



EBENEZER MATOBO

Another May, another Selection Camp! Having shortlisted our applicants through a thorough preselection process, we enjoyed a 2-day selection camp with a group of 60 hopefuls. Through rigorous activities including interviews, weeding, manure-bagging, team-building games and a 5 km run, we were confident in offering places to 54 of those who attended. Please pray for these young people as they prepare to join us in July.

The 25th May - Africa Day - is a significant celebration across the continent and no less here at Ebenezer. As part of our celebrations this year, families prepared dances from different African nations including Zambia and DRC. We all enjoyed seeing different cultural dress styles and some excellently choreographed dances!

As we approach graduation, we are grateful for agribusinesses connected with Ebenezer for visits they have made to share employment and partnership opportunities with our second years. Having polished their interview skills in Communication lessons, our apprentices have been busy applying for positions, or planning their own enterprises.

At the end of May, many of our apprentices and staff team enjoyed attending a combined church service with three local congregations. This was a particularly joyful gathering thanks to the input of the Press On team, a group who run soccer outreach activities with children.



CROPPING

May has been an exciting month in terms of harvesting – we have sent a lot of tomato to the market where it has been receiving a good price. This is because demand has been high, and supply low, following the unseasonal rains this year. We have been additionally blessed to be tuta-free in this crop, all thanks to the hard work of our field coaches and apprentices.

Our butternut and watermelon crops have not fared so well, being adversely affected by the excessive rains. This has led to reduced harvests of both of these crops.

In total this month we harvested 52,500 kg of tomato and 9,760 kg of butternut. With winter approaching, we did not plant any crops in May.

We have begun harvesting some of our butternut crop which was grown for seed. The produce is now being stored under shade as we prepare to extract seed in June. Our greenhouse crops of green peppers (also being grown for seed) are beginning to fruit and are looking healthy.





LIVESTOCK

Layer production dipped this month, with all houses struggling to hit their lay rate targets. Challenges contributing to these changes include cold weather (alongside unseasonal heavy rain!) and broken manure belts. The exemption has been our faithful aged flock in Layer House 1, which has now hit 103 weeks and is still smashing targets with a 72% lay rate!

In our dairy, we have been pleased to welcome input from Byron King, a new assistant farm manager. We have appreciated his enthusiasm and knowledge as seek to improve our dairy. We have also welcomed back retired Quicks Team member, Malume Moxen, who has been helping us to fix our fences.

Our broilers have shown resilience and good growth this month. The batch placed in April had faced challenges with feed shortages but still hit good weights in the middle of the month when they were sent to market. Weights were ranging from 2.7 - 3 kg.

The same batch suffered from an intestinal infection outbreak in its final days. This was very unfortunate timing as it led to a spike in mortality just as birds were being sent for slaughter. This incident highlighted how easily health setbacks can erode gains made throughout the batch.





INTRODUCING...

Takudzwa Madakufa, 20, is a first year apprentice at Ebenezer, about to complete the Intermediate Course before stepping into his second year of apprenticeship on our Advanced Course.

Originally from Masvingo, Takudzwa and his two siblings were raised by their grandparents following the death of both of their parents in 2008. With no qualifications on leaving school in 2023, Takudzwa found himself working alongside his grandparents as a shopkeeper in their shop. He heard about Ebenezer from his cousin-brother who had himself been an apprentice. Facing a challenging environment at home and with little opportunity for alternative employment, Takudzwa thought agriculture could be the ladder to future success and decided to apply.

On arriving at Ebenezer, Takudzwa decided straight away that this was a good place to be. Even on day one he learnt many new things – how people could talk politely to one another and what it might mean to belong. Throughout this year he has especially enjoyed the family atmosphere of Ebenezer and the way in which coaches have treated him like a younger brother. He came with no Ndebele but was quick to learn and has found communicating with others enjoyable and easy.

The main challenge Takudzwa has faced this year has been a period of sickness, with chest pains and some heart issues. We thank God that he is fully recovered and feeling strong as he prepares for second year. Through all his experiences and studies, he has discovered some new things about himself – that he is a straightforward person who can socialise with everyone and that he has a talent to share God’s word. He loves encouraging others and is inspired by the stories of Job and Joseph, their integrity and purpose in the face of difficulties.

Looking to second year, Takudzwa is excited to improve his skills and knowledge further, to be a person who knows where he is coming from and where he is going, and to be a big brother to the new apprentices who will be joining us in July.

