

# Empowering Limpopo's producers

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

**O**verdijk Village near Bochum Township in Limpopo was the location of an impactful information day held on 20 September this year. Hosted by Khula! and Potatoes SA at Tshepho Kgopa's farm, the event aimed to provide important information and support to small-scale producers, especially those benefiting from the Small Grower Development Programme and Enterprise Development Programme facilitated by Potatoes SA.

## Key attendees and participants

The event attracted over 100 producers from the surrounding region. Representatives from Khula!, Hygrotech, AECI, and the Limpopo Department of Agriculture's extension offices were present, offering vital insights into input supply, digital platforms, and technological advancements in the agricultural sector. These organisations play a key role in helping producers understand how to access essential resources such as fertilisers, chemicals,

and production inputs, which are important for successful farming.

Rotondwa Raligidima, Sheila Makgato, and Lebo Tlomatsana of Potatoes SA assisted with exhibits and shared information on Potatoes SA's programmes. They guided producers on how to better position themselves within the industry, emphasising the importance of ongoing support and mentorship, as well as providing access to critical inputs.

## The Capricorn region

In my speech, I highlighted the significant contributions of the Capricorn region, noting its strategic importance in Potatoes SA's transformation agenda. I commended the region for its increasing share of developmental projects, made possible through collaboration with various stakeholders.

I also noted that while Potatoes SA's support, which is mainly focussed on providing seed and mentorship, may seem limited due to budget constraints, it has nonetheless laid a solid foundation for potato production in the area. We have great confidence in the cluster of producers developed by Potatoes SA, which is now attracting attention from off-takers, lenders offering credit facilities, and local companies interested in supporting corporate social investment programmes. This interest from previously overlooked segments signals a positive shift towards empowering disadvantaged producers in the district.

## Sustainable collaboration

I placed emphasis on the critical need for transparency and collaboration among all stakeholders and urged for support to be provided sustainably, ensuring that producers have long-term access to resources and opportunities. Such collaboration would ensure that the transformation

goals of Potatoes SA are met and that producers are empowered to achieve commercial success.

A major theme of the information day was to educate producers on the importance of leveraging technology and accessing input supplies. Khula!, Hygrotech, and AECI demonstrated how digital platforms and new technologies can simplify the farming process and help small-scale producers remain competitive.

These platforms offer innovative solutions that streamline the input supply chain, making it easier for producers to access fertilisers, seeds, and chemicals at the right time, thereby boosting productivity. Producers were also encouraged to engage with these platforms to improve their knowledge of the market and production cycles, which is key to ensuring they can compete in a challenging agricultural landscape.

## In conclusion

The information day at Overtake Village reinforced the vital role Potatoes SA and its partners play in supporting small-scale producers in Limpopo. Producers were provided with the tools and knowledge needed to access resources, improve their operations, and take advantage of opportunities in the agricultural sector.

In my closing remarks, I underlined the importance of transparency and sustainable collaboration to ensure the support provided is long-term and impactful. As the Capricorn region continues to expand its role in potato production, the foundation established by Potatoes SA and its partners will remain critical in advancing agricultural transformation and economic empowerment in Limpopo. 🍅

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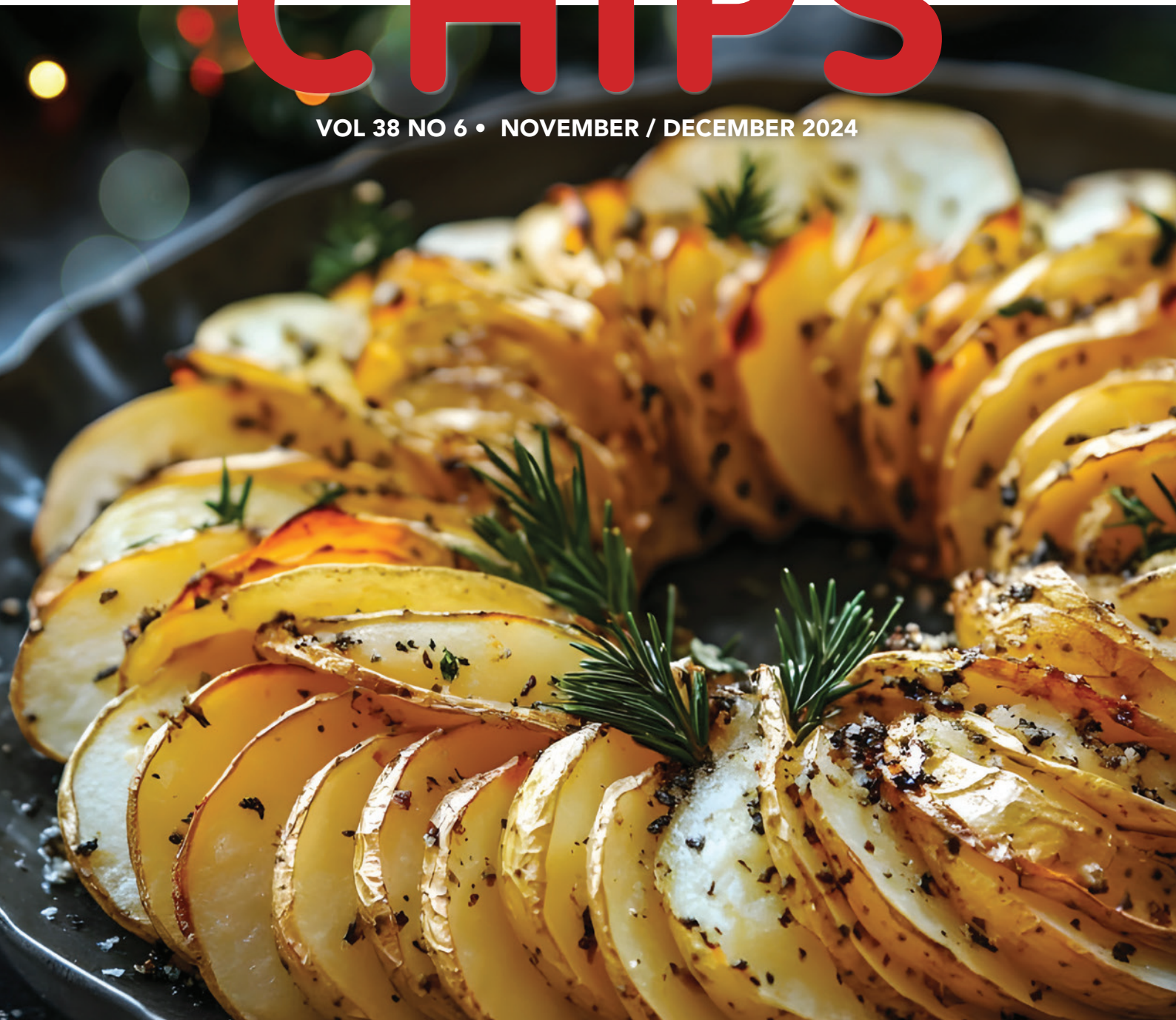
Lebo Tlomatsana, Sheila Makgato and Rotondwa Raligidima of Potatoes SA assisted with exhibits and shared information during the information day.



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