

Training of emerging producers in Limpopo

By Rotondwa Raligidima, Potatoes SA

Important information regarding the July planting season was conveyed to 16 emerging producers during a training session held at the Cornerstone Boutique Hotel in Mogwadi, Limpopo on 4 and 5 July this year. Potatoes SA was appointed by the Department of Agriculture to implement these projects. The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) conducted the training, which the Department funded under its Cooperative and Enterprise Development (CED) programme.

For the past two years, Potatoes SA has collaborated with the former Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, now the Department of Agriculture, to support emerging potato producers in Limpopo. This support includes

providing production inputs, and assistance in respect of mechanisation, mentorship, and training. Sixteen projects benefited from this support during the planting season.

The two-day training offered both theoretical and practical insights into potato farming. On the first day, ARC experts presented detailed information regarding various aspects of potato production including an introduction to potato production and husbandry, and post-harvest handling.

This comprehensive session was aimed at laying a strong foundation for the producers, ensuring that they understand the scientific principles and best practices behind successful potato farming. Following the training, producers gave positive feedback and expressed their appreciation for the valuable knowledge and practical advice they received.

Practical application skills

The second day of the training focussed on practical aspects. Producers had the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained from the previous day in a hands-on environment. This session included demonstrations regarding soil preparation, fertiliser application, planting methods, and ridging. Producers showcased their understanding by practically demonstrating various techniques, such as land preparation and planting with attention to depth and spacing. By engaging in these activities, producers were able to better grasp the practicalities of potato farming and learn how to implement these practices on their farms.

The ARC commended the producers for their active participation during the training, highlighting their knowledge and passion for potato production. They also recommended that

producers form study groups to share challenges and support each other in overcoming them.

This training is a vital step towards increasing the productivity and profitability of emerging producers in the potato industry. By providing both theoretical and practical knowledge, Potatoes SA and the Department, with the support of ARC, are helping to build a sustainable future for these producers. The skills and techniques learned during this training will not only improve their current farming practices, but also contribute to the overall growth and development of the potato industry in the region.

Long-term investment

The success of this training underscores the importance of ongoing education and support for emerging producers. As Potatoes SA advances with project implementation, the groundwork done during this training will be pivotal for achieving long-term success and sustainability in potato production. It is hoped that the impact of this training will be evident in the producers' fields, as they will possess the knowledge to manage their crops from planting to harvest. Best wishes are extended to the producers for a bountiful crop and a successful harvest.

The Department of Agriculture's invaluable support and funding through the CED programme, which made this training possible, is greatly appreciated. Their commitment to the development of emerging producers and the agricultural sector will have a lasting impact on the community. 🍅



During day two of training, Sidwell Tjale from the ARC explained to producers the importance of soil preparation.

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