



EBENEZER MATOBO

Good news in the month of February has been the installation of some new water tanks at Ebenezer! With our onsite reservoir leaking and unfixable, we were grateful to receive a grant from Tearfund Netherlands to install a new water storage system that will deliver clean water directly from our borehole to our accommodation, dining hall and even our layer chicken houses.

As well as fresh water pouring through our new system, we have also enjoyed another month of fresh water falling from the skies! While this has caused a fair amount of inconvenience with trucks getting stuck, rivers becoming impassable and family night supplies being delivered by canoe, the benefits outweigh the inconveniences with our dam continuing to fill.

A highlight for everyone on site this month was a combined church service held between 3 local churches. We gathered for a time of worship, testimony and sharing of the word together. Seeing apprentices involved in all aspects of the service was encouraging and there was a wonderful atmosphere of unity and joint purpose together across our different congregations.

Our staff team has started a new course this month called Practicing the Way. Over 8 sessions, we will be exploring what it means to follow Jesus every day, with practical and intentional spiritual exercises to lay a foundation for lifelong apprenticeship to Jesus



CROPPING

In February, we planted 2 hectares of butternut, 1 hectare each of maize, sugar beans and tomato, and 750 green pepper plants in our greenhouse. This is our first time grow green pepper for seed and we are doing so in partnership with Avanos seeds with whom we have been forming a firm partnership.

The abundant rain in January and into February caused some fungal diseases in our watermelon crop which saw our yield reduced considerably.

In other crops, however, we exceeded our harvest targets for the moth. We harvested 37,200 kg of tomatoes, 20,120 kg of butternut and 556 kg green pepper, against a target of only 120 kg!

Current crops under irrigation are 1 hectare of onion seed, 3 hectares each of butternut, tomato and sugar beans, 4 hectares of maize and 1 hectare of watermelon.





LIVESTOCK

February started with a batch of 5,792 day-old chicks in our broiler house. Despite them being slightly underweight on arrival, the birds looked healthy. Our broiler team has worked to close the gap between target weights and actual weights, whilst also battling with some bacterial infections. Despite these challenges, the team broke an Ebenezer record by going up to 3 weeks with a mortality percentage below 1%. Mortality has remained low and the batch will be ready for slaughter in mid-March.

Our apprentices working in layer production have impressed us this month with their grit and perseverance in working many nights to move birds from rearing houses into our layer houses. With almost 16,000 new birds placed across 2 houses, we are now operating all 4 layer houses and a total of 25,430 birds. With these new birds just coming into lay, we are looking forward to a productive month of March!

Recent rains have made the road to our dairy quite muddy. As a result, the Dairibord truck has been getting stuck and we have been failing to send some of our milk to town. This has led to some creative developments as we look at turning our milk into cream and butter!





INTRODUCING...

My name is Simelinkosi Tshabangu and I'm a 25-year-old woman from the Mablawuni community, just 4 km away from Ebenezer. After completing my A Levels in 2019, I applied for a job at Ebenezer and was fortunate enough to be accepted. One of my main roles at Ebenezer is being a training coach, though we refer to ourselves as the Transformers, because we are in the business of transforming mindsets. I consider myself a transformer because I'm passionate about sharing knowledge with apprentices.

What I love most about Ebenezer is the welcoming and supportive spirit that everyone here embodies. It feels like being part of one big family. Getting to know each apprentice was initially challenging, as I had to understand their diverse personalities and backgrounds. However, over time, I've come to appreciate this process, which has helped me develop greater empathy and adaptability.

Being part of Ebenezer has also been a journey of self-discovery. The encouragement I've received from my colleagues and mentors has played a huge role in my personal growth I've learned so much about who I am and how to effectively handle conflicts. The communication and problem-solving skills I've gained here have enriched not just my professional life but also my personal relationships.

Looking to the future, I dream of starting my own seed company. I'm passionate about raising seeds and want to produce varieties that thrive in Matobo, benefitting the community here by building a sustainable business that not only offers quality seeds, but also educates local farmers on best practices. Beyond that, I want to mentor young women in agriculture, encouraging them to break barriers in a field that has traditionally been male-dominated. By sharing my story and experiences, I hope inspire the next generation of leaders in our community.

To Ebenezer apprentices, my advice is simple: You don't need to worry about fitting in at Ebenezer, because the mentors here genuinely care and look out for your well-being. Don't be afraid to ask for help or guidance. And take advantage of every opportunity to learn, whether through formal training or from daily interactions. Hop on the train and enjoy the ride!

