

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

CHIPS

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**CERES/KOUE BOKKEVELD-
KULTIVARPROEF ONDER BESPROEING:
DONKERBOS 2020/2021**

**EMPANGENI INFORMATION DAY
A SPUD-TACULAR
LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

**Die GeoFarmer-platform
maak monitering maklik**

**Stuit Alfalfa-mosaïekvirus
in sy spore**

**Potato product exports:
A twelve-month snapshot**



Empangeni information day a spud-tacular learning experience

By Louis Pretorius

Food security is one of the more important issues for Potatoes South Africa's (PSA) small farmer development projects. The project has moved far beyond food security alone and is now focussed on creating job opportunities and much-needed sources of income.

The theme of PSA's Empangeni Small Farmer Development project held early in October, centred on potatoes. Even the after-meeting lunch consisted of various potato dishes made from each cultivar, such as chips, baked potatoes, mashed potatoes and roasted potatoes. But before attendees could dig into the delicious lunch, the day kicked off with harvesting and determining the yield of various cultivars at Empangeni.

More than 50 people, most of whom are small farmers and members of PSA or the Department of Agriculture's extension offices, took part in this activity. Afterwards, everyone gathered for the main meeting, where PSA's Louis Pretorius explained the purpose and extent of the small

farmer development project. Price formation as well as supply and demand were also discussed.

Now is the time to harvest

Empangeni falls in a winter production region, which means the harvest can reach markets at a favourable time of the year (September/October).

According to Pretorius, the yield of various cultivars achieved on the 0.4 ha planting was 62.3 t/ha for Sababa, 55.8 t/ha for Mondial, 65.4 t/ha for Panamera, 51.4 t/ha for El Mundo, 46 t/ha for Connect and 44.8 t/ha Sifra.

The following activities contributed to achieving these results:

- The producer prepared the soil well, and followed the recommendations of the planting team.
- Certified seed potatoes were used, which sprouted optimally at planting.
- Fertiliser was used according to the soil sample



The day at Empangeni started with harvesting and determining the yield of various cultivars.



PSA's Louis Pretorius explaining the purpose of the small farmer development project, as well as price formation and supply and demand.

recommendations from Cedara Agricultural Training Institute for targeted production.

- Optimal irrigation was administered using rain gauges.
- The producer diligently followed the spray recommendations and correctly used all herbicides, pesticides and fungicides provided by PSA.
- Good management on behalf of the producer, who followed all recommendations and personally tended to his crop.

Taslos Magubane, an extension officer from Cedara Agricultural Training Institute, elaborated on disease management, highlighting the producer's important role in this regard. Magubane played a pivotal part in aiding the producer to achieve a favourable yield. Next, Dr Suzette Bezuidenhout, research manager at Cedara Agricultural Training Institute, spoke about the valuable contribution the research conducted by the Department of Agriculture, is making to potato production.

Marketing and quality assurance

Following Dr Bezuidenhout's discussion, Sakhile Mtembu from HelloChoice spoke about the value that HelloChoice can add by providing an additional market



Sakhile Mtembu from HelloChoice explaining the value of HelloChoice as an additional market option to small farmers.



The producer of the project, Qinisan Mzimela (front), being assisted by other small farmers to determine the yield of the project.



The post-meeting lunch consisted of various potato dishes made from each cultivar, such as chips, baked potatoes, mashed potatoes, and roasted potatoes.

option to small farmers. Marketing options often pose a challenge for these farmers, since they mostly market unwashed potatoes. Judging by the questions posed to Mtembu, producers showed great interest in this option.

Next to address the meeting was Dorothy Mbele, regional manager of Prokon KwaZulu-Natal. She explained the importance of potato quality assurance and went on to discuss the quality standards and tolerances of each class of potatoes. The producers welcomed this information as they were in the process of sorting and packaging their products.

The meeting ended with the producer of the development project, Qinisan Mzimela, thanking all role-players for investing in the knowledge and development of small farmers. 🍌

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