

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

CHIPS

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**COVER CROPS AND NEMATODE
MANAGEMENT: TOLERANCE TO
MELOIDOGYNE ENTEROLOBII**

Pesticide maximum residue
limits and market access

**WES-VRYSTAATSE KULTIVARPROEF
ONDER BESPROEING
OP BULTFONTEIN**

Tendense op
varsproduktemarkte

PSA small grower development
programme in Limpopo

PSA Transformation: Expanding the small grower development programme to Limpopo

Nomvula Xaba and Masabatha Motsoeneng

Potatoes South Africa's (PSA) transformation division has been assigned to promote the production of potatoes in rural communities as part of educating and addressing household food security. The programme is conducted by establishing small-scale demonstration trials on the identified host farms.

The programme is mainly focussed on teaching communities about simplified potato cultivation methods; pest control approaches that can be applied by individual producers to control pests, diseases and weeds; record-keeping during production; and crop monitoring.

In this month's edition of *CHIPS*, the transformation division gives feedback on new projects launched in the Limpopo region.

Limpopo projects

We have introduced six small-grower development projects in Limpopo in the Blouberg Local Municipality. The district is home to 65% of producers currently participating in PSA's Enterprise Development Programme (EDP).

The region is surrounded by villages, with community members farming vegetables and livestock on communal lands or commercial farms. The main purpose of farming in the area is income generation. During interactions with residents in Avon Village, most said they believe that potatoes are delicate crops to produce and require sufficient funds, irrigation, infrastructure and implements.



Avon Village community members busy planting.

The programme aims to educate communities about simple methods that can be incorporated by anyone who has a small patch of land, water, basic pre-planting fertilisers and handheld tools. The objective is to continue disseminating information about potato production and provide business advice that will further potato production enterprises and increase their chances of success.

Partnering for growth

We have once again collaborated with the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (LDARD). Local and provincial officials have played a significant role in assisting PSA to identify villages that can host the projects, mobilising community members to attend information sessions and providing some chemicals.

They have contributed to making the information sessions

a success and we look forward to partnering with them on future projects.

Nearby producers who are currently part of the EDP, such as Robert Chauke, Ratsetla Fresh Produce Co-operative, Tswetsi Ya bo Makgafela and Aldrin Lawrence, are contributing to these projects by availing their tractors and implements for land preparation, as well as providing technical support.

We also look forward to establishing additional partnerships with industry role-players to continue spreading information on potato production to rural and urban communities.

Information sessions

Six information sessions and the planting of demonstration trials took place at the Gemarke, Ga-Mashalane, Avon-A, Kibi, Dendron and Buisdorp villages. An average of 300 community members were reached through the programme.

Information sessions covered various topics, including the availability and selection of potato cultivars, standard fertiliser application, use and handling of chemicals, planting demonstrations, and monitoring and maintenance of crops.

Valor and Mondial potato cultivars were planted to compare yield, tolerance to blight, and

climate conditions. The size of each demonstration trial is 0.2 ha.

Making a tangible difference

Cynthia, a young woman from Gemarke, said she is grateful for the project as it has taught her a great deal about producing potatoes. She also learned how to identify tuber moth and *Tuta absoluta* in potatoes, and gained knowledge about the use of pesticides. The programme has inspired her to plant potatoes on a bigger scale.

District co-ordinator of LDARD, Mokgadi Ramoroka, remarked that the programme gave producers the opportunity to improve their farming skills and that “small-scale farmers received first-hand information from PSA, inspiring them to grow potatoes”.

Harvesting in Gemarke, Avon and Ga-Mashalane will take place from July to August, during which



An information session held at Gemarke.

information sessions will focus on identifying the differences between Valor and Mondial, harvesting methods, as well as handling and marketing potatoes after harvesting. 📍

For more information, contact Masabatha Motsoeneng at email masabatha@potatoes.co.za.



The small grower development project in Avon Village.

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