



Approach life like a producer

By Willie Jacobs, CEO, Potatoes SA

As we reached the festive season last year, South Africa's load distribution changed. It became lighter inland and heavier on the coast. I wonder if it influenced climate change ...

Other questions also popped into my mind such as:

- What, apart from the dates on a calendar, determines the start and end of things?
- What influence do calendar years have on us? I believe the school system might be blamed for the bulk of these patterns and certainly for the largest contingent of parents.
- So, if school terms did not end, if December to January was not a long school holiday, like July, how would things change?
- How will it impact our expectations, stress levels and reactions to different emotional drivers?

As we prepare ourselves as consumers for a new year, someone somewhere is planting potatoes and someone somewhere is harvesting potatoes. Several trucks are on the roads moving potatoes from one place to the next. Potatoes do not celebrate Christmas or the new year, nor do they enjoy holidays. Its job is to continue feeding the nation daily, ensuring all consumers are properly nourished.

Towards year-end, we tend to experience burnout-like symptoms as we are overworked and overstressed, our finances are under severe pressure, and we probably did not manage to achieve all of the goals

we set out to reach. Meanwhile, we have probably damaged a number of our key relationships due to our own stress.

Learn from the producer

There are so many lessons and pieces of advice that were given to overcome or at least mitigate this issue. For instance, Francois Knowles, registrar of the Agricultural Produce Agents Council or APAC, advised me to choose the largest pieces of washing to hang first so that the bin looks emptier faster. A famous United States commander said to start your morning by making your bed. Even if you then have a bad day, feeling that you've achieved nothing, you will get home to a neatly made bed and know that something was achieved.

My message to all is to approach life like a producer. The moment you harvest, the soil should already be prepared for the new crop. Something should always be in a production phase. That way there is always something to look forward to. When the crop is growing, allow time to admire the work nature is doing. Have faith that the knowledge you have developed in understanding all the activities that are out of your control, is sufficient to yield a good crop and positive outcomes.

Accept the results and plan for new successes. Never let the risk of failure be your guideline, but rather the dream of success.

After a few years of tense farming conditions, the potato industry is looking forward to good seasons. Nature is unpredictable, but we have seen that even at lower yields, the profitability of the industry is improving due to the value seen by our consumers in this superfood.

To our consumers: The price of potatoes should rise immensely before it truly becomes too expensive. It is important to note that the cost of potatoes should not be measured per bag, but per year as part of your nutritional plan. As much as our potato producers are trying to keep stock available throughout the year, it is ultimately up to nature, and we have to be sensitive to that fact.

Buy your potatoes and eat it with pride and thankfulness. Approach life the way producers handle their farms. Lessen the pressure of trying to achieve everything at once and don't postpone breaks or celebrations. Take time to appreciate the relaxing effects of nature. I trust everyone enjoyed a truly energising festive season and is ready to take on this new phase of life in smaller, more calculated steps. 🍌

Mondstuk van die Suid-Afrikaanse aartappelbedryf • Mouthpiece of the South African potato industry

CHIPS

VOL 38 NO 1 • JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2024

**CULTIVATING SOIL HEALTH:
VITAL FOR
POTATO PRODUCTION**

**World potato markets
at the end of 2023**

**'n Kykie na die
pepper ringspot-situasie**

**WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN:
ROLE OF THE SPUD
IN GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY**

**Plaagdoderresidu's en
voedselveiligheid**