



EBENEZER MATOBO

We have had some rich interactions with old and new friends at Ebenezer this month. Our staff team have been hugely benefiting from some discipleship workshops being run by friend of Ebenezer, Sarah Gerhart. Sarah has been conducting reflective workshops around the Nature and Character of God and the Power of the Cross. Next month she will continue with us, looking at our Position & Authority in Christ and the Father Heart of God. We are often reminding ourselves that the God we know is the God we will make known, and so grounding ourselves more and more in these truths is an essential part of our discipleship and coaching training.

Some new visitors we welcomed this month were 51 students from Gwanda High School. These Agriculture students connected with us via Ebenezer graduate, Siphon Ngulube, and they were keen to see some practical implementation of the Agricultural theory they have been learning in school. The feedback we received from their visit was that they gained meaningful knowledge in both agriculture and animal science which will help them in their studies and their future careers!

Following on from their February visit, eye surgeon Dr Steve Beatty and his team returned to Ebenezer this month, this time serving 51 patients from Ebenezer and the surrounding communities. We are deeply grateful to them for their continued commitment to us and to our neighbours.



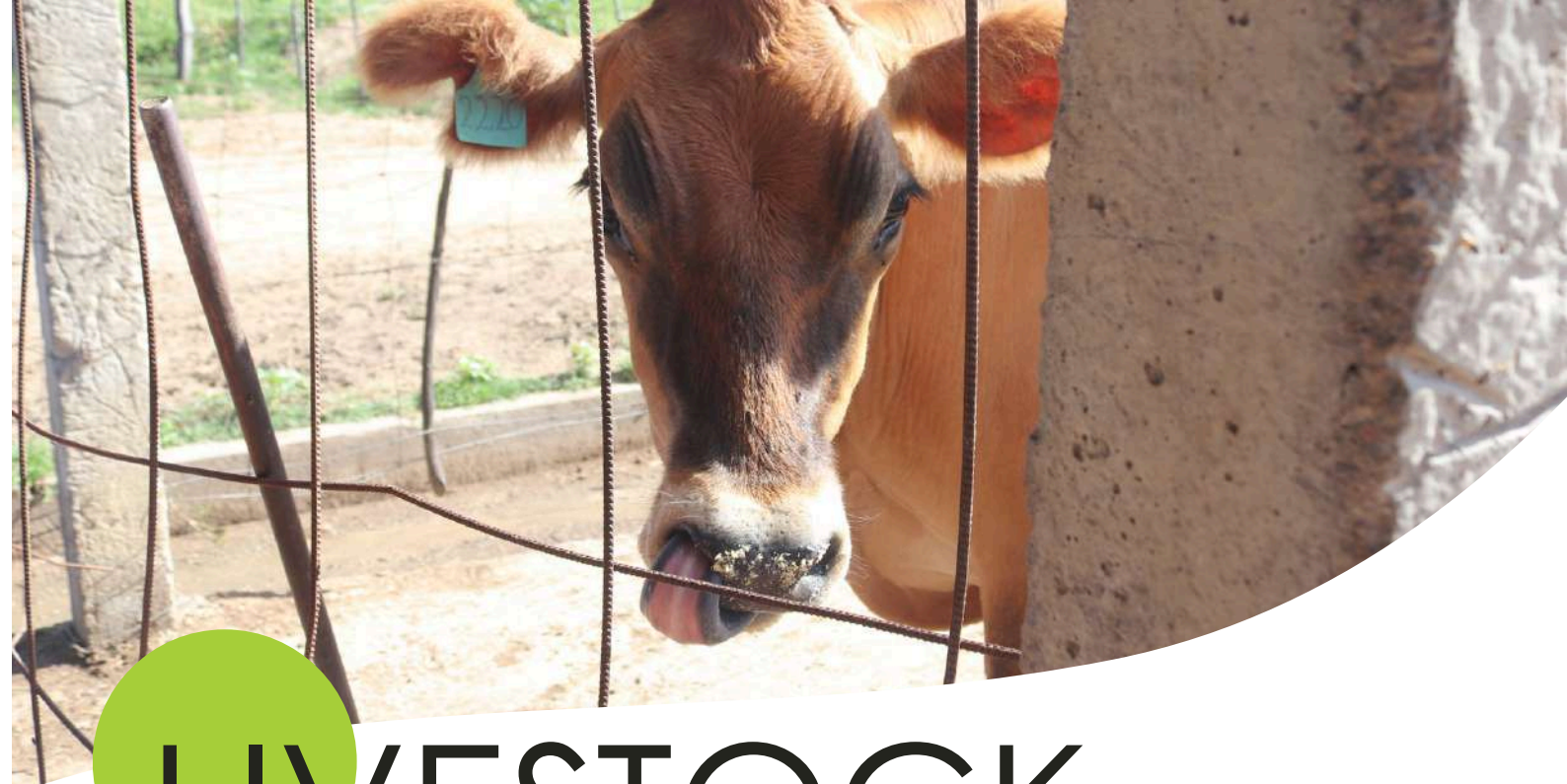
CROPPING

March has been a challenging month for our cropping teams; we received a lot of rain which led to fungal and bacterial diseases and prevented us from following our planned spraying schedules. With the land so wet, we were also unable to plant some of the crops we had planned. Our apprentices met these challenges admirably, enduring relentless wet days and working hard to keep on top of weeds and pest management in their fields.

Crops that were planted in March consisted of 2 hectares of peas, 1 hectare each of watermelon and beans, and half a hectare of onions. This takes our current crops in the ground to 28 hectares.

Despite the wet conditions, our tomatoes are still looking good with only minimal blight which is easily curable. We are also pleased to report no cases of tuta absoluta, a persistent and hard to treat pest which has become common across Zimbabwe in recent seasons.





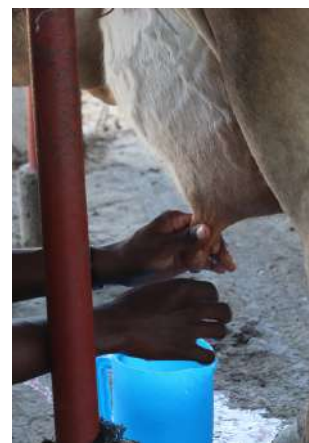
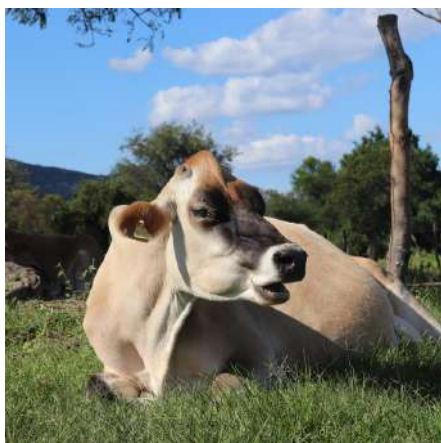
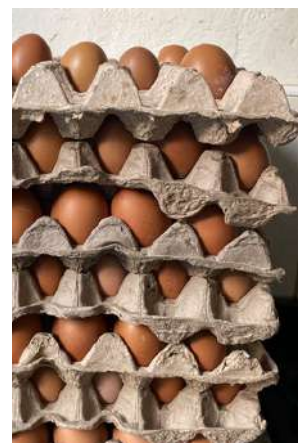
LIVESTOCK

Our broiler team closed their batch of 20,000 birds in March, with half being sold as teen birds and half being kept to maturity. Unfortunately we hit a shortage of customers for teen birds which meant we kept them longer than anticipated, reducing our profit. However, we still achieved a profit of \$0.33 / bird which was a pleasing result. Our apprentices are familiar with farming batches of 10,000 birds, so it was a good and stretching experience for them to look after this larger batch.

Our dairy herd grew this month, thanks to the birth of 2 bulls and one heifer. Muddy conditions have led to some health challenges among our cows, in particular foot rot. We have begun silaging this month, but have been hindered somewhat by the wet weather.

Our layer houses have all been continuing to exceed their lay-rate targets, despite challenges with manure belts and generators breaking, compounded with heavy rains which have made manure management even more challenging.

Our astonishing flock in layer house 1 has now reached 94 weeks and yet is still achieving a lay rate of 83%, that's 10% above target. It is not usually profitable to keep such an aged flock, but these birds are continuing to amaze us with their productivity and profitability!





INTRODUCING...

My name is Musawenkosi Mlotshwa, I am 23-years-old and come from Nkayi, where I lived with my parents and nieces/nephews before coming to Ebenezer. Growing up, I did well at school and achieved 7 O Levels. Financial challenges meant I could not continue to do A Level; this was a disappointment but something I accepted. Instead, I took further training opportunities including 2 years working as a Primary School teacher, completing a health course with the Red Cross, and studying as a Clothing and Technology Designer in 2023. In this course I achieved the prize for the highest achieving student – a sewing machine, which I used in my uncle’s grocery shop to provide garment mending services for local customers.

A mentor of mine who had been both my teacher and colleague, told me about Ebenezer and the opportunities available there. I thought to myself, “Interesting. Let me try.” I was surprised at the preselection interview to find the Maths and English tests quite simple, and I wondered what kind of place this was that asked such questions. However, on arriving at Selection Camp and being faced with a 5 km run followed by some serious weeding tasks, I began to wonder if I was up to the challenge. Despite my doubts, I was accepted! I was put in touch with some previous graduates and I was encouraged by their stories and experiences – if they could do it, what should stop me? So, I pulled up my socks and began preparing for life as an apprentice. I was excited to get going, to be that girl who can fulfil her dream at the end of this training.

I had little farming experience before Ebenezer, but it is something I have come to love. I have discovered there is a space for me in agriculture, especially dealing with animals. I have become so interested in looking after animals! There are other discoveries I have made – Ebenezer is not all about learning farming practices but it’s a place where you get to learn about how to live with others and create beautiful communities, and you get to know who Jesus is and why he deserves my worship.

