



# EBENEZER MATOBO

Well done to second year apprentice, Tricia Ndlovu, who this month took on the role of an ATTIC Chief, leading a team of participants in the ATTIC camp between 8–14<sup>th</sup> August. ATTIC stands for “A Time To Invite Christ” and is an initiative run by the Sethule Orphan Care Trust. Sethule works with churches and schools in Matabeleland, from which 12 teams of ten members are invited to a 7-day camp. The 12 teams (with competitors aged 13–17) compete in music, sports, drama, poetry and a Bible quiz. The whole event aims to glorify God, within a Christian atmosphere of love, fellowship and fun. This year’s ATTIC camp was held at Matopo high school and we are very proud of Tricia who participated as a team leader!

Huge congratulations to staff members Davison and Simelinkosi who were married on 9<sup>th</sup> August! Lots of enthusiastic, dancing apprentices were there to celebrate the day, along with the majority of our staff team and many Ebenezer graduates – making for a truly wonderful occasion.

Another highlight this month was a week-long visit from 12 young adults who are part of an 8-week discipleship program called Lose your Life at the Base Church in Bulawayo. As part of our community for the week, the team participated in lessons, worked alongside apprentices in their production areas, and led fun and games in the evenings. The apprentices thoroughly enjoyed interacting with them and there was a great deal of laughter and learning for everyone involved.

An unexpected blessing in August was the donation of chairs to Ebenezer! Each apprentice now has their own chair which they carry to lessons and other activities. This donation has greatly blessed us and given us more flexibility and freedom in how we plan and implement activities at Ebenezer!



# CROPPING

Great news from our cropping section this month, was the fact that we fixed our solar pump after many months of ongoing repairs! This is especially good news as we enter into a busy planting season – being able to irrigate our young crops with our solar pump will save money spent on diesel and hopefully provide a reliable water supply to our fields.

As winter draws to an end and summer arrives, we are busy preparing to plant. This season we are planting half of our fields with commercial crops and half with seed production, following the success of previous seed crops. We are making a concerted effort with this season's planting to maximise our use of organic fertiliser, so as to build up our soil structure.

Our apprentices have also been busy pruning pecan trees this month, in order to promote plant growth which should lead to increased production. Pruning has also been underway on our nursery trees, preparing them for being planted out next season.

This month we harvested 4,110 bunches of onion and planted 1 hectare each of tomato and watermelon.





# LIVESTOCK

Having seen some dips in our layer production last month, in August we have identified the specific bacteria causing sickness in some of our birds and have been therefore able to target treatment effectively. With most of our layer house hitting a production rate between 80 - 88%, we have seen production sky rocket in Layer House 4 from 18% on 1 August to 94% on 31 August!

Our dairy has a reduced number of cows in milk at the moment. In order to maximise milk production from these cows, we have introduced 3 milkings per day. Our dairy team has also been working to prepare land for the planting of pastures.

In August we received very pleasing results for the broiler batch which we had finished in July. The birds hit a remarkable average weight of 2.91 kg, demonstrating an exceptional growth performance. This lead to a substantial profit per bird of \$0.81.

In August we undertook a thorough cleaning and disinfection of our broiler houses and equipment, with a new batch of 6,700 birds placed on 19<sup>th</sup> August. After a steady start, we observed a drop in average weight and so we have been implementing strategies to encourage greater feed intake, aiming to promote growth an development.





# INTRODUCING...

Benhilda is one of our most recent Ebenezer graduates, completing her 2 years with us in June this year. We asked her to share her Ebenezer journey with us and to tell us what she has been up to since graduating...

My name is Benhilda Pedzisai and I am 23 years old. I grew up in Hwange with my aunt, following the death of my mother. My father lives in Binga where he works as a teacher. I am the youngest in my family and my two older sisters are both married. Before applying to Ebenezer, I had finished my studies but had nothing to do, so I was just sitting at home. An advert for Ebenezer was shared in a church group that I am part of. I decided to apply because I have loved agriculture since my childhood.

When I was invited to selection camp and saw Ebenezer for the first time, I thought I was coming for soldier training because they made us do a 5 km run on the first morning! Once I was accepted and started my apprenticeship, it was quite an experience to socialise with so many other people my age. Throughout my two years, I really enjoyed the Family Nights we had, especially when speakers from other places visited us to share about the Lord our Father.

I grew both spiritually and physically at Ebenezer. The way I live and interact with people now is very different from before because I'm now living a godly life. While at Ebenezer, it was challenging to interact with so many different personality types, but I ended up understanding these different characters.

Following graduation, I secured a job working with broiler chickens just outside of Bulawayo. In the first days I found it very challenging leaving the family I had found at Ebenezer. I thought I would never see them again, but I'm happy that we still communicate, and I'm still getting support from my Ebenezer parents. Unfortunately, where I'm staying is far from churches, so I'm not part of any church, and I'm really missing it.

Ebenezer changed my life a lot. I used to live a life without God, but now I'm living in Jesus, and Jesus lives in me. I'm now living a purpose-driven life.

