



EBENEZER MATOBO

Don't we look smart?! A highlight for our whole staff team in April was the gift of new branded shirts and t-shirts. It's amazing how these unexpected gifts can boost our morale and affirm our pride in the vision we represent. You may also spot two refreshed faces in the middle of this crowd; it was wonderful this month to welcome back Mr and Mrs Nyams from their 4-month sabbatical in the UK! We have missed them a lot and it is a joy to have them back, sharing stories of their time away and seamlessly slotting back into life at Ebenezer.

April 10th was the deadline for applications for this year's course starting in July. This means our team has been very busy conducting preselection days with potential candidates in locations near and far. All Ebenezer applicants go through our preselection process in which we screen and interview in order to invite around 100 candidates onto one of our 3-day selection camps.

In less uplifting news this month, we were gutted to experience a burglary in our kitchen earlier on in April. An overnight theft saw us lose cooking oil, juice, rice, biscuits and mealie meal. This was a disheartening experience to say the least, especially as no culprits have been found.

On a brighter note, congratulations to staff team members, Simelinkosi and Davison who officiated their traditional marriage this month! We are delighted for them as they embark on this next chapter of their lives together and our prayer is for many years of unity together.



CROPPING

April has been a very good month in terms of harvesting. Our watermelon crop ripened sooner than expected and so far we have harvested 800 heads. Alongside this, harvesting has begun in all of our tomato fields, with a total of 58,060 kg harvested this month. We have also been seeing good yields from our green pepper crop, with 370 kg harvested in April.

As we head into the winter months, planting has decreased and this month our main planting was 2,000 green pepper plants going into our green house. These are the green peppers we are growing for seed, in partnership with Avanos Seed.

We have continued to face some irrigation challenges with repairs underway on our solar pump. This has meant more reliance on our diesel engine to pump water and a less efficient water supply to our crops.

Crops currently in the ground and under irrigation are 1 hectare of watermelon, 2.5 hectares of onion, 3 hectares each of tomato and butternut, 4 hectares of beans and 5 hectares of maize.





LIVESTOCK

Our layer houses have continued to see a rise in lay-rate throughout April which has been really pleasing. In Layer House 2 we saw a significant improvement which can be attributed to our manure belts being fixed, resulting in less stress among our birds. While Layer House 3 has also seen an increased lay rate, challenges with water pressure has caused some stress among birds; we are working fast to rectify this.

We were discouraged to discover thefts have been happening from Layer House 1. We were alerted after empty crates with feathers were found in nearby bushes; we then undertook a physical count of birds and found that we had lost 60 birds.

7 calves were born in our Dairy in April, 2 females and 5 males. As well as increasing the size of our herd, these new arrivals mean we can increase the number of cows we are milking. This month has also seen us start to feed our cows silage, thus reducing our feed costs.

We successfully closed one batch of broilers in April, hitting an average weight of 2.1 kg per bird. We then placed our largest batch since January, with 10,000 teen birds being placed in one house. These birds arrived underweight and so we have been administering immune boosters to improve health and encourage growth and weight gain.





INTRODUCING...

Hello, I am Simangaliso Ndlovu-Ncube, a 35-year-old from Mapane, in Gwanda District. My journey has been one of transformation and discovery. Before I found my way to Ebenezer, I lived with my parents, navigating the challenges many young people face in search of purpose.

My adventure began when I achieved 4 O Levels. At that moment, I felt a mix of disappointment and uncertainty. My family encouraged me to relocate to South Africa, but I hesitated. Instead, I took a leap of faith and enrolled at Ebenezer. The moment I received the application form, hope blossomed in my heart. I envisioned a future where farming and learning biblical principles could not only change my life but also impact those around me. I was overjoyed to be accepted as one of Ebenezer first apprentices back in 2007! Graduating in 2009 and becoming an Ebenezer Coach in 2011 were two significant milestones in my life. In 2018, I pursued a teaching degree and later returned to Ebenezer as a trainer, where I continue to inspire and educate young minds.

My time at Ebenezer has been enriched by interactions with a diverse array of individuals. Each person I meet brings unique stories and insights that broaden my understanding of the world. The friendships I have formed here are invaluable; they remind me of the strength found in community and the beauty of shared experiences.

Transitioning from urban life to rural living has been one of my greatest challenges. Adapting to a lifestyle where sadza is the staple food for most meals required a significant shift in mindset. Initially, I struggled with the simplicity of rural life, but over time I have learnt to appreciate the beauty in it. The experience deepened my appreciation for community, connection, and the richness of a simpler way of living.

Throughout my journey, I have discovered the importance of farming in a way that honours God. My faith is now at the forefront of everything I do, guiding my actions and decisions. This spiritual foundation has transformed not just my farming practices but my entire outlook on life. I have learned that success is not solely measured by material wealth but by the impact we have on others and the legacy we leave behind.

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