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**OOS-VRYSTAATSE STANDPROEF
ONDER AANVULLENDE
BESPROEING IN REITZ**

**THE POTATO LEAF MINER:
ORIGIN OF THE FIRST FLY
INFESTATIONS OF THE SEASON**

Tegnologiese ontwikkeling: | Effect of fungicide application | Engagement with New Era
Gebruik van QR-kodes | on potato cultivars at Cedara | farmers in Limpopo

PIDT and NAMC engage with successful New Era farmers in Limpopo

By Hanrie Greebe, Potatoes SA

Transformation is high on the agenda in the potato industry. In the Potatoes SA (PSA) Enterprise Development beneficiary pipeline, 19% of participants are in their second year, 62% in their third year and 19% in year six. On-farm mentorship support is an integral part of the Enterprise Development Programme. Industry-related training was released on DVDs in eight languages and distributed at various agriculture-related events. Business mentorship as well as accounting services support have been introduced to all farmers in the programme.

The Enterprise Development Programme of PSA has participants in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, ten farmers of which are situated in Limpopo. Three of these farmers' hectares were expanded and, apart from the PSA contribution, further infrastructure and inputs support is received from the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD).

Members of the Potato Industry Development Trust (PIDT), National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), PIDT Transformation Advisory Committee (PTAC) and PSA visited five successful New Era farmers in Limpopo on 1 and 2 December 2021. The delegation consisted of Dr Ben Pieterse, chairperson of the PIDT, Nokanyo Moyake of PIDT, Gert Bester, PTAC and PSA board member, Bonani Nyhodo, Matsobane Mpyana, Brian Makhele and Precious Yeki of the NAMC, Rodney Mbuyazi, chairperson of the PSA Transformation Committee and a

PSA board member, and Nomvula Xaba, PSA's transformation manager.

A visit to Afrikan Farms

Afrikan Farms is currently owned and managed by Sipiwe Khumalo, its financial director and Vusi Khanyile, chairperson of the board of directors. The business has 2 396 ha available in Mpumalanga which is currently utilised for grazing. Afrikan Farms in Marble Hall comprises 86 ha of which 46 ha is under irrigation, 26 ha under grazing and 12 ha is dryland.

Potatoes were produced for the first time in 2020 with a yield of 48 t/ha. After a vigorous selection process, including the compilation of a business plan which was presented to different PSA approval committees, the farm commenced its first year under

the PSA Enterprise Development Programme.

Approval was granted for 20 ha on which Mondial was planted. The crop was harvested from the third week in November until the first week in December 2021. Afrikan Farms successfully implemented the envisaged production plan under the mentorship of Alex Jandrell.

The business has been working with the following partners:

- AECI Plant Health, providing crop protection advice.
- Tiger Brands, an offtaker for white beans.
- RSA Market Agents.
- Easy Greens, which assists with washing, sorting, and packaging of potatoes.
- SABIE Farming, assisting with final land preparation, planting and harvesting of potatoes.



Gert Bester, PTAC and PSA board member, Dr Ben Pieterse, PIDT chairperson, Sipiwe Khumalo, financial director at Afrikan Farms, and Nokanyo Moyakhe of the PIDT, inspecting the last of the season's potato harvest at Afrikan Farms.



Siphiwe Khumalo, financial director of Afrikan Farms, with Gert Bester, board member of PTAC and PSA, discussing the long-term benefits of access to an on-site sorting machine.

The farm in Limpopo has a 23 ha centre pivot used to irrigate the potato crop. There are four boreholes with a pump station along with a 500 000-litre reservoir for steady water supply. Other infrastructure include farm dwellings and an office. In terms of mechanisation, the farm has three tractors with trailers, seed planters, boom sprayers, a slasher, mist blower, bale handler as well as firefighting units. To complete its farming activities, the farm also has an old model potato harvester and a branded delivery truck.

Afrikan Farms plans to expand its potato production to 30 ha on the Mpumalanga farm in 2022. To accommodate the planned expansion, the business is currently in the process of registering for more than 50 000 m³ worth of water rights per annum with the Department of Water and Sanitation. Although the business mainly focusses on the production of potatoes, some commodities such as spinach, tomatoes, lettuce, white beans, and cabbage are currently produced on the farm in Marble Hall. The vegetables are mostly sold to national fresh produce markets and local supermarkets.

The following opportunities are needed to assist Afrikan Farms in becoming a commercially viable agricultural concern:

- Access to funding for developing a packhouse.
- A potato sorting, washing, and packaging machine.
- A generator to support the irrigation schedule as disruptions are currently caused by load shedding.

- Access to funding to acquire a bigger potato planter and a potato harvesting machine.

**Kaalbult Farming:
Petrus Ratsomane**

Kaalbult Farming in Limpopo was established by the late father of Petrus Ratsomane, who inherited his father's name. Petrus is in his third year of the PSA Enterprise Development Programme. Farming activities are currently conducted on a 120 ha portion of land acquired through a permission to occupy (PTO) from the local tribal authority.

In 2021, Petrus planted 20 ha of potatoes which was harvested in October 2021 and attained an extraordinary yield of 71 t/ha. Produce was sold to the Mozambique market as well as the local national fresh produce markets at R5 300 per ton. The farm has successfully implemented its envisaged production plan under the mentorship of Alex Jandrell, VKB and Solly's Boerdery.

Kaalbult Farming has been working with the following partners:

- VKB, which provided a production loan, mentorship, offtake for sugar beans, seed contributions, fertilisers, and chemicals.
- Novon, providing crop protection advice.



Gert Bester, PTAC and PSA board member, with Petrus Ratsomane of Kaalbult Farming.

The farm currently has two 10 ha centre pivots, three equipped boreholes, a storage facility and a dwelling. In terms of mechanisation there are two tractors, a planter, potato harvester, plough, rippers, disc harrow, two-wheel trailer and a 1 000-litre boom sprayer for chemical application.

Petrus intends to purchase an additional 10 ha centre pivot and plant potatoes on 30 ha in 2022. He will be deforesting new fields on the current 120 ha land. The business is also involved in the production of other crops such as sugar beans and sweetcorn which are sold to VKB and the open market respectively.

Opportunities required that can assist Kaalbult Farming in becoming a commercially viable agricultural concern include:

- Access to funding for developing a packhouse for potato sorting, washing, and a packaging machine.
- Selling all the potatoes to national fresh produce markets.

**Mankona Farming:
Andrew Nekgotha**

Andrew Nekgotha from Mankona Farming has been involved in the production of potatoes for nine years with 2021 marking his third year in the PSA Enterprise



Mentor Alex Jandrell with Andrew Nekgotha and assistant mentor Josh Jandrell. (Photograph: Masabatha Motsoeneng)

Development Programme. Farming activities are conducted on a 120 ha portion of land acquired through a PTO from the local tribal authority.

During the 2021 harvesting season, Andrew planted 7 ha and 10 ha of potatoes. The 7 ha field was harvested in October with a yield of 65 t/ha, while the 10 ha field which was harvested from the last week of November, was anticipated to sell at an average price of R6 000/ton.

Mankona Farming has successfully implemented its envisaged production plan under the mentorship of Alex Jandrell and Phophi Raletjena, a local commercial farmer. Additional support with the development of water infrastructure, implements, a tractor, potato seed, chemicals, and fertilisers was provided by the DALRRD. Furthermore, the farm is also involved in the production of butternuts and watermelons which are sold to the open market.

To conduct his potato farming operations, Andrew has centre pivots covering 7 ha and 10 ha for irrigation. There are five boreholes with a pump station along with a 960 000-litre reservoir for steady water supply. There is a storage facility as well as a tractor, disc harrow, planter, harvester, boom sprayer, fertiliser spreader and ripper.

Andrew plans to expand his potato production to 30 ha in the

next two years. This will require the purchase of an additional 13 ha centre pivot, two additional boreholes and upgrading the electrical transformer from 50 kva to 100 kva to ensure that there is sufficient electricity.

Opportunities required that can assist Mankona Farming in becoming a commercially viable agricultural concern include:

- Access to funding for developing a packhouse for potato sorting, washing, and a packaging machine.
- Selling all the potatoes to national fresh produce markets.

**Raletjena Farming:
Phophi Raletjena**

Phophi Raletjena is a commercial producer who farms in Teerven in the Blouberg municipality of Limpopo. He has eleven years of involvement in potato production under his belt and has been participating in the PSA Enterprise Development Programme for eight years. He is now a successful commercial potato producer. Phophi is also the first New Era farmer to be awarded PSA Enterprise Development Farmer of the Year.

Farming operations are conducted on 2000 ha of land acquired from the tribal authority. During the 2021 season, Phophi



Andrew Nekgotha of Mankona Farming in his potato field. (Photograph: Masabatha Motsoeneng)

planted 80 ha potatoes of which 40 ha were planted with Mondial and yielded 68 tons/ha. The harvest was sold to Mozambican traders. The other 40 ha was planted with FL2108 under an offtake contract with Simba. A relatively low yield of 48 t/ha was realised due to frost damage.

Phophi, who provides mentorship to New Era potato farmers in the region, has been working with the following partners:

- DALRRD, which provides infrastructure, implements and machinery.
- AECL, providing operational capital.
- VKB, providing technical support on an informal basis.
- Novon, providing crop protection advice.

Phophi's enabling potato farming operations include centre pivots, water reservoirs, equipped boreholes and a packhouse with a potato sorting machine. He also owns a planter, harvesters, tractors, a ripper, a disc harrow, a boom sprayer, trailers, forklifts and an 8-ton delivery truck. He is also involved in the production of other commodities such as onions and peppadews which are sold to the open market and Miami



Nomvula Xaba, PSA's transformation manager, with Phophi Raletjena and Gert Bester, PTAC and PSA board member, at Raletjena Farming.

respectively. A mixture of beans and cow candy is planted for crop rotation and animal feed.

In terms of expansion, Phophi is planning to expand his potato production to 200 ha in the next three to four years. He has acquired 2000 ha land from the tribal authority, part of which will be used for producing certified seed which he intends to sell to local potato producers. Phophi has expanded 30 ha to 40 ha for potatoes supplied to Simba, with a further envisaged expansion of 150 ha.

Due to limited water supply and infrastructure, Phophi was

given an option by Simba to have an outgrower programme, in terms of which he can contract farmers under the PSA Enterprise Development Programme who are situated in close proximity, to also grow potatoes for Simba on his behalf.

Opportunities required that can assist Raletjena Farming in growing as a commercially viable agricultural concern, include:

- Access to affordable finance for machinery & infrastructure.
- To use the current farm, which is still owned by the government,



Seed harvesting at Raletjena Farming.

as collateral. Government has offered Phophi an option to buy the current land that he is leasing. However, he is unable to obtain financing from the banks due to the tight collateral requirements.

- Information on how to become a certified seed potato producer.

Selamoola & Sons Boerdery: Johannes Selamolela

Johannes Selamolela farms with potatoes on Selamoola & Sons Boerdery’s farm in Limpopo. For the past five years, he has been planting potatoes and in 2021 was in his third year of the PSA Enterprise Development Programme. He planted Mondial on 6.5 ha with harvesting that commenced in the early weeks of November 2021. The entire harvest was sold as ‘unwashed potatoes’ to Mozambican traders and to Soetdoring in Dendron.

The farm has successfully implemented the envisaged

production plan under the mentorship of Alex Jandrell and Wouter Van Amstel, a local commercial potato farmer and also PSA Board member. The DALRRD also supported Johannes with the development of water infrastructure, chemicals, and fertilisers. Furthermore, Novon provided him with crop protection technical advice.

To conduct his farming operation, Johannes acquired a 170 ha portion of land through a PTO from the local tribal authority. The local community has raised concerns over the expanse of grazing land taken up by his potato operations, and this is preventing Johannes from expanding his production. However, Johannes has entered into a ten-year lease agreement for a 200 ha farm in Pickum.

Infrastructure on Selamoola & Sons Boerdery consists of a 10 ha centre pivot (reduced to 6.5 ha due to lack of water), 960 000 litre



Johannes Selamolela from Selamoola & Sons Boerdery. (Photograph: Masabatha Motsoeneng)

reservoir and four boreholes. As far as mechanisation is concerned the enterprise has tractors, a maize harvester, disc harrow, chisel plough, slasher as well as a potato harvester. Johannes is also involved in the production of other commodities such as butternut, baby marrows, patty pans, green peppers and cabbage which are sold at the national fresh produce markets.

Johannes plans to expand by 10 ha in the 2022 season. He acquired a grant funding of R5 000 000 from DALRRD which he will use to purchase an additional 10 ha centre pivot, a 950 000 litre reservoir, fencing and production inputs for the 16.5 ha potato crop.

Opportunities required that can assist Raletjena Farming in growing as a commercially viable agricultural concern, include:

- Access to funding for an own packhouse with a potato sorting and washing machine.
- Access to the national fresh produce markets.
- Funding for planting and harvesting implements. 📍



Josh Jandrell, mentor assistant, Johannes Selamolela, Dr Ben Pieterse, PIDD chairperson, and Alex Jandrell, mentor.

For more information on PSA’s transformation projects, email Nomvula Xaba at nomvula@potatoes.co.za.