



EBENEZER MATOBO

June 19th was a day of epic celebrations at Ebenezer Matobo as we graduated 43 apprentices from our Advanced Course and 50 from our 1-year Intermediate Course. Having spent weeks planning outfits and hairstyles and dance moves, our apprentices impressed us with their smart appearance and choreographed entrance on the big day. We were delighted to have parents, friends and community leaders support us with their attendance.

Of our 50 Intermediate graduates, 24 are joining us in July for the Advanced Course, along with 50 new first years. In the interim period, many staff will be taking the opportunity to take some leave, to refresh and rejuvenate before the start of our new year in mid-July.

It has been encouraging to see employment opportunities opening up for many of our graduates. 2 weeks before graduation, a group of 20 apprentices visited Parable Communities, a chicken outgrower program on the outskirts of Bulawayo, to find out more about the organisation and to interview for positions. Following graduation, a significant number of this group has landed roles with Parable. Other graduates have taken on poultry and cropping roles with Maleme farm, close to Ebenezer, while others have started their own farming enterprises at home.

We said a sad good bye to staff team member, Simelinkosi in June. Simeli has played an important role on our transformers team since she joined us in 2020. Simeli has moved to Beitbridge where her husband has taken a new role as a farm manager – we wish them all the best as they settle there.



CROPPING

June has been a milder month than anticipated, which has benefited our crops in the ground. We are grateful to have received no frost damage and the warmer weather also allowed our water system to run smoothly.

No planting took place this month, but we harvested 28,220 kg of tomatoes and some butternut seed. We extended our harvest target for tomatoes which was very pleasing.

While it has been a productive month, one challenge we have been facing is community donkeys and cattle coming into our fields and enjoying some of our crops!

Currently in the ground we have 1 ha of cabbage, 1 ha of dried maize, 1 ha of tomato and half a hectare of onion. We also have our greenhouse crops of green pepper which are being grown for seed and which are continuing to ripen nicely.





LIVESTOCK

You may remember our outstanding flock of layer birds in Layer House 1. The time finally came this month to cull this flock, having seen them smash lay-rate targets until the ripe old age of 107 weeks. Our layer apprentices are now busy cleaning and preparing Layer House 1 for a new placement of birds in July.

Lay-rates in our other houses have varied, with the flock in Layer House 3 hitting their target of 74%. This flock becomes our new aged flock, being 93 weeks and continuing to lay well. Layer House 4 has been exceeding its lay-rate target by 4% while Layer House 2 has been laying at 6% below target.

Towards the end of June, we received a new batch of 12,046 day-old broiler chicks. Many chicks were weak on arrival, resulting in an increased early mortality. Despite this early setback, the chicks gained weight pleasingly, and ended the month slightly below target weight but showing good health.

We are seeing a slow but steady increase in milk production in our dairy. This is thanks to a lot of hard work and concerted effort from our dairy team.





INTRODUCING...

In August, we will be saying good bye to Mr and Mrs Nyams, our longest standing members of staff who have been at Ebenezer Matobo since we started in 2007! This month we caught up with Mrs Nyams, to find out why she came to Ebenezer and what has kept her here for 19 years...

"I have been at Ebenezer almost 19 years. I was drawn by the vision – discipling young people and giving them skills to sustain themselves and their communities. One of my highlights has been seeing some of our apprentices graduate and then returning to join our staff team. Another highlight has been seeing other graduates start ministries in their communities and help local farmers to improve their methods. I have also seen Ebenezer grow from nothing to an amazing entity!

A sadness in 19 years has been some young people use dangerous substances and become addicted.

I have loved the consistency in the discipleship programme, the steady growth we have seen on site with buildings and housing, and the transformation we've seen in the lives of our staff component, as they have become leaders themselves.

I feel very grateful and humbled by how the Lord has sustained us thus far. I feel we have fulfilled and accomplished our calling and mission here at Ebenezer and in the community. We are also grateful for the Ebenezer leadership who have allowed us to stay even after reaching our retirement age.

I am excited to see what God has in store for us. I also look forward to some rest and new assignments. I will miss the spiritual and peaceful family environment at Ebenezer. I will miss interacting with young people and the daily discipleship we have enjoyed. I will also miss prayer walks around Ebenezer. Ebenezer has been my second home."

