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HELP MANAGE THE SPREAD OF ORIENTAL FRUIT FLY

Rony Moremi

Did you know that a removal permit is required to move fruit such as mangoes, guavas and avocados from Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (excluding the Amajuba, uMzinyathi, uThukela and Zululand magisterial districts); the Sundays River Valley Local Municipality under the Sarah Baartman District Municipality in the Eastern Cape (only the following towns/farms: Kirkwood, Addo, Coemey and parts of Barkley Bridge) and the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality?

A removal permit can be obtained from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) Directorate: Inspection Services in terms of the Control Measures R.110 of the Agricultural Pests Act, 1983 (Act No. 36 of 1983).

The DALRRD appeals to communities, producers, farmers, hawkers and market agents not to move host fruit from quarantine areas to non-quarantine areas without a removal permit. According to the Directorate: Plant Health Early Warning System, removal permits are only issued when the Oriental fruit fly (OFF) management control measures are implemented and population levels have been reduced to acceptable levels.

January and February are peak seasons for mangoes in South Africa, and as travelers from different provinces transport bags full of fruit such as mangoes, guavas and papayas, the chances of spreading the OFF are high.

The Oriental fruit fly is an exotic fly which originated in Asia, entered South Africa in 2010, and established itself in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Hosts of the OFF are deciduous fruit such as apples, pears, peaches and nectarines; subtropical fruits such as mangoes, bananas, litchis, papayas and guavas, as well as berries, tomatoes and cucurbits.

The Directorate: Plant Health Early Warning System states that the life cycle of the Oriental fruit fly begins when a female fruit fly lays eggs into ripening fruit of a host plant such as mangoes. The eggs hatch into larvae that feed on the inside of these fruit, causing premature ripening and rotting of the fruit. As the fruit ripens and rots, it falls to the ground and the larvae crawl out to pupate in the soil.

The department regularly monitors the OFF on a monthly basis by placing fruit fly monitoring traps that are determined by the number of fruit flies collected in the traps in an area per day, week, or month. According to the Directorate: Plant Health Early Warning System, if the number of male fruit flies detected in a methyl eugenol-baited trap exceeds ten flies per trap per month, additional measures must be applied to manage the fruit flies. Furthermore, if fruit fly numbers are 12 per trap per week, removal of the produce from a fruit fly-free area may not be allowed.

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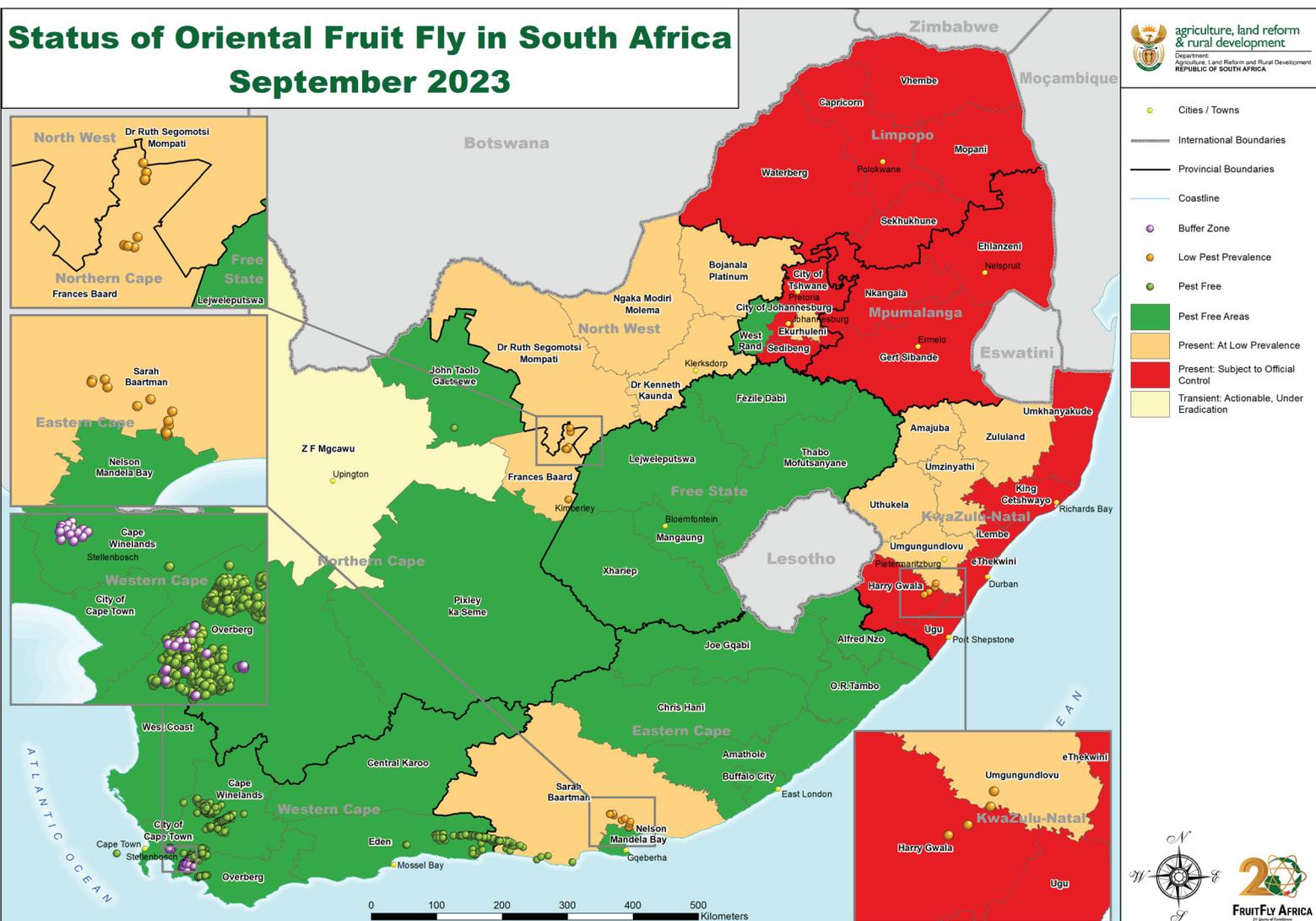
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The department is advising communities, farmers, producers and market agents to practice good orchard and field sanitation by regularly disposing infested fruit (rotten fruit that has dropped to the ground) so that the fruit fly larvae cannot survive, pupate and develop into adult flies. Disposing rotten or infested fruit can be done through the following techniques: solarisation (placing rotten or infested fruit in a refuse bag and exposing the refuse bag to the sun for at least three days, or seven days if temperatures are below 30 °C, or by placing the refuse bag in a freezer for two days); crushing infested fruit to destroy larvae inside the fruit or burying infested fruit half a metre beneath the soil. In addition, the community can also place four MAT blocks per hectare on their land and conduct bait spraying to reduce the population of OFF.



Oriental fruit fly trapped in a yellow bucket.

Status of Oriental Fruit Fly in South Africa September 2023



A map indicating the status of oriental fruit fly in South Africa.

FALL ARMYWORM , A PEST THAT INSTILLS FEAR IN SA'S GRAIN FARMERS



Fall armyworm larvae damage crops through defoliation, leaving the crops with a ragged and torn-up appearance.



FAW moths caught in a trap placed in a maize field.

Ndivhuwo Thenga

South Africa's grain farmers have been planting their summer crops since the start of South Africa's 2023/24 summer crop production season in anticipation of a good harvest. A good harvest cannot be guaranteed because of threats from adverse weather events and invasive pests including the Fall armyworm (FAW). According to crop estimates published in November 2023 by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development's Crop Estimates Committee, the size of the expected commercial maize crop remained unchanged at 16,395 million tons. The area estimates for maize was 2,586 million ha and the expected yield was 6,34 t/ha. The estimated maize crop was 5,98% or 925 225 tons higher than the 2022 crop.

The department advises grain farmers to practise good integrated pest management practices for effective control of the FAW by handpicking and destroying egg masses and young caterpillars found on leaves. It is recommended to use registered agrochemicals and also to rotate and change chemicals to prevent FAW building resistance. The manufacturers recommends that the dosages and concentrations should be followed strictly for effective control.

The FAW is regulated in terms of the Agricultural Pests Act, 1983 (Act No. 36 of 1983), Regulation R.449 of 26 May 2017. According to this regulation, every land user in the Republic shall immediately notify the executive officer and/or authority of any occurrence or suspected occurrence of the FAW.

Fall armyworm, *Spodoptera frugiperda*, is a polyphagous insect pest of more than 80 plant species, causing damage to economically important cultivated cereals such as maize, sorghum and vegetable crops and cotton. FAW is a moth native to the Americas, and it only started appearing in Africa in 2016. Maize is one of the most significant staple foods to many African communities including South Africa and over 200 million people in

Africa depend on it and its by-products for food security. The field crops that are often damaged by the FAW include barley, oats, soya beans, tobacco and wheat. FAW primarily causes damage by feeding on both vegetative and reproductive parts of the host plant. Fall armyworm larvae damage crops through defoliation leaving the crop with a ragged and torn-up appearance.

Compared to other pests, the FAW causes more damage to maize plants than other crops falling within the same species present in Africa. It is difficult to control Fall armyworm once the population is high. It consumes all stages of maize development, mostly the whorl of young plants until 45 days old.

In South Africa, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) confirmed the presence of *S. frugiperda* in February 2017 by positive identification of caterpillars and adult moths, and it was also published on the International Plant Protection Convention's (IPPC) portal in terms of South Africa's international pest reporting obligations. Its presence was confirmed in Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and Eastern Cape. FAW is still new to African countries and, as a result, natural enemies are still rare for biological control.

This pest poses a serious economic risk to maize farmers in South Africa by causing direct damage to maize crops resulting in major yield losses. In South Africa, the production of maize contributes the biggest component within grains. About 43% of maize production is for white maize and 57% is for yellow maize. Free State and North West are the main producers of maize, contributing 60% to both white and yellow maize. Detection in the pest-free areas (Northern Cape and Western Cape) should be reported to the DALRRD or executive officers. International trade could also be impacted by FAW. Trade also carries the risk of introducing pests to countries where they are not present yet.

PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO GROW VEGETABLES IN THEIR BACKYARDS



One of the community members raising her concerns during the Presidential Imbizo in Welkom.



President Cyril Ramaphosa at the 11th Presidential Imbizo in Welkom.

Samuel Kgatla

President Cyril Ramaphosa encouraged residents in Lejweleputswa District Municipality in Free State to grow vegetables in their backyard gardens. President Ramaphosa said this during the District Development Model (DDM) Presidential Imbizo held at Kopano Indoor Sports Centre in Thabong, Welkom on 7 December 2023. The Presidential Imbizo is an interactive platform that gives communities an opportunity to engage and interact with the president, ministers, deputy ministers and the provincial and local government's leadership.

The purpose of the presidential visit was to assess progress on commitments made and report on progress achieved by government after the first presidential visit. The first presidential engagement with communities and stakeholders in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality was on 9 April 2022.

The president said because the price of food continues to rise, people could alleviate this by planting vegetables in their backyard gardens. "Agriculture is a haven and the most powerful tool for our communities. You do not always need clean water to irrigate your vegetables. Let us use our hands to grow fresh vegetables. Imagine if all of us had gardens at home," he said.

Prior to the Presidential Imbizo, deputy ministers for Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Zoleka Capa and Mr Mcebisi Skwatsha embarked on pre-Imbizo build-up programmes across the district. The deputy ministers handed over agricultural facilities and equipment to the Zastron Farmer Production Unit (FPSU) and had engagements with organised farmer associations and Communal Properties Associations (CPAs) including the handing over of a title deed to the Dabula Manzi CPA.

The Imbizo under the theme "Leave No One Behind" gave the leadership in all the three spheres of government an opportunity to provide an update on the progress made since the last Presidential Imbizo at Mangaung in the province. The DDM also aims to intensify the delivery of services, promote social cohesion, and advance the developmental state agenda in line with the National Development

Plan and the Growth and Development Strategies of the province. More than 50 community members raised their concerns with the president, which were duly captured by the respective government officials in attendance for investigations and finalisation.



Deputy Minister Zoleka Capa was one of the attendees at the Presidential Imbizo in Welkom.



Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha in Welkom during the DDM Presidential Imbizo.

AFRICAN DELEGATES SHARE EXPERTISE ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS



Delegates who attended the 28th Session of AFCAS.

Samuel Kgatla

African delegates converged at Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg to share expertise on key issues related to statistical capacity development on the continent during the 28th Session of the African Commission of Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS), which was held from 4 to 8 November 2023 in Gauteng. AFCAS is a platform for the sharing of ideas on the state of food and agricultural statistics in Africa. This bi-annual event was jointly hosted by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD).

The theme for the 2023 AFCAS was, “Leveraging data and statistics for agrifood systems transformation in Africa”. The 27th Session of AFCAS was held virtually by Senegal from 15 to 18 November 2021 due to COVID 19. AFCAS brings together senior statistics officials from FAO member countries in Africa who are responsible for the development of agricultural statistics in their respective countries. Attendees had an opportunity to review and exchange ideas on the state of food and agricultural statistics on the continent and advised member countries on the development of their agricultural statistical systems. Furthermore, delegates also discussed progress achieved with the initiative and presented efforts to promote the use of data by institutions that design and implement agricultural policies.

During the opening address, Deputy Director-General: Agricultural Production, Biosecurity and Disaster Management, Mr Dipepeneng Serage, welcomed the delegates and said that South Africa was excited about hosting the 28th Session of the AFCAS. “I am always fascinated by how agricultural statistics give perspectives and details of the sector’s performance. DALRRD values the significant role of quality statistics in informing decisions

on planning and policy formulation and monitoring thereof. We also appreciate the role Stats SA plays in coordinating and producing agricultural statistics. The collaboration between Stats SA and the department is amply demonstrated by co-hosting the 28th AFCAS,” he said on behalf of Minister Thoko Didiza.

FAO representative in South Africa, Dr Babagana Ahmadu, thanked all the stakeholders involved in hosting the successful 28th Session of AFCAS. “We really appreciate the government of South Africa for their hospitality. The production of quality agricultural data and information at the global level depends primarily on the capacity of countries to produce them. This commission was established to measure progress made by countries on agricultural statistics. Agriculture requires meticulous planning, informed decision making and sustainable practices to ensure food security and economic prosperity,” Dr Ahmadu concluded.



From the left: DDG Serage, DDG Komape and FAO Rep Dr Ahmadu.

WORLD SOIL DAY HELPS RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THIS LIFE-GIVING RESOURCE



South Africa is also facing extreme weather conditions that range from extreme heat to flooding—making the preservation of our soil all the more important.

Mercia Smith

World Soil Day, annually celebrated on 5 December, was held at the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) Institute for Soil, Climate and Water in Arcadia, Pretoria, on 5 December 2023. This was to raise awareness about this life-giving resource from which our food grows.

The theme for World Soil Day 2023 was soil: where food begins. According to Mr Dipepeneng Serage, Deputy Director-General (DDG): Agriculture, Biosecurity and Natural Resources Management, people underestimate the importance of this natural resource although statistics clearly illustrate the link between soil health, food security and climate change.

“Some aspects of the value of soil cannot be expressed in numbers. For instance, the billions of bacteria that live in soils are crucial to the development of antibiotics and other medicines. Healthy soils absorb and purify water and regulate the impact of excess rainfall by preventing floods. As climate change causes increasingly erratic rainfall patterns, the ecosystem will only become more important,” said DDG Serage as he further emphasised the importance of soil in sustaining human livelihood.

Mr Stefan van Zyl from Syngenta Seedcare South Africa added that “Soil health matters a great deal. The reality that the 10 to 30

cm of topsoil that sustains our ability to grow food could run out in just 60 years is a call to action that not a single person or a company can afford to ignore. The key to protecting and restoring soil health is a holistic approach. In agriculture, the problem and the solution lie in what we plant and when, and the cultivation practices used. Far from roots just taking from the soil, the relationship between the two is highly symbiotic. Healthy soils enable and support root systems and vice versa. In combination, healthy soils and healthy root systems result in better yields, bringing us closer to the goal of producing more food with less inputs,” he concluded.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT SOIL

- Soil is the planet’s second-largest carbon store.
- Soils supply 15 of the 18 naturally occurring chemical elements essential to plants.
- 25% of the planet’s biodiversity is found in its soils.
- One teaspoon of soil can contain more living organisms than there are people on the planet.
- It takes more than 1 000 years to grow 1 cm of soil.

DM CAPA LAUNCHES ZASTRON FARMER PRODUCTION SUPPORT UNIT IN THE XHARIEP DISTRICT, FREE STATE



Tractors forming part of equipment being leased to farmers at the Zastron Farmer Production Support Unit (FPSU).



Training room and gathering facilities.



Zastron Farmer Production Support Unit storage facilities and some of the machinery being leased.

Keitumetse Moticoe

Deputy Minister Zoleka Capa launched the Zastron Farmer Production Support Unit (FPSU) in the Xhariep District as part of build-up activities towards the District Development Model (DDM) Presidential Imbizo that took place in Welkom on 5 December 2023.

The Zastron FPSU is a rural outreach and capacity building unit that links farmers with markets. The broad tasks of the FPSU include some storage facilities, a processing hub for the local market and extension services, including mechanisation. The FPSU is located at the beginning of the agricultural value chain and facilitates access to inputs, services and facilities for the benefit of the small-scale and emerging farmers.

The FPSU is located just 2 km outside Zastron, a small agricultural town that is about 30 km from the Lesotho border, within the Mohokare Local Municipality. Prioritised commodities for the FPSU are venison, aquaculture, red meat and wool production. Part of the enterprise support includes 26 bulls, seeds and fertilisers procured for 10 primary cooperatives while capacity has been provided for FPSU members.

Addressing representatives of the 14 primary cooperatives that boast about 105 registered farmers, Deputy Minister Capa said she was excited with the amount of work done by the province. She encouraged the farmers to seize export opportunities that the department is unlocking in the country with countries such as China, while flagging her recent excursion to China with Deputy President Paul Mashatile.

"We agreed that approved beef, soya and grains must go to China. We want their money and they want our food," said Capa to the farmers during engagements.

Talking to the media in the courtyard of the centre under favourable sunny weather conditions, Capa added that, "The centre will be used by farmers in the area, and it has training facilities, equipment and a big yard to store our equipment. We are glad that the president will get a report on the work that has been done in the province. We will continue to look for resources to enable the farmers to grow and for the facility to become a great exporting centre for this part of the country.

We took time to explain the process of our engagements in China, and those who want to import beef, grain and deciduous fruits should be able to do so. Now, we need to strengthen production while taking into considering factors such as disasters and weather conditions."

Ms Nomathemba Tyokolo of Tshwaraganang Farming Cooperative said not only was their cooperative able to borrow equipment from the FPSU, but it had also been appointed as an administrator at the centre.

"I have also benefited from the FPSU by being hired as an administrator and helping with renting out of farming equipment, which has come as a great relief for farmers in the area. They are now able to hire equipment such as tractors, rippers, ploughers and trailers at a reasonable rate," Tyokolo said.

Mr Collen Pheza of Phahamang Cooperative said the centre has been a sigh of relief for local farmers and their cooperatives. "We did not have implements nearer to us because they were far and we had to travel to Bloemfontein, now they are accessible to us as they are in Zastron," explained Pheza.

AN ALL-WOMEN COOPERATIVE THRIVES IN NCISE VILLAGE OUTSIDE MTHATHA



Kholeka Maliphane, director of Ikamva le Ncise Poultry Co-operative.



Ikamva le Ncise is gearing up to bridge the gap and produce more eggs at a lower price.

Thabile Mehlomakhulu and Innocent Mhlanga

“Good morning, ladies” This is how Kholeka Maliphane fondly greeted the chicken layers at Ikamva le Ncise Poultry, an all-women cooperative based outside Mthatha. The cooperative consists of five women members under the stewardship of Kholeka Maliphane, who serves as the director.

This cooperative is steadily reaching its mandate, and is producing about 600 eggs per day delivered from 800 layers, with the stock sold to local hawkers, surrounding schools and confectionaries.

Kholeka Maliphane praised the department’s Cooperatives and Enterprise Development programme, which funded the project to the tune of R1 425 116.80 and provided 1 000 layers, cages, feeds and a scale. She admits that avian flu has caused major disruptions in the poultry industry, however, she says it motivated her and her team to be extra cautious and adhere to strict safety measures such as sanitising the entire production area to prevent foreign viruses that may lead to fatalities of their layers.

“We are intending to expand the project; therefore, we would need more land for more production, and we also need to deal with the challenges posed by climate change as our layers need water, which sometimes is not available.

With the shortage of eggs throughout the country, Ikamva le Ncise is gearing up to bridge that gap and produce more eggs at a lesser price for its markets and every potential buyer.

Acting Chief Director in Eastern Cape Provincial Shared Services Centre, Mr Phakamisa Mgedezi, commended and praised the good work that the all-women project was doing, especially from the rural area like Mthatha where they are based,

“As a department, we would like to appreciate the opportunity given to us by the farmers and project owners to showcase the good work that you are doing in your area, and thank the media for the platform to showcase the good work that the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is doing in the country as a whole, I would also add that I’m impressed with the way the project leaders acclimatised to the new era of doing things technologically, because every time we walk throughout the farm, we are encouraged to sanitise our feet so that we don’t contaminate the animals, that shows the understanding of biosecurity.”

He concluded by encouraging farmers to work harder and never stop asking for assistance from the government, in whatever shape or form, as what is happening on this farm should be enough motivation to other rural women and farmers in general.



Media and other stakeholders during the project walkabout.

FAMILY AFFAIR FOR FATHER AND DAUGHTER VENTURING INTO SOYA BEAN FARMING



Father and daughter showing off the 200 ha of land where soya bean is planted.

“Farming is not a “smooth ride”, it is difficult, and you must have character to overcome all obstacles. If you do not have passion for farming, do not do it”

One are the days when only sons were expected to follow their fathers’ footsteps by taking over family farming operations. While other families usually look outside for assistance to run their farms, Robias Tsele trusted his daughter, Mercia Tsele, to successfully run the family farm. This father and daughter have proven that even daughters can successfully venture into farming.

They grow soya beans in Devon, Gauteng. According to Robias, soya beans have proven to be one of the lucrative crops in the farming business. He is part of the Yeleti Grain Farmers Association in Devon, the association that looks after the interest of farmers and assists them in resolving any challenges that they come across in the area.

Before he became a farmer, Robias was a regional manager for one of the big banks in the country, while his daughter has a certificate in Early Childhood Development (ECD) and was employed at Eugene Marais Hospital as a hostess.

The family plants soya beans on 200 ha. Mr Tsele has a contract with Tiger Brands for supplying soya beans. On odd days, Mercia sells vegetables to the community.

Matsepo Malatswane

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has assisted the farm with funding over the years and will provide mechanisation and inputs in 2024. The South African Grain Farmers Association (SAGRA) will provide mentorship, which will start in the next planting season, the department will also fund the first year’s planting season, then for the next five years, mentoring will be conducted by SAGRA to get the farm into a stable environment.

Some of the challenges raised included limited underground water. DALRRD has since assisted with a borehole owing to the challenge of extracting water from the ground.



Mr Tsele and Mercia Tsele next to the tractor funded by the department.

10 000 KM WALK TO SAVE SOIL

Mercia Smith

Businessman and Save Soil ambassador and CEO of Eco Africa Energy, Tseke Nkadimeng, embarked on a walk across South Africa to raise awareness about the Save Soil initiative. The Save Soil initiative is a global movement launched by Sadhguru to address the soil crisis by bringing people from around the world together to stand up for soil health and supporting leaders of all nations to institute national policies and actions toward increasing the organic content in cultivable soil.

Tseke walked together with former MK military veteran, Parker Mamabolo. Their journey officially kicked off on Wednesday, 27 July 2022 in Dullstroom, Mpumalanga, and ended in Johannesburg on 1 April 2023. He completed the walk after 250 days and an epic 10 000 km Save Soil walking target. At each stop, after covering approximately 40 km, they talked to communities about the Save Soil movement and asked for signatures for a pledge. This pledge was for information purposes as they neither took financial donations nor solicited financial support during the journey.

The sole aim was to inform citizens about the degrading condition of our soil and Save Soil activities. "We also met influential leaders including the kings, chiefs and government officials in each region. We will, however, need governmental support in trying to spread the "Save Soil" message and we hope decision makers, specifically in the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, will take heed of the problems that lie ahead should no action be taken," Tseke said.

"Soil, which is part of the basis of life on this planet, is in global danger of desertification. Desertification is characterised by soil having insufficient organic content, We need a minimum of 3% to 6% to call agricultural soil healthy (enough to keep microbes in soil on a survival diet). Lack of organic content in soil results in lack of nutrition in food, thereby resulting in malnutrition," lamented Tseke.



Tseke Nkadimeng walked 10 000 km across South Africa to raise awareness on the #SaveSoil movement.

NARYSEC PROGRAMME GIVES HOPE TO RURAL YOUTH

Mphahlela Rammutla



Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha handing over trophies to participants during a pass-out parade at Saldanha Bay Naval Base.



Participants saluting their seniors during the pass-out parade.

A new graduate of the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) programme, Molebogeng Maweni from Eastern Cape, has hailed the youth programme as a discovered missing link to empower rural youth living with disabilities.

Maweni is one of the 823 NARYSEC programme participants who graduated under the National Youth Leadership Development Programme Pass-Out Parade held at the Dunnottar Military Base in Nigel, Gauteng.

The excited Maweni, who lives with a physical disability sustained after a motor vehicle accident encountered in 2006, bagged two awards, namely, the Best Academic Performance and Best Overall Participant. She said that when she joined the programme, the aim was to test her limits. "After this, I am going to pursue the automotive engineering space. When I joined the programme, I did not want the disability to define me; with that approach it was easy to infiltrate the military space," said Maweni.

The pass-out parade was hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development in partnership with the Department of Defence as part of their long-term vision to support and capacitate rural communities with specific focus on upliftment of youth, particularly females, so that they can meaningfully participate in the rural economy.

Addressing the participants, parents and officials of the departments, the acting chief director of the NARYSEC programme, Neo Mashaba, commended the participants for their resilience, focus and determination to see their graduation day as the future looked bleak before they were enrolled into the programme.

Mashaba indicated that his department would be implementing the newly revised policy surrounding the programme. "The revised NARYSEC policy that was approved in March 2020 is also aligned to the District Development Model, which aims to accelerate aligned integrated service delivery using a single development plan. The Skills Development Programme is aligned to economic opportunities in each district. In terms of the revised NARYSEC programme, we have identified the following outcomes from the programme: young people who are economically active in their rural spaces. We also want them to have their enterprises which are youth-led," said Mashaba.

The youth that are graduating from NARYSEC were trained by the Department of Defence in partnership with the National School of Government, the National Youth Development Agency, and the Road Traffic Management Corporation. These youth people were recruited from various districts and municipalities across all the provinces, following a prescribed selection criterion.

In conclusion, Mashaba highlighted that the department strived to develop young, vibrant, disciplined and patriotic leaders who can evoke change and make meaningful contributions to their communities through NARYSEC.

Cont.



NARYSEC participants demonstrating their sailing skills during a rescue mission.



NARYSEC participants following the lead of the instructor.



NARYSEC participant releasing green smoke to signal that a rescue mission was successful.

NARYSEC PROGRAMME PARTNERS WITH STAKEHOLDERS FOR GRADUATES' PLACEMENT

Mphahlela Rammutla



Ms Moleboheng Maweni Ntsika receiving the Best Academic Performance and Best Overall Participant awards during the National Youth Leadership Development Programme pass-out parade.

The Deputy Director-General: Rural Development, Ms Thandi Moyo, indicated that the programme provides almost everything ranging from uniforms, food and shelter during the training. She further said that her department has sought various exit strategies that enable the participants to be placed after completing the full course.

“The exit opportunities that were secured for these youth were done in partnership with private sector companies, traditional tribal authorities, communal property associations as well as municipalities and various government departments. The confirmed exit opportunities for these youth include employment and business opportunities in agriculture, construction, apprenticeships, solar installations and maintenance,” said the deputy director-general.

Evans Steyn, a parent of one of the NARYSEC participants, was among the attendees of the pass-out parade to witness his child demonstrating the skills he acquired from the Navy. Steyn, who could not hide his excitement, said that the programme came at a time when the country was confronted with youth unemployment and many other challenges. “The programme is good, the government is addressing youth unemployment; now that they have completed this stage, they have to go out and study at the said institutions so they can be exposed to the job opportunities and deviate from drugs and funny things,” said Steyn.

Deputy Minister Skwatsha told attendees at the packed Saldanha Bay parade grounds that the NARYSEC programme is one of the key contributors of the department towards alleviating the high levels of unemployment amongst the young people in rural areas.

Skwatsha was officiating the pass-out parade of 713 rural youth who completed the military-orientated Youth Leadership Development Programme (YLDP) in Saldanha Bay at an event that was held in partnership with the Department of Defence. These graduates come from all of the nine provinces in the country.

The focus of the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) programme is to capacitate youth from rural areas with the necessary skills so that they become economically active and contribute towards the upliftment of their rural communities. “The youth that are graduating from the YLDP were trained by the Department of Defence in collaboration with the National School of Government, the National Youth Development Agency and the Road Traffic Management Corporation. These young people were recruited from various districts and municipalities across the country. The NARYSEC programme strives to develop young, vibrant, disciplined, patriotic leaders who can inspire change and meaningfully contribute to their communities,” the deputy minister emphasised.



NARYSEC participants cheering their mates on during the precision drill at the pass-out parade ceremony held at Dunnottar Military Base in Nigel.

DALRRD LAUNCHES THE AGRICULTURAL INPUTS CONTROL SYSTEM



DALRRD officials at the official Agricultural Inputs Control System launch held in Pretoria.

“ In today’s fast paced world, organisations and the sector continue seeking operational efficiency to increase productivity to stay competitive. As government, we are characterised by efficient service delivery, ”

Mphahlela Rammutla

to use their own credentials to log on the system as opposed to the individual having to use their own identity number to access the system on behalf of a company.

Chief Information Officer, Ms Tsoiso Sehoole said that automating the Agricultural Input Control System at DALRRD was a steppingstone towards maximising efficiency and speeding up the business processes. “In today’s fast paced world, organisations and the sector continue seeking operational efficiency to increase productivity to stay competitive. As government, we are characterised by efficient service delivery,” said Ms Sehoole.



Representatives from various inputs producers during the online registration system launch.

Applicants who wish to manufacture, import, sell and advertise agricultural remedies in South Africa will now make submissions and registrations on a newly launched online system.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) launched the Agricultural Inputs Control System to ease the application process.

The launch of the online registration system took place at the Times Square conference centre in Pretoria.

The newly launched Agricultural Inputs Control System, will allow manufacturers of agricultural remedies to make applications and register their products online, track their registration status and make amendments on their applications.

When addressing manufacturing industry representatives, Maluta Mudzungu, Director and Registrar of the Agricultural Inputs Control unit, said that the online system originates from the agreement between stakeholders and the department, to develop an interactive online system as other counterparts in the industry were going digital.

DALRRD, through the Directorate: Agricultural Inputs Control (DAIC), regulates the manufacturing, distributing, selling, using and advertising of agricultural remedies through the Fertilisers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 Of 1947).

Industries such as Syngenta SA and Nutrico SA are among the manufacturers who welcomed the launch of the online registration system as a step in the right direction. Meanwhile, some of the manufacturer’s representatives (name withheld) had some reservations as they thought the system was still in its early stages and would improve as times goes by. The representatives requested the department to allow companies to have a proxy or