



# EBENEZER MATOBO

Happy New Year from Ebenezer Matobo! Our year got off to a super start with the continuation of some consistent rains which got the local rivers flowing and our Ebenezer dam spilling! This is great news for our current farming production as well as a wonderful resource for the upcoming dry season. We are grateful for the rain and praying for more!

The New Year has seen a new training block start for all our apprentices, who are refreshed and rejuvenated after visits to family over the Christmas season. Second years are diving into a Business Finance module in which they will be competing in groups to see who can make the most profit out of a small batch of SASSO chickens. As well as the financial lessons they will learn, this will also provide them with a great opportunity to learn more about raising SASSO birds!

Meanwhile, first year apprentices are getting familiar with the 5 pillars of agriculture (Environment, Water, Food, Health & Records) and learning to ask good questions around these pillars in the context of being a broiler farmer. For example, what kind of environment is best for my chicks? How much water will my chickens need and where will I source it?

We have also begun a new Family Night series on "Walking Everyday with Jesus" in which visiting speakers are sharing their testimonies of knowing Jesus with them as they face challenges and trials which can be common to us all. This month we loved hearing from friend of Ebenezer Gugulethu as she addressed the issue of worry and anxiety.

NEWS JANUARY 2025



# CROPPING

Good rains have continued into January which has been very good for our maize crop. However, it has also led to a disease increase in our tomato and butternut crops. While we have been busy keeping on top of our integrated pest management, we have seen a yield reduction in these crops as a result.

Further good news about the rain is that it has helped us in replenishing our water source. It has also given us good conditions for our January planting.

This month, we planted 2 hectares of tomatoes and 1 hectare each of butternut and watermelon.

Our January harvesting has included 2,140 kg of tomatoes, 400 watermelons and 513 kg of butternut. We had hoped to start harvesting green pepper but have not yet seen them fully matured.

Currently in the ground, we have 9 hectares of maize, 4 hectares of butternut, 3 hectares of tomato, 2 hectares each of watermelon and beans, and 1 hectare of onion seed.





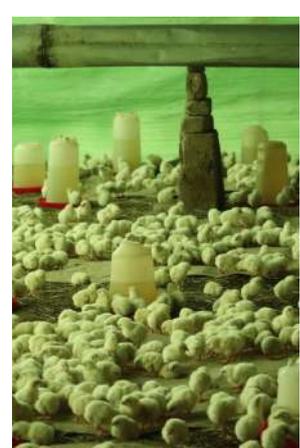
# LIVESTOCK

Our dairy team has been busy silaging our maize crop so that we have a ready supply of nutritious feed on site. We have also introduced foraging into our pastures, with a combination of lablab, sorghum and sun hemp. To visitors at Ebenezer, our pastures may look like overgrown weedy fields, but they are in fact a delicious smorgasbord of healthy food which should increase and enhance our milk production!

In January we placed 2,788 new layer birds in Layer House. This placement will continue into February, when we will also be placing birds in Layer House 3. This house has been empty for a long time, so we have also been busy preparing it for new birds.

We saw an unexpected drop in production in our young flock of layer birds this month, but we are glad to report a turnaround with lay-rates increasing again. Our older flock in layer house 4 has been close to its lay-rate target throughout the month. In total we produced 212,024 eggs.

We closed one batch of broilers in the middle of January, with a good mortality rate of 5% but a disappointing average weight of 1.87 kg per bird. Our broiler team then worked hard and fast to prepare for another batch of 5,800 birds placed at the end of the month.





# INTRODUCING...

My name is Pelon Mthombeni and I am an 18-year-old first year apprentice from Ntabazinduna, close to Bulawayo. Before enrolling at Ebenezer, I was a student at EAGLE Learning, where I gained significant confidence in my O level subjects, thanks to the support I received.

During one holiday, I attended a camp at Shalom Campsite, close to Ebenezer. It was there that I heard about Ebenezer and had an opportunity to visit the Ebenezer campus. That experience was transformative and I instantly felt a desire to join this community. I was also inspired by former Ebenezer apprentices who are thriving in agriculture and spreading the word of God in my community.

So far, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Ebenezer. Despite the early mornings, I have adapted well and made many friends. The sense of community here is incredible, and it has made my journey even more enjoyable. Cultivating crops is not new to me; I used to do that back home with my grandmother, which made the transition smoother.

At Ebenezer, I have had the chance to participate in various hands-on activities that have enhanced my practical skills. I now know a lot about different types of fertilisers and the appropriate times for their application. Additionally, I have gained valuable knowledge about growing various crops, which has enriched my understanding of agriculture. The trainers are supportive and always willing to share their knowledge, making learning engaging and enjoyable.

Looking ahead, I aspire to find work and start a poultry project in Ntabazinduna when I am finished at Ebenezer. My goal is to apply the skills that I have learnt here to create a sustainable source of income while contributing to my community. I also hope to inspire others, just as I was inspired by the former apprentices.

One of my favourite verses is Revelation 1:18, which reminds me of the strength and courage I find in my faith. It serves as a guiding light in my journey, encouraging me to persevere and strive for my goals: *"I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever!"*

JANUARY 2025

