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WORLD FOOD DAY

LEGACY PROJECTS



TOP NEWS

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DEPARTMENT'S INTERVENTION A WELCOME BOOST FOR INDIGENOUS CHICKEN FARMER



The solar panels that were installed by the department.



These incubators hatch 700 eggs in a week.

Jabulani Malinga

South Africa's agricultural sector is vibrant and multifaceted, with activities ranging from crop production to animal husbandry, among others. The sector contributes significantly to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), creates jobs, and ensures food security at a household level. As a result, it is very common that young people are attracted to the farming industry because of all the opportunities it presents.

One such person is Ms Ntombikayise Dlayedwa, a BSc Biotechnology graduate, of Kayi-Kayi Enterprise. She is a smallholder farmer based in Meyerton, Gauteng, who farms with indigenous chickens.

Ms Dlayedwa describes herself as an enthusiastic person with an eye for detail and believes in working hard. Her eye for detail bodes well for the farming sub-industry she chose to pursue because chickens are a very sensitive commodity and need extra care.

Kayi-Kayi Enterprise is a 2,3 hectare farm that produces 1,000 indigenous birds per cycle. The chickens that are available on the farm are the Black Australorp, Lohmann Brown and the Potch Koekoek. Ms Dlayedwa said that she started out with broiler chickens, but she however realised that the market for them was too saturated. "I was then advised to tap into the indigenous chicken market. I have never looked back since then," she revealed.

She mentioned that besides the broilers, she also tried her hand at pig farming. "It is funny that I ended up choosing to work with chickens even though I fear them. I have a terrible fear of chickens, but I'm the one who is able to notice when there is something wrong with any of the chickens in the cages," said Ms Dlayedwa.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development sponsored Kayi-Kayi Enterprise with two incubators

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that hatch 700 eggs a week and a solar system that runs the incubators during loadshedding or electricity blackouts. This enterprise started with one incubator that hatched 90 eggs a week. Consequently, the intervention by the department was a welcome boost for the business.

The biggest challenge facing the business is crime in the area. Ms Dlayedwa said that not so long ago, criminals had cut their fence and stole all their chickens as well as other items. This deplorable action set the business back as they had to start from the beginning again. She decried the lack of support from the police in this regard. "We rely on the assistance of community forums to protect ourselves because the police take time to respond when we report," she said.

To try to combat the persistent theft on the farm, she has already started to beef up their security by erecting a 2-metre-high brick wall to cover half of the farm to replace the fencing that thieves could easily steal.

Ms Dlayedwa beamed with pride as she walked us around the farm to show us how they segment different chickens into different coops to avoid unintentional cross breeding and fighting.

Another challenge she says they must contend with is the lack of a reputable and consistent egg supplier. "The chickens that I work with are very scarce and not many people have them. Therefore, it is a struggle to get a consistent supplier. The last guy we bought Lohmann Brown chicken eggs from told us that he was out of stock when we went back to purchase more. He

"We rely on
the assistance of
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we report,"



The solar system was installed inside the main house.



Ms Ntombikayise Dlayedwa and Mr Mbuyiselo Mendela.

said he was badly hit by bird flu and had to cull all the chickens on his farm," said Ms Dlayedwa.

In addition to providing the farm with the two incubators and a solar system, the department also sent both Ms Dlayedwa and her business partner, Mr Mendela, to attend accredited courses. These courses have empowered them to manage the farm since they did not have a farming background when they started the business.

"I ventured into this business purely out of passion. I just took a leap of faith and enlisted the assistance of my brother to help me build my dream. I am grateful that it is now slowly but surely shaping up well. I am also thankful to the department for all the assistance they gave us and hope that they will continue to do so as we progress," Ms Dlayedwa said.

She concluded by saying it would be great if the department could help them with market access for their produce.

ANTHEA'S FRESH SPINACH CONTRIBUTES TO FOOD SECURITY IN EKURHULENI

Samuel Kgatla



employs between five and 10 temporary employees during the harvesting process. Her Business Management Diploma helps her to manage the farm efficiently.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) assisted her with irrigation, fertilisers, boreholes and seedlings. She re-invests the profits into the farm and she managed to purchase a tractor, harvesting machine and some implements.

The provincial department managed to take her to farming training and this improved her knowledge of agriculture. Anthea is one of the farmers who are determined to make sure that the City of Ekurhuleni is food secure. Her farm is part of the legacy projects that are key to food security in the province.

Naidoo pleads with both DALRRD and GDARD to assist her with an inverter and shade nets or tunnels. She said that crops are easily damaged when there is hailstorm or other natural disasters. Some of her crops were heavily affected by hail last year. I advise young people to change their mindset toward farming. The possibilities are endless in farming and young people should stop seeing it as something for poor people. Our children love and enjoy planting vegetables with us and sometimes we go with them to the market for the delivery of spinach," she said.

The dedicated farmer does not plan on taking her foot off the pedal anytime soon as she has plans of expanding the farm, supplying both Johannesburg and Pretoria fresh produce markets with her sought-after spinach.

“ I advise young people to change their mindset toward farming. The possibilities are endless in farming and young people should stop seeing it as something for poor people. Our children love and enjoy planting vegetables with us and sometimes we go with them to the market for the delivery of spinach, ”

Passion, love and a demand for more food during COVID-19 motivated Ms Anthea Naidoo to start Phumelele Farming, a five-hectare farm producing vegetables at Endicott just outside Springs in Gauteng. She produces fresh crops like spinach, beetroot, carrots, onions, tomatoes, cabbage, and flowers. Spinach is her main crop and it is thriving. Anthea now supplies the Springs Fresh Produce Market with over 500 bunches of spinach per week. She sells her spinach at a cost of R10 for individuals and R5 for bulk buying. She also supplies Pick 'n Pay in Springs.

Naidoo says she has always found joy in working with her hands and farming has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember, thanks to her grandfather who was also a farmer. Naidoo's husband, Keagan, bought the land in 2019 after resigning from his work and they immediately started working on the farm together. The farm has employed one permanent worker and



Ms Anthea Naidoo of Phumelele Farm at Endicott in Springs.

BACKYARD GARDEN IMPACTS COMMUNITY'S LIVES IN A POSITIVE MANNER



Daphne farms on a piece of land at a school.

Mercia Smith

Higher food prices are hurting the poor, especially female-headed households. Daphne Mbongo, living in Sebokeng, saw how people in her neighbourhood went to bed hungry. In 2018, she started a food garden on a piece of land at an old school. She named the project Qala Kuhle, which means “a beginning”.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) drilled a borehole, put up a water tank and a pump. They also bought a generator for the good garden. The land, which is about 100 square metres, is used to plant spinach, onions, beetroot, cabbage, brinjals, cucumber, carrots, and tomatoes. The seeds are donated by Stark Ayers vegetable seed suppliers. There are eight volunteers that work at Qala Kuhle, four men and four women.

Daphne said she saw how many of her neighbours were struggling to meet basic needs, such as accessing healthy and nutritious food. As her own children were going to school, she decided that she had to do something to make her community a better place to live in. She did not have any knowledge of vegetable farming and has been relying on the assistance and guidance of Ntando Masango, an extension officer of the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment.

Most of the produce is sold locally, but she also donates to the people who ask her for assistance. “Most of the time, that spinach or cabbage I gave them is the only food in two days that they will have,” Daphne said. She also donates to clinics and orphanages in her community.

Theft is a problem. Just last month the electric cables that connected the generator to the water pump were stolen. As the property is not properly fenced, criminals come during the night and destroy vegetables by uprooting them from the ground and not carefully cutting it.

The harsh winters and very hot summers also have an influence on the growth of the vegetables. The two recent cold spells caused the spinach to stop growing, hence spinach will only be available from next week. The application she submitted for the shade net at the end of August is still being processed.



Eight volunteers assist at Qala kuhle to prepare the soil, plant, remove weeds and water the crops.

SITHANDAZILE MPOFU LEAVES FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT TO FOLLOW PASSION FOR FARMING

Matsepo Malatswane
Innocent Mhlanga



Sithandazile uses the plastic crop water retainer to retain water for her crops.

A champion of the Legacy Project, Sithandazile Mpfu started practicing farming part time nine years (2015) ago, and switched to fulltime farming in 2020 after her retirement.

One of her challenges is not having access to water because her crops rely heavily on water supply. To preserve water, she covers her cabbage with plastic crop cover, which assists in retaining the water so that the crops not to suffer from a lack of water. Even though her irrigation system is fully functional, she was let down by an old borehole which she tried to renovate. However, it ultimately collapsed owing to lack of proper maintenance. She plans on installing a new borehole once she is financially stable.

“On 1 October, my crops were hit by snow. With the current unpredictable weather patterns, it was unfortunate as we didn’t expect such a disaster and we had a client that had placed an order for spinach. There isn’t much one can do when the weather affects your farming production and output, it comes with the job of being a farmer,” says Mpfu.

Mpfu was a statistician at StatsSA before retiring to farming. She is happy with her decision of leaving her previous career and starting a new one in farming in which she’s thriving. She had a vision of wanting to feed the nation and growing a legacy business for herself.

She received two tunnels from the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment during the 2021/22 financial year and had also added another tunnel with the profits made from the business.

Her future expansion plans are to acquire more land, which she has already identified and will be buying with her farming colleague and neighbour, who is also a crop farmer. They will split the land into two parts, where each farmer will focus on their farming business.

She has started preparing to plant cherry tomatoes and regular tomatoes for the first time, which are expected to go to the supplier by the festive season. What is impressive about her is her enthusiasm towards her business, and the respect she has for it.

Sithandazile Mpfu (44) bought about two hectares of land in a small town in De Deur, near Walkerville Gauteng South, after retiring from being a public servant. She acquired the land on her own as both a family home and to follow her passion for small-scale farming. Her love for farming motivated her to start a farming business, focusing on crops such as cabbage, spinach, spring onions, kale, mochina spinach, and cherry tomatoes.

She sells her produce to Boxer supermarket in Vereeniging and Spar in the town. In addition, her growing farming business also supplies herbs such as coriander to Spar and Boxer.

According to Mpfu, farming is a lucrative business if managed well. “I was able to buy myself a car cash with profits from the business, in fact I do not have any debt to my name as I bought everything that I own cash,” said Mpfu.

