

# Harvest day: An uplifting event for producers

By Rachichi Marokane, national transformation co-ordinator, Potatoes SA

**P**otatoes SA and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) recently hosted a harvesting day in the Capricorn district. The event was hosted in Avon Village, located in the Blouberg municipal area in Limpopo. This area is part of the renowned potato belt extending to the north. The day took place at the farms of Willie Maseka and Andries Masoga. Both producers received potato production input support from DALRRD in 2023.

Amid the relatively higher summer temperatures and with the tubers being well set in the

field, producers experienced the gratifying process of harvesting potatoes. This activity not only served as a practical lesson in potato harvesting, but also instilled a deep sense of appreciation for the hard work and dedication of DALRRD in unlocking the potential of potato farming for previously disadvantaged groups. Over 300 ha were funded through a partnership with Potatoes SA over the past year.

Khula!, a service provider that offers software tools to support and expand agriculture and food businesses, attended the event. The event also featured exhibits from the Limpopo Department of

Agriculture (LDARD), Standard Bank, VKB, New Holland, and African Explosives and Chemical Industries.

## Community involvement

On this day, the true spirit of the community was palpable. The day not only celebrated the harvest but also strengthened community bonds. By actively engaging in the harvesting process, individuals gained a deeper appreciation of the hard work producers put in, and the value of fresh local produce.

Producers learnt the importance of supporting sustainable agricultural practices and promoting the local economy. Most importantly, the potato harvest day reminded the industry of the positive impact of collective action.

In general, the day provided a unique opportunity to foster collaboration between Potatoes SA and other industry role-players in developing an inclusive potato industry in Limpopo. Organising such an event and inviting stakeholders to exhibit, could potentially increase interest in potato production.

Through its experience in enticing investment in rural communities, Potatoes SA not only supports local agriculture and its economy, but also hopes to strengthen bonds and build relationships within the communities of Capricorn district. This event also promotes sustainable farming practices and provides a platform for sharing opportunities.

## A productive effort

Reflecting on this day, Potatoes SA's CEO, Willie Jacobs, and the transformation team appreciated the hard work of producers and various organisations. Potatoes SA also hosted a cooking show during



*Potato production has great significance in the rural areas of the Capricorn district, serving as a testimony to the deep-rooted connections between industry role-players and the community. Harvest days bring together industry role-players as well as local potato producers.*




Potatoes SA's transformation team conducted a cooking show during which various cultivars were tested for taste and other quality aspects.

which various cultivars were fried and boiled to demonstrate the characteristics of table and processing potatoes. The harvest

day also presented producers with the opportunity to learn about the various funding programmes offered by Potatoes SA.

LDARD went to great lengths to prepare for the day. Throughout the years, the department has been playing a pivotal role in the region through its support of developing producers in terms of inputs and extension services.

The director of DALRRD, Lethabo Rakgoale, elaborated during the event on the LDARD, DALRRD, and Potatoes SA partnership milestones which has provided alternative streams of project-related support. Masoga, on behalf of local producers, thanked the various industry stakeholders for uplifting these rural economies.

Masoga, one of the recent beneficiaries of the collaborative support, managed to plant ten ha of potatoes. The potatoes were successfully harvested and sold to the Mozambique market. 

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