



# EBENEZER MATOBO

It's been a great month for the Ebenezer Imvuselelo team who competed successfully in their third annual WAGES contest. WAGES stands for We Are God's Eager Servants and is an initiative run by the Sethule Orphans Care Trust for young adults aged 18-30. The WAGES contest happens once per year between Imvuselelo and two other regional teams. Months are spent practising for Bible knowledge quizzes as well as Drama and Singing competitions, all of which are held over a weekend camp. With over 40 hours of activities, there's a lot going on and a lot of prizes to be won. Imvuselelo brought home 4 trophies this year, including the overall Bible quiz trophy which they have now won for three years in a row. Well done team!

April has been an active month for all of our families, too, as we have started our last Family Night series of the Ebenezer year, which is always focused around enjoying food, fellowship, and fun together in our individual families. Each family rotates around five different activities including a braai, making pizzas, creating some art, watching movies, and making pancakes. We also enjoy some reflective prayer activities that help us look back over our time at Ebenezer and forwards to the plans God has for us in the future!

April saw our preselection process come to an end. This year we have had over 200 applications for the 60-70 places we have to offer on our course starting in July. During preselection, we visit candidates to do interviews and numeracy screenings, and to make sure they understand exactly what Ebenezer is. Of these 200 applicants, we have invited 120 join us for 2-day Selection Camps to be held in May.

NEWS APRIL 2024



# CROPPING

Our trials for growing seeds continue to go well. This month we welcomed a consultant from JW Seeds on site and he was pleased with the progress on the ground. Work has begun to harvest lettuce and cucumber seeds, with other vegetables to follow suit in the next month. Of the seeds we harvest, we will be sending samples to JW Seeds for quality assessment.

In April we harvested 910 crates of green pepper and 20,960 kgs of tomato. This is just the start of our latest two hectares of tomatoes coming into harvest, and so we look forward to sending many more crates to the market in the coming weeks! Our sugar beans are looking great as they mature and begin to dry. They should be ready for harvest in June.

We are grateful to have had a more consistent water supply this month. Our pivot irrigation is now working and we have planted  $\frac{1}{2}$  hectare of onion under it. Other planting this month has included 5,000 cabbage seedlings and 22 lines of beetroot.

Apprentices have been introduced to Ebenezer Cropping Standards this month. Our cropping standards give apprentices an idea of how long particular tasks should take when running a farm. Our business partnerships with apprentices now take into account their ability according to these standards; for example, one apprentice might be given responsibility for 7 beds of onions, with another taking care of 4 beds, each according to their own ability.





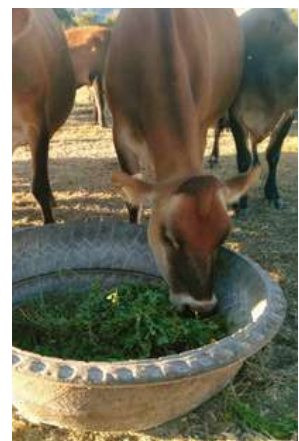
# LIVESTOCK

A group of apprentices received an invite this month from a neighbouring farmer who asked if they would like to help him brand calves. They spent a fun Saturday morning growing their muscles as they tackled calves and helped in the branding process.

In other cow-centred news, we produced a total of 21,078 litres of milk in our dairy this month and sold 16,179 litres of that to our main customer, Dairibord. We are also making good milk sales to our local community. We are glad that 20 of our cows are pregnant but we are still exploring options to artificially inseminate cows due to our bull's ongoing leg injury.

Our latest batch of broilers went for slaughter in April. Final results from the batch showed a pleasing weight of 2.24 kg per bird and a low mortality of 2.4%. The Food Conversion Ratio ((FCR) was higher than previous batches at 1.95, but we still made a reasonable profit of 29 c per bird. At the end of the month we placed another 11,000 birds.

We have been working hard to see an improvement in the lay-rate of our Layer House 4 flock. Analysing feed and making environmental changes are two of the actions we have taken. We have seen an increase in lay-rate from 68% to 72%, however this is still way below target. In contrast, our Layer House 1 flock are excelling, hitting an 86% lay-rate which is 3% above target.





# INTRODUCING

A team of five Ebenezer team members had a great experience this month, as they travelled to Ebenezer Kazungula in Zambia, to help the team there run Selection Days for their new intake in June. For two of the team members, it was their first time to leave Zimbabwe, and they did it in style, walking across the Victoria Falls bridge as they crossed into Zambia!

One of those team members is Linet Ndlovu who also celebrated her birthday while in Zambia! Linet is a 2016 Ebenezer graduate who came back onto our staff team in 2018, having completed a further 2-year Bible course at Ekuphileni Bible Institute. Linet first came to Ebenezer as an apprentice because she was interested in discipleship: *"I had a desire for discipleship. I loved God but my love wasn't deep deep. I was kind of scared of God; when I sinned, I thought, 'God is angry with me'. Now, I see him as more of a friend. Yes, he's going to judge sin, but God is love. He is not a judge with a big stick ready to beat me, but a kind and loving father. This is what I discovered at Ebenezer."*

When Linet returned to join the Ebenezer team, she came as a volunteer. She says, *"After two more years studying the Bible, my heart was still hot for Jesus. I didn't want to be just a theologian, but to find a place to serve, share my experiences and continue to grow in my relationship with God."*

Initially planning to volunteer for 3 months, Linet is still on the team 5 years later! She is an integral member of our Transformers team (our trainers who are transforming mindsets in the classroom) and has grown enormously in her discipleship, training and admin skills. *"I think I am still at Ebenezer because of Jesus. I have a passion for Ebenezer and for young people, seeing them mature in their faith. I have also grown more than I expected - I have gained skills alongside knowledge, especially in training and administration, and every day I am learning something new."*

APRIL 2024

