



EBENEZER MATOBO

Hurray for the start of a new Ebenezer Year! It was with joy that we welcomed 43 new apprentices into the Ebenezer family on July 13th. Our new first years are an enthusiastic bunch. They had a lot of fun during Orientation Week, getting used to Ebenezer life and culture, connecting with the second years and being put into their Family groups. Since their arrival Family Nights have been special times of getting to know one another and bonding.

Following Orientation Week, our new apprentices got down to work in the Productive Learning Areas; over the coming weeks they will be rotating around 10 areas, gaining exposure and experience in all aspects of Ebenezer farming. They have also begun lessons in Bible, Business, Agriculture, Communication and Numeracy.

During the last week of July, Ebenezer hosted four FACT (Family AIDS Caring Trust) team members for four days of learning and collaboration. The visit gave us insight into FACT's community gardens in eastern Zimbabwe, while the team gained a deeper understanding of the Ebenezer model and our community partnerships. We shared practical learning around agricultural production and explored opportunities for future collaboration. It was encouraging to strengthen connections with another like-minded organisation in Zimbabwe



CROPPING

The arrival of our new apprentices has made July an exciting month in the fields. We now have more hands on deck and our second years are feeling a greater sense of leadership as they share their skills with our newcomers. There has been plenty of enthusiasm as we work to prepare land for our summer planting.

We have implemented some good systems which have improved our situation with roaming donkeys and cows. We have found ways to control them which seem to be working well.

Lower temperatures this month have delayed the planting we had planned. This means that the butternut, watermelon and tomatoes we had intended to plant this month will now go into the ground in August.

July brought the start of our cabbage harvest, with 205 heads going to market. The same is true for our onion crop, from which we have so far harvested 710 bunches. We have also been finishing the harvest of our tomato crop with a final 2,680 kg going to market.





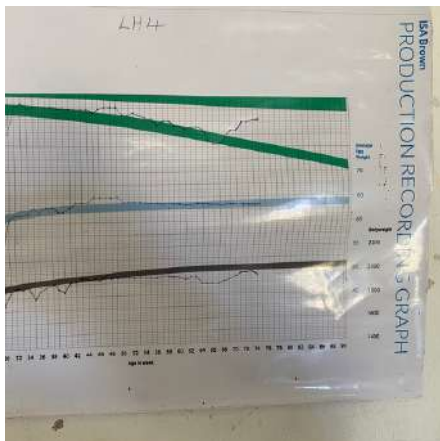
LIVESTOCK

We opened the month of July with a 1-week-old batch of broiler chicks in good health. Some feed shortages in week affected their weights and then we were hit by a virus in week 3. This increased mortality rapidly, but through good team work and co-operation we managed to contain the outbreak. Good recovery was seen over the following weeks, in fact we recorded our lowest mortality ever in week 4! By the end of the month overall flock uniformity was much improved and the batch was finishing well.

We have been working hard to fix our dairy fence this month, sending our dry cows and bulls on a little holiday to Maleme farm while we do so. Average milk production was sitting around 13 litres per cow per day in July.

Our layer team has been busy busy busy, with 3,000 new point-of-lay birds being placed in July! The birds are 18 weeks old and are already exceeding their lay-rate target by a few percent. This is excellent considering the stress of transportation. The birds are looking healthy and we have only experienced one mortality in a period of 16 days.

Our other 2 flocks are also hitting or exceeding lay-rate targets, with our Layer House flock achieving a 90% rate against a target of 81% – impressive for an aged flock of 76 weeks!





INTRODUCING...

This month we are introducing you to one of our fresh arrivals, Bongani Dube, who is only 3 weeks into his apprenticeship at Ebenezer!

"My name is Bongani Junior Dube and I am 21 years old. I grew up in Esigodini, being cared for by my grandmother. I went all the way to Form 6 in school, completing my A levels in 2025. I like studying and would have liked to go to university, but as a family we had to decide to prioritise my younger sister going to school. My passion is Media Studies and I still hope to study it one day.

My pastor told me about Ebenezer and I thought it would be a good opportunity, as I see agriculture as a powerful tool to make a living. It is not my passion but it is something I want to know more about as it can help me in my future.

At first I thought Ebenezer would be a place of learning only. On arrival, I discovered it is not only learning but doing. That's good – I am gaining new skills and getting good experience. So far, I have spent a week cropping and a week with layer chickens. Cropping has been my favourite productive area so far, because I have learnt about how plants grow, what they need, and what diseases to look out for. I also think cropping is a quicker way to make money than working with poultry.

A challenge I have faced in my first weeks at Ebenezer is praying. I am not someone who has liked praying but I am being encouraged to do so through different people. I have enjoyed business lessons which have been teaching me about budgeting. And I've learnt things about myself, too, how to pray, how to encourage others and how to interact with others.

My advice to my fellow apprentices is that if you put your mind in one place and focus, you will succeed.

