

TEKULIMA

NENTUTHUKO
ISSUE 17

Anele Zulu

HARNESSING HER SKILLS AT
A FORTUNE 40 PROJECT

EMBRACE THE DIGITAL ERA
-says MEC Shiba



agriculture, rural development,
land & environmental affairs
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S NOTE



Ms Z.J Shabangu

Director: Communication Services

Greetings to our farmers, all our stakeholders and the Dardlea family. Let me welcome you to our 4th edition of departmental external newsletter. I wish to take this moment and applaud the Communication Services' team who worked tirelessly to make sure that this edition is what it is today; an informative, empowering and captivating publication for our readers. Please have some time to read through.

I am happy to present to you this exciting 4th quarter edition which is the last quarter in the financial year aimed to give insight on all our activities, that the department has undertaken to improve the lives of our people throughout the province.

It has been a very busy year for the Department, we welcomed the Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development for oversight visit to our projects at Bohlabela and Ehlanzeni District respectively.

The Department is sympathising with some of our farmers who lost their loved ones, farm infrastructure, crops and livestock, due to the recent devastating floods in Ehlanzeni South and Ehlanzeni North (Bohlabela Region).

Climate Change is a reality and the Department is very concerned about it. If we do not act now, and change our behaviour towards nature, it will destroy our livelihoods. Let us all do our part and preserve the environment and be kind to it.

The Masibuyele Esibayeni programme, is a Department's livestock initiative and has become a game changer. Some farmers from across the Province have benefited from this programme. We enjoyed great coverage from various social media platforms. We heard our farmers complimenting the programme. Let us make sure that we encourage others to apply for the programme, so that they can also benefit and make a difference in their lives.

We are Turning Mpumalanga Green.

FORTUNE 40 PROJECT MAKES A DIFFERENCE



Anele Zulu (right: in blue overalls) with her counterparts working on irrigation infrastructure at the Barberton F40 project.

In spite of challenges some agricultural projects might be facing, the Barberton Fortune 40 Young Farmer Incubation Project is sustaining the momentum, impacting positively to young people and changing their lives.

33-year old Ms Anele Zulu, a University of Mpumalanga Graduate, is one of the many young people who recently benefited from both the 3-month Agricultural Assistant Practitioner, and the Fortune 40 Programmes respectively. Anele is one of the four students that were placed to work at the Barberton F40 project. Boasting a BSc in Agriculture - Plant Production, Anele is elated that she is part of the Assistant Agricultural Practitioners programme, which offered her the on-the-field practical experience, and learned a lot about spacing of plants, application of herbicides and irrigation systems.

Currently the Barberton Fortune 40 project has seven beneficiaries. The total farm size is 20 ha, however the learners are utilizing 10 ha for the production of a variety of crops like spinach, cabbage, chilies and butternut. They have a sustainable market, selling their produce to Pick 'n Pay, Galitos, Spar, Multi Save and the Government Nutrition Programme.

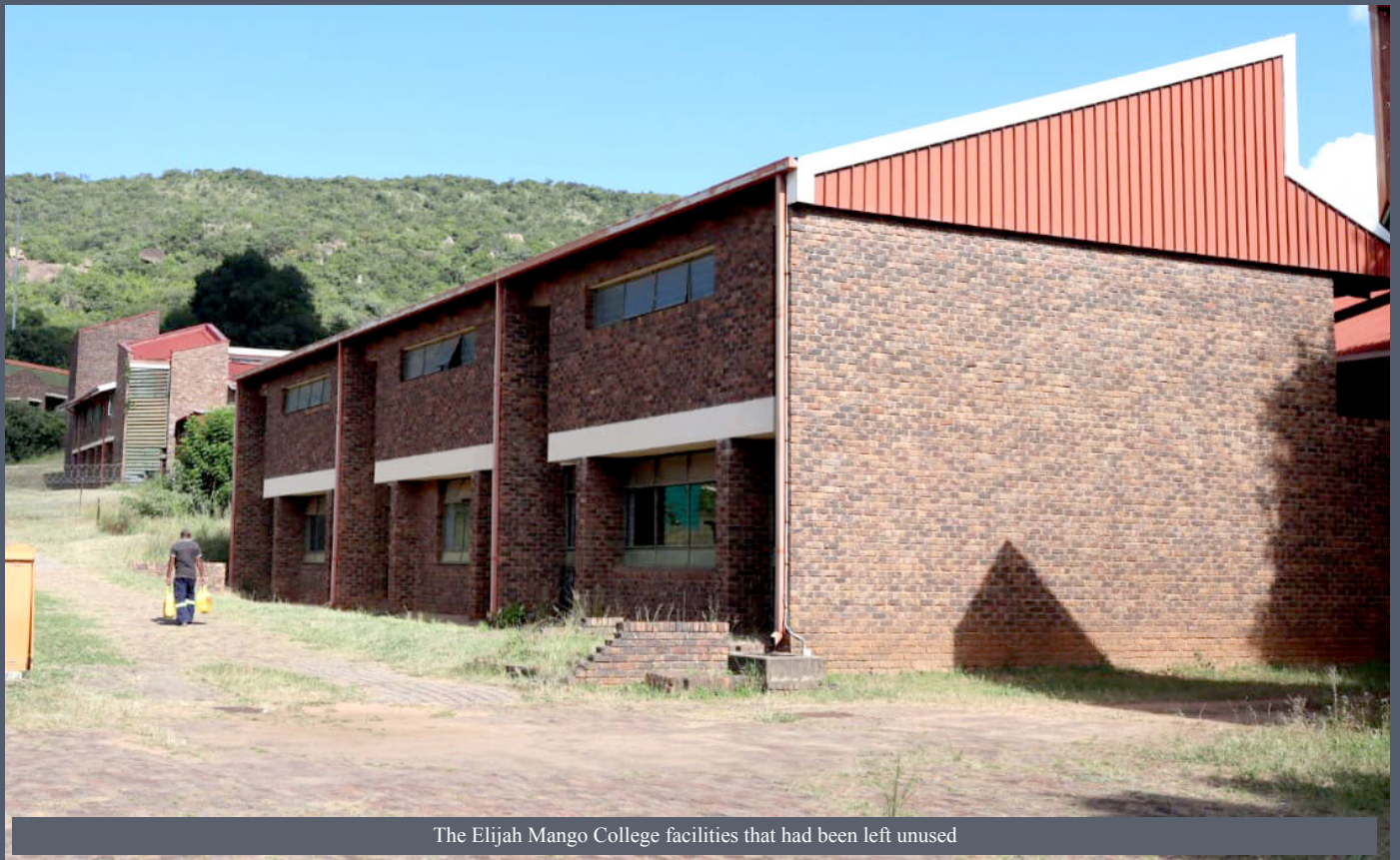


Locals pictured after buying spinach from the Baberton F40 project

The APP programme was a national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development initiative, aimed at giving farmers access to advisory and technical services. Meanwhile, the Fortune 40 Young Farmers Incubation Programme was launched in 2015, with a focus on crop and/or animal production, and AquaCulture. Many of those who were part of the first intake are currently running their own projects, thereby creating the much-needed job opportunities, and contributing to food security. They received their SETA-accredited certificates upon graduating.

“ *the Barberton Fortune 40 Young Farmer Incubation Project is sustaining the momentum, impacting positively to young people and changing their lives.* ”

COMMUNITY TO BE PART OF ELIJAH MANGO COLLEGE REFURBISHMENT



The Elijah Mango College facilities that had been left unused

The Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs has been ordered to facilitate a process that will involve all affected stakeholders in the refurbishment

of the former Elijah Mango College of Education in KaBokweni. Members of the Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Agriculture went on an oversight visit to the facility on March 23rd, to see

progress on the portion of the facility currently utilised by the DARDLEA as a Farmer Training Centre. The Department had already spent on refurbishments of the once dilapidated structure, to accommodate the Farmer Training Centre students but it has been agreed that more work needs to be done for a total refurbishment of the erstwhile college, and the process should be a community-based project.

MEC Busi Shiba suggested that reviving the facility must be a community-driven project, saying everyone should prioritise it. An Interim Project Steering Committee will be set up, led by Dr Maanda Dagada.

Elijah Mango College produced thousands of qualified teachers during the former KaNgwane Homeland, but became dilapidated due to vandalism and theft, after it was closed down.



An entrance to Elijah Mango College

“ that reviving the facility must be a community-driven project, saying everyone should prioritise it. ”

WOMEN MUST EMBRACE THE DIGITAL ERA



MEC Busi Shiba

The DARDLEA MEC Ms Busi Shiba has called on women in the Department and Agriculture sector in general to use social media responsibly, adding that social media can make or break an individual or a brand. She addressed female colleagues during a Departmental International Women's Day commemoration earlier on March 9th, held virtually under the theme: "DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality".

MEC Shiba also called on officials to take advantage of eLearning Programmes, advising them to register and study further to capacitate and improve on their qualifications while working. "Yes we must move with times, the 4th Industrial Revolution is here, which allows us to be together, apart. We live in a digital era, but let us be responsible especially on our interactions through Social Media. Let us also be proactive and make sure we do not fall victims of hacking", said MEC Shiba.

CHALLENGES AT KOLISHI FARM TO BE SORTED SOON



Kolishi Farm dwellers paying attention during a meeting with MEC Busi Shiba

DARDLEA MEC Ms Busi Shiba and HOD Mr Mfana Chunda held a meeting with dwellers of the Kolishi Farm at the Amsterdam Environmental Center on January 17th, with an aim to listen to and come upon with solutions to their plight. In the main, the farm dwellers needed Tittle Deeds, and some form of assistance from the DARDLEA on their needs for agricultural activities. MEC Shiba has promised to revisit the community with some tangible feedback soon.

The same day also saw a stop over by the DARDLEA leadership to monitor developments at the One Stop Center that is currently under construction in Mkhondo.

The Contractor, who also raised vandalism and theft as some of the challenges faced, gave a report to the MEC and HOD on progress made since their last site visit.



MEC Busi Shiba and HOD Mfana Chunda with officials and contractor at the Mkhondo One Stop Centre

FARM SCHOOL LEARNERS ENCOURAGED TO FOCUS ON THEIR STUDIES



MEC Busi Shiba flanked by Gert Sibande District Mayor and Thokozani Combined management and learners

MEC Busi Shiba spent the first day for the 2023 academic year at the Thokozani Combined School, a farm school within Ward 21 in Carolina, in the Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality. This was part of the Executive Council’s School Visits Programme, during which they assess the state of readiness as the year starts, to encourage learners and educators alike, but also to come up with interventions when they are needed.

Accompanying the MEC was the Gert Sibande District Mayor Cllr. Walter Mngomezulu and DARDLEA HOD Mr Chunda, among others. Interestingly, the learner registration for 2023 at the school was concluded in time for the commencement of teaching and learning on the first day. The DARDLEA has in the past donated garden tools and assisted the school in establishing a food garden, augmenting the school’s nutrition programme.



MEC Busi Shiba mingling with learners at Thokozani Combined School

“ to encourage learners and educators alike, but also to come up with interventions when they are needed. ”

LIVESTOCK FARMERS BENEFIT FROM MASIBUYELE ESIBAYENI

Bab' Noster Napo, a smallholder farmer with 14 years in the field from Rietfontein in the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, recently received a set of 25 Bonsmara heifers and 1 bull, thanks to his successful application to be assisted through the Masibuyele Esibayeni Livestock Development Programme.

After three consecutive years of failed attempts, Bab' Napo finally received his set, and he calls on his peers to be patient while applying, adding that their turn will definitely come. Bab' Napo and many other Masibuyele Esibayeni beneficiaries received a set of that which they applied for after their applications

underwent a rigorous qualifying process, to ensure that they meet the set criteria.

Other farmers in different municipalities across the province, received goats, sheep, cattle and pigs through the programme. New applications for the 2023/24 financial year will be called later this year around July/August.

“ *he calls on his peers to be patient while applying, adding that their turn will definitely come.* ”



Mr Noster Napo poses in front of his new set of 25 Bonsmara heifers and one bull



MOUNTAINVIEW COMMUNITY MUST KEEP THEIR ENVIRONMENT CLEAN

The Mountainview community in the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality must work together to keep their own environment clean. They must sort, manage and recycle waste. This came up during a collaboration between the DARDLEA, WasteAid, Innovate UK, Wrap, Community Bin Project and Masibambisane and the Municipality, who gathered at the local Kgantsho Primary School on January 30th, to encourage the community and learners about the benefits of recycling to both the environment and humans. Climate Change-friendly trees, the Speakboom trees, including Recycling Bins and Refuse Bags were also donated to the school.

Meanwhile, 300 refuse bags donated by Plastic SA were filled to capacity with waste during Clean-up campaign near the KwaMhlanga cemetery in the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality. Locals are encouraged to stop using the area as a dumping site. "No Dumping" signboards donated by WasteAid

have since been erected to try and stop the illegal dumping scourge.



Kgantsho Primary School learners who were part of the workshop on recycling and waste management

IPELENG – THE FIRST BLACK FEMALE VICE-PRESIDENT OF SAIAE



Ms Ipeleeng Maroo-Maseko, our Gert Sibande District-based Agricultural Engineer, continues to raise the Department's flag as she plays a pivotal role in the National Council of the South African Institute of Agricultural Engineers (SAIAE). Ipeleeng was elected as the Vice President of the 59-year-old Voluntary Association that represents Engineers in the agricultural industry, at the 210th National Council Meeting held on the 22nd of February 2023 in Johannesburg.

This makes Ipeleeng the first Black Woman to be appointed as Vice President of the Institute. In her dual role as Vice President and Chairperson of the Mpumalanga Branch, Ipeleeng is a representative on internal and public platforms, and provides leadership and strategic guidance on the operations and activities of SAIAE.



SAIAE Branch Chairpersons (L to R). G Jephthas, Western Cape; MJ Mabadi, Gauteng; KI Maroo-Maseko, Mpumalanga; N Nsele, KwaZulu-Natal; S Erasmus, Free State.

SAIAE is the association registered under the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) as the authority on Agricultural Engineering issues, with the aim of promoting the agricultural engineering profession through the dissemination of knowledge, information, and ideas in the field through meetings and publications. The Institute provides members with exposure to issues concerning the engineering profession and the latest technologies; creates a collective think tank on matters of importance to members; provides guidance to young members who want to register professionally and provides links with other organizations, government, and the public.

As a discipline, Agricultural Engineering, also known as Bioresources Engineering is the application of engineering principles to agriculture and other bio-based industries. It contains elements of civil, mechanical and electrical engineering as well as natural and environmental sciences.

Most members of SAIAE are engineers, technicians and technologists with agricultural engineering, civil engineering and mechanical engineering qualifications that are being utilized broadly in the agricultural spheres.



SAIAE Executive Team (L to R). S de Wet, Secretary-Treasurer; KI Maroo-Maseko, Vice-President; T Mavundza, President.



SAIAE Management Team (L to R). S Masikane, Administrator; S de Wet, Secretary-Treasurer; KI Maroo-Maseko, Vice-President; C Gurira, Business Manager; T Mavundza, President.

CCS VETS HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

The Compulsory Community Service Programme continues to benefit Mpumalanga livestock farmers and pet owners alike. The CCS Programme, an initiative of the national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, aims at bringing the scarce animal health and Veterinary services closer to far-flung rural communities.

25 young Veterinarians, who just completed at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute of the University of Pretoria, have been placed in State Vet Offices throughout Mpumalanga on a 12-month long contract. The Vets, who are already on the ground, are servicing all municipalities, rendering animal health services to both pets and livestock.



Compulsory Community Service Vets for Gert Sibande District State Vets offices

POTATO TRIALS YIELD EYE-OPENING RESULTS



Briefing and discussion on the cultivars and harvest

The MONDIAL potato cultivar is the best performing cultivar at the Mantjolo Greening Project outside Manzana and the Sitshudubeziwe Project in Bethal. This after the potatoes were planted late last year for trials conducted by the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs and Potatoes SA, to determine the best cultivar between SIFRA and MONDIAL in these areas of the Gert Sibande District. They were harvested in mid-February this year.

The harvest kaMantjolo was graced by the presence of Inkosi Manyovu III, who appreciated the partnership between Government, Amakhosi and the Private Sector for developing his community. Farmers who were part of the trials shared their experiences on the two cultivars.



The potatoes are harvested to determine the best cultivar

“ *the best performing cultivar at the Mantjolo Greening Project outside Manzana and the Sitshudubeziwe Project in Bethal.* ”

MP HOSTS PUBLIC SECTOR FORUM FOR EXTENSION SERVICE



The delegates also went out to visit SHEP projects in Bohlabela

The DARDLEA hosted delegates from Departments of Agriculture from all other eight provinces, for a two-day Public Sector Forum for Extension and Advisory Services in Hazyview in

February 2023. The DALRRD, PSSC, ARC and the SACNASP were part of the meeting held in Hazyview. The Forum meets quarterly to give reports on Extension Services on their respective provinces,

including progress made in implementing SHEP, which is an extension methodology that seeks to help farmers to produce according to the market demand.

The meeting also looked at how best government Departments can align service to avoid double-dipping, where one farmer continues to benefit from different state organs, while others aren't. Delegates

also visited the Mvuleni Poultry Farm in Madrass, and Mwayi Cooperative in Cork to monitor the progress on the SHEP implementation.

SACNASP as a professional body that deals with recruiting and registering all Agricultural practitioner, encouraging them to attend symposiums, workshops and conferences to help them with their grading.



Public Sector Forum for Extension and Advisory Services attendees in a group picture

SMART BOXES PERFORMING WONDERS INSIDE TUNNELS



The good quality products planted in Smart Agriculture boxes inside Tunnels



DARDLEA officials with The Presbyterian Church leadership who received Smart Boxes in Matsulu A

Testing the effectiveness of the Smart Agriculture Box inside Tunnels at the Amsterdam Environmental Centre has proven to be a fruitful exercise. This after vegetables planted about in January 2023, using the organic compost produced at the centre, looked amazingly healthy, with no pests whatsoever, a month after they were planted. This can safely lead to a conclusion that these Climate Change-friendly Boxes also produce amazing yields inside Tunnels.

Meanwhile, the department is spreading the Smart Agriculture gospel to churches, encouraging them to use whatever available space in their yards to plant and grow vegetables that will help benefit the needy in their vicinity through food security.

The Presbyterian Church in Matsulu A, and the Assemblies of God in Elukwatini near Manzana, are some of the churches that received Smart Agriculture Boxes, to assist them in producing vegetables in a Climate Change-friendly and smart way.



Aubergine planted in Smart Boxes inside tunnels

ILLEGAL DUMPING IN MATAFFIN MUST STOP!!!



Locals and government officials during a cleanup in Mataffin

Communities are urged to stop creating illegal dumping sites. The DARDLEA's Environmental Services team collaborated with the City of Mbombela Municipality and other key stakeholders to raise awareness about the benefits of preserving Wetlands and Grasslands. The awareness campaign, held in February in Mataffin outside Mbombela, also dealt with major threats that degrades Mpumalanga's wetlands and grasslands.

The event marked the commemoration of World Wetlands Day, celebrated annually on February 2nd. Activities on the day included a clean-up campaign and the planting of indigenous trees at John Mdluli Primary School and a local church. Learners and the community were encouraged to play their part in promoting a healthy ecosystem.

Stakeholders included Working on Fire (WOF), the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), the Department of Water and Sanitation, Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA) and Halls Properties.



John Mdluli Primary School learners taking part in a cleanup campaign

“

Learners and the community were encouraged to play their part in promoting a healthy ecosystem.

”

KAGISO IS A FORTUNE 40 AMBASSADOR



Potatoes planted by Kagiso Mohlala

Kagiso Mohlala from Mashishing in the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality is a good ambassador for the DARDLEA's Fortune 40 Young Farmer Incubation Programme. He was one of the 10 young aspirant farmers who were part of the Sibhizi Njani Cooperative. After spending 3 years of training, Mohlala is now flying solo; his passion and determination is paying off. He produces potatoes, Maize and dry beans.

Interestingly, Kagiso approached Two Rivers Mine for assistance and they bought him a John Deere Tractor, a Planter, 4-row Disc plough and a boom sprayer. He has two employees on a full-time basis, and two more as seasonal workers.

Launched in 2015, the Fortune 40 Program aims to equip young wanna-be farmers with mentorship and farming skills that will ensure that once they are done, they can be their own bosses and run their own successful projects.



The good quality potatoes produced at Kagiso's project

MPUMALANGA TWIN TREASURES

Wetlands and grasslands are our **water factories** and together they form a source of weather and landscape all work together to provide the services all living things depend on.



If this source of life becomes degraded or lost, the services diminish and ecosystems and the people who depend on them, become increasingly vulnerable to shocks and disturbances, such as the impacts of climate change or natural disasters like floods and droughts.

RESTORE FOR MORE

Restoring our Wetlands and Grassland will provide more :

- Water during dry times
- Lighten the impact of floods
- Create fertile soil for planting food security
- Bring back animals and plants that disappeared – tourism
- Help us to fight against Climate Change – sustainable livelihoods, communities and economy



WATER CRISIS

AWARENESS

Water is a critical input for agricultural production and plays an important role in food security

MITIGATION MEASURES FOR FLOODS CONDITIONS

 <p>Water pumps in the river basin to be lifted from the flood line to higher grounds.</p>	 <p>No application of production inputs at this stage.</p>
 <p>Close all irrigation systems.</p>	 <p>Remove all irrigation equipment from flood plains to avoid damage from flooding.</p>
 <p>Avoid planting in flood line and closer to river banks.</p>	 <p>Create water ways on access roads and contours in the field to avoid damping and silting of earth dams.</p>
 <p>Open spillways, to reduce pressure in the earth dam walls on flood uncontrolled dams.</p>	 <p>Unblock storm water drainage system.</p>
 <p>Put net to cover horticultural crops in order to reduce hailstorm effect.</p>	 <p>Remove livestock from the grazing camps to safe high lying areas and if possible provide shelter.</p>
 <p>Vaccinate livestock against high valley fever and botulism.</p>	 <p>Keep up to date with advice sent by credible institution such as - DARDLEA, SWS, IUMCA, TsGro.</p>

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