



# EBENEZER MATOBO

It has been a month of deepening faith at Ebenezer Matobo. At the beginning of the month we spent a night away together at Shalom Campsite; while there we enjoyed some excellent sessions from the Alpha series on “Who is the Holy Spirit?” and “How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?” It was good to take time together to ask questions around our faith and take steps to welcome the Holy Spirit into our lives. The trip also included our annual visit to the Shalom water slide and zip line, both of which are exhilarating experiences!

At the end of the month, we celebrated 27 baptisms of Ebenezer apprentices and graduates. Local church leaders joined us at the Ebenezer dam for a combined service, during which these young people took the public step of declaring their faith. Please pray for these new believers, that God would continue to reveal his truth to them and that they would grow deep roots in the knowledge and experience of his love.

On a different note, a big excitement for our second years in September was the annual Marketing Trip. Tying in with their business lessons, this trip exposes our apprentices to multiple markets in Bulawayo, from the vendors on street corners to high-end supermarkets and other suppliers. They also visited the Hamara Feed Mill, giving them an insight into the value chain of which Ebenezer is a part. Our second years returned to Ebenezer buzzing with everything they had seen and with lots of questions for further research!



# CROPPING

It has been an exciting month for our cropping team, as our summer planting has got underway, and it is very satisfying to see green seedlings germinating across our fields. We are grateful to have had sufficient water throughout the month, meaning our young crops have got off to a great start.

Planting this month has included a mixture of commercial crops and seed production crops. We are increasing our seed production in partnership with Avanos Seeds, following successful trials. Overall, we have planted 4 ha of butternut, 5 ha of maize, 2 ha of tomato and 1 hectare of watermelon.

As you would expect in the dry month of September, there has been no harvest this month, except for 1,100 bunches of onion.





# LIVESTOCK

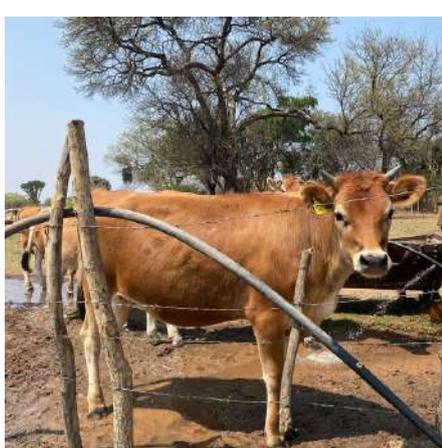
This month, we started feeding our homegrown Lucerne crop to our cows. Lucerne is high in protein and is palatable for the cows who enjoy it a lot. We have already started to see an increase in milk production as a result.

In other dairy news, we have introduced feed testing of our feed and homemade farm mixes, so that we can gain an in-depth analysis of the feed that our cows are eating. This enables us to plan our feed rations more accurately, feeding our cows according to the results we receive.

Some financial challenges in early September saw us struggle with feed availability for our layer birds. This resulted in a production drop, but we are impressed with how our birds have recovered - with birds in layer houses 1 and 4 hitting lay-rates of 94% and 96% respectively!

We are continuing to contend with a stubborn virus in Layer House 4, which has caused a lot of mortalities. Viruses cannot be treated, but we are in the process of vaccinating these birds in the hope of building their immune systems.

An outbreak of respiratory and bacteria infections caused an increase in mortality in our latest broiler flock, but the batch still finished well with an average weight of 2.49 kg per bird.





# INTRODUCING...

Tinotenda Nyanhete has been the Ebenezer Business Manager since 2021. We asked her to tell us about herself, how she came to be at Ebenezer, and what has kept her with us for these past 5 years...

"I am originally from Harare, but came to Bulawayo in 2017 to study Business Management at university. As part of my degree I undertook a year-long attachment with Hamara, a company which works closely with Ebenezer. The attachment gave me lots of practical experience in business management, from preparing budgets to managing HR to leading teams, and much more. Throughout that time, I had become aware of Ebenezer, connecting with the team lead, Renée, both through Hamara and through my church community, The Base. In fact, as part of a discipleship program run by The Base, I had visited Ebenezer in 2018 and I loved what I saw there of young people being taught the Bible alongside Agriculture and Business.

On completion of my attachment, I was offered a role at Ebenezer working under Renée and the Business Manager at that time, while I completed my degree. I liked the idea of being able to grow in my business and leadership skills while also being involved in Ebenezer. I love people and I love business, so this felt like the perfect synergy. Juggling studies and full-time work was challenging, and definitely helped to instil a good work ethic and resilience in me!

In time, I took on the Ebenezer business manager role, and I have been doing that since 2022. I have grown a lot, especially in my ability to work with different people, which is not something they teach you at university! I am only 26, so I often find myself leading or negotiating with people considerably older than me - this has taught me much about the need to balance assertiveness with a willingness to listen and learn from others.

I think one of the biggest wins I have seen over the past 4 years has been the number of people I have seen go from having zero relationship with God, to starting to testify to his goodness. My hope and drive for the future is to see Ebenezer financially self-sustaining. We have taken good steps in that direction and reaching a place of profitability is something I am pushing to see happen in the next 3 years."

