

DECEMBER 2023



EBENEZER MATOBO

NEWS



As always, Christmas and New Year were times of celebration, fun and games at Ebenezer. Being full time farmers, not all of our apprentices can go home for the festive season, which meant 60 were onsite for a Christmas celebration and another 60 enjoyed a braai and fireworks for New Year's Eve!



At the very end of the year, we accepted an invite from Bishop Nkokha to minister at Mapane Baptist Church. A group of apprentices calling themselves the "Almighty Souls" participated in their 31st December service, with first year Abigail Twala preaching on the "Realities in life - Are you ready to meet Jesus when your days in this world are over?" We love building these connections with local churches and seeing our apprentices step out in ministry.



Congratulations to staff members Michael and Zandile Mzamba on the arrival this month of their second child, Praise, who was born on 17 December!

Another cause for celebration this month was a visit from past team members, Cephaz and Michelle Tapedzisa, with their children Makanaka and Kudzi, all the way from Nairobi, Kenya!

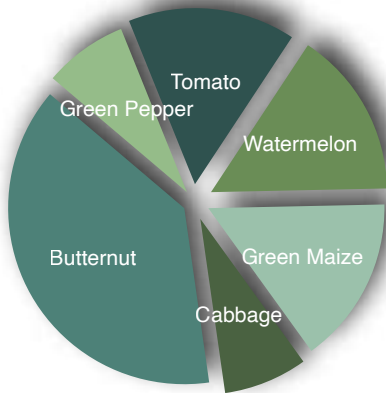


Our final congratulations for December go to graduate and staff member Nkanyiso Sithole, who this month graduated from his diploma in Agriculture Food Security and Livelihoods!

What a wonderful way to end 2023, with so many reasons to celebrate. As Ebenezer we have faced many challenges in the past year, but we reach the end of the year with gratitude as well as faith and hope for 2024!

CROPPING

12 hectares under irrigation



Our cropping team have been happily busy this month with some bumper harvests happening across our fields! In December we harvested 62,843 kgs of tomato, 15,937 water melons and 38,605 kg of butternut, exceeding our yield expectations in each of these crops!

Apprentices have been excited to see their crops doing so well. Harvesting has been hard work but no one is complaining when this is what we have been working so hard towards!

We have been seeing great success in our biological integrated pest management programme, however we did lose on field of tomatoes this month to tuta absoluta. We were glad at least to have reached half of our harvest target in that field before the loss.

As well as harvesting, in December we planted 1 hectare of butternut. We have also been preparing land for more tomato seedlings as well as trellising our younger tomato crops. We are also pleased with the progress of our young green pepper green house crop.



LIVESTOCK



Following the great success of our broiler batch closed in November, apprentices were excited about placing another batch in December. We did so in the middle of the month and by month-end we were seeing good results in terms of mortality which currently stands at 1.2%. The birds seem happy and healthy, although as they were slightly underweight when we received them, our apprentices have their work cut out to keep them well-fed and hitting their weekly weight targets.



Our flock of laying birds has managed to maintain a good lay rate of 85% at 52 weeks.



We have another flock of layers which we have grown from chicks to point-of-lay. Our layer team has been busy administering the last injectable vaccines before the birds start laying. We are anticipating our first eggs from this flock in early January 2024.



A consistent feed supply in our dairy this month has had a positive impact on our milk production with our cows producing an average 18.8 litres per cow per day in the middle of the month.

We have also achieved a reduction in the number of cows with a high somatic cell count (SCC). Of our 40 milking cows, only 4 cows are above the threshold, meaning we are able to sell the majority of our milk to our main processing customer.