", a Pfumvudza is a maize plot designed in such a way that it is easily possible for a family to harvest enough maize to feed themselves for a year. The concept uses conservation agriculture principles devised by Foundations for Farming and ties in nicely with the classroom training our apprentices have been undergoing throughout the Foundation Course.

A September highlight for our second year apprentices was the annual Marketing Trip in mid-September. Giving our apprentices exposure to different markets, suppliers and retail centres, the trip is a great complement to the Business training they are undertaking. This year there was a particular focus on handling customers and identifying the best places to purchase particular inputs.

As our Foundation Course and our first block of training for the year has drawn to a close, so to has our Family Night Youth Alpha series. As part of the series we took an overnight trip to Shalom Campsite for our sessions on the Holy Spirit. As well as some good talks and times of prayer, apprentices also had a lot of fun trying out some horse riding, a zip line and the terrifying Shalom water slide!

PRODUCTION

12 hectares under irrigation



Our cropping teams have been observing germination and gap filling where necessary. This is especially the case with our butternut and watermelon crops where germination was affected by temperature fluctuations.

As well as ongoing land preparation for October planting, we have started trellising our tomatoes which are looking very good. Alongside this, we started harvesting our second greenhouse of tomatoes.

Our broiler team finalised a batch of birds in September and we are very pleased with the results achieved. Despite some high mortalities early in the batch, the team continued to manage the birds well and ultimately made a profit of 37 c per bird. From 10,027 chicks placed, 19,803 kg of live weight was sent to the abattoir, an average weight of 2.32 kg per bird.

We have seen some good improvement in our layer section with lay rates increasing from 55% at the beginning of September to 78% by the end of the month. Apprentices have been having fun predicting the lay rates each week and then working hard to achieve the high rates they have predicted!

Our dairy team has been experimenting with making dairy juice out of whey and we are receiving positive feedback from customers. Work continues to improve our overall milk quality in order to be able to sell higher quantities for processing.

