



## This edition

The ESO organic production module **P.1**

Tips and tools for advisors **P.1**

How to: Create an ESO desktop icon **P.2**

Monthly National ESO User **P.2**

To receive the Extension Suite Online newsletter via email, register your details on: [www.newsletter.esuite.co.za](http://www.newsletter.esuite.co.za)

## THE ESO ORGANIC PRODUCTION MODULE

*Sabhinah Ncongwane*

### How to access organic production on ESO

After logging in, users of Extension Suite Online (ESO) can access the Organic Production information option by clicking on the “plant production” icon and then selecting any crop type (Vegetables, Fruits, Grains, Oil Seeds, Roots and tubers, Industrial, Pastures and Flowers).

From here the user goes to the sidebar to select the “Organic Production” information option, then to “Overview” and “Organic Production”. The Organic Production section compares agricultural production systems such as organic agriculture, sustainable agriculture and conventional agriculture by providing definitions, descriptions and differences between each of them.

### Organic production

Organic farming is a production system that does not use synthetic or external inputs such as fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and

genetically modified seeds. It promotes and enhances cultural practices such as crop rotation, biological and mechanical management practices (such as growing cover crops), and the use of organic fertilisers (manure and compost), which helps to increase and maintain soil fertility. It helps to sustain the ecosystem by reducing chemical pest and disease control which in turn lead to the reduction of pollution of air and water.

The objective of organic agriculture is to produce sustainable and healthy food through harnessing natural, biological and ecological processes. An organic agricultural system is based on management practices that maintain, restore and enhance ecological harmony, therefore it is designed to rely on renewable energy sourced as much as possible from on-farm or natural local systems.

### Environmental benefits of organic production

**Soil** – Organic farming builds healthy soil by improving soil structure, fertility and organic matter while it reduces soil erosion through practices such as crop rotation, composting and growing cover crops.

**Water** - The system helps to conserve water through mulching and growing cover crops. It reduces water pollution which occurs due to soil runoff that carries chemical fertiliser, pesticides and herbicides. Organic farming keeps water supplies and underground water resources clean, which enhances the water quality.



*Sabhinah Ncongwane*

**Air** – Organic farming discourages air, soil and water contamination by the use of synthetic chemicals. It also discourages chemical resistant build up in plants, weeds, pests, fungi and bacteria. Fire plays no role in organic farming, such as the burning of crop residue.

**Biodiversity** - Organic farming encourages biodiversity, which plays a critical role in the maintenance of basic life support e.g. fruit crops need insects or birds for pollination and soil microbes assist with the decomposition of organic matter and nutrients cycle in the soil. Biodiversity also helps farmers maintain sustainable farm land.

**Carbon sequestration and climate change** – The system has potential to minimise the impact of climate change through decreases of fossil fuel usage to produce crops and increase in carbon sequestration which leads to increased soil fertility and enables the soil to tolerate extreme weather conditions.



## TIPS AND TOOLS FOR ADVISORS

*Matsunke Malefane*

### Leadership

An extension officer has to work with different people in a variety of ways. Officers often work with farmers whose circumstances are very different from their own. Being a trained professional requires working with clients who may have little or no formal education and people who might be leading a totally different lifestyle.

To be a leader to a potpourri of clients, an Extension Officer will require a range of qualities such as being: A Teacher, Facilitator, Organizer, Friend, Broker, Administrator, Consultant, Enabler, Communicator, Intermediary, Activist, Motivator, Listener, Provider, Arbitrator, Advocate and Catalyst.

It is part of human nature to continuously look for quicker and more effective ways of doing things. This article should assist ESO users in their quest to quickly open ESO in their browsers and to teach users a few easy steps to create a desktop shortcut icon that will afford easy access and immediate browsing of ESO:

- Right-click in an empty space on your desktop and select "New" and then select "Shortcut."
- Type into the textbox "[www.esuite.co.za](http://www.esuite.co.za)" and then click on "Next".



- Type a name (e.g. Esuite, ESO, etc.) into the textbox, and then click on "Finish."

Voilà! The shortcut will automatically appear on your desktop ready for use and a double click on the shortcut icon gives the user instant browsing of ESO.

Additional tips:

- To rename the title of the shortcut icon right-click on the icon, then click on the "Rename" option, and type your new name.
- Delete the shortcut by dragging it into the Recycle Bin.

## MONTHLY NATIONAL ESO USER: AUGUST 2013

ESO utilisation is determined through monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces and by attaching values to Visits, Pages Visited and Duration of Visits; a rating is calculated to establish the National ESO USER of the Month. The monthly national ESO user will receive the following prizes: First time National ESO User 2013: **4 Gig USB memory stick**, second time National ESO User 2013: **Digital Camera**, third time National ESO User 2013: **Blackberry cell phone**, fourth time National ESO User 2013: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

**Congratulations to Mr Mark Makashane (Eastern Cape Department Rural Development and Agrarian Reform), who is a 1<sup>st</sup> time ESO National User for August 2013. Mr Makashan will receive a Certificate, 4 Gig USB and a pen.**

The Extension Suite Online (ESO) top users' leader board for August proclaims Mr Mark Makashane as the number one user nationally. Congratulations! Mark's hometown is Matatiele in the Eastern Cape next to the beautiful Drakensburg Mountains, where farmers in the area predominantly farm with cattle and sheep. Mark, who has been at the department for more than 20 years is currently, based in Grahamstown and works as an Extension supervisor in the Cacadu district municipality. His immediate supervisor is Me Sandiswa Keva.



*Mr. SM Makashane addressing Red Meat Producers (Beef) during an Information Day.*

As an extension supervisor, he is responsible for 9 extension officers (EO's) working in 3 different local municipalities. He started to use ESO more extensively when they started working with commodity organisations such as Red Meat Producer Organisations, Poultry Producers, Mohair Producers, Piggeries, and their section had to do a lot of research for farmers on those topics for production purposes. Mark prefers to be hands-on, and did a lot of research on ESO himself to ensure that extension officers get proper, quality information for their farmers. Mark and his group are currently assisting Ndlambe municipality- where a very promising group of

Beef Producers were producing Nguni cattle for traditional purposes. He encouraged the extension officers responsible for that area to look at other alternative ways available on ESO to improve their production as well as sales, and they have recently introduced the Bonsmara breed through the help of ESO.

Mark describes ESO as a very good extension tool. He says that it gives Extension Officers ideas to alternative ways of farming, such as dryland versus irrigated farming, resistant varieties to diseases, pets, draught etc.

## UTILISATION OVERVIEW FOR AUGUST 2013

*Piet van Zyl*

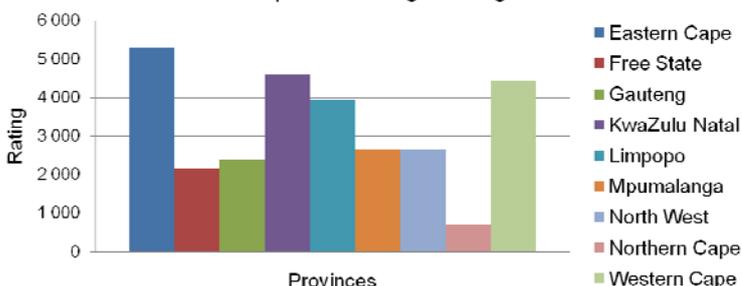
The previous Newsletter referred to the "spectacular" growth in Extension Suite Online utilisation during July 2013. While it would be unreasonable and even unrealistic to expect the same type of performance two months in a row, August utilisation remained in the "very good" bracket.

User data (Registrations and account activations) remained very much the same while utilisation statistics showed only slight decreases in total visits, pages visited, duration of visits and the amount of data being transferred.

Besides the **Provincial Monthly Top User** list comprising the top ESO user from each province, there is also a table showing the **National Top Ten Users**, irrespective of their province.

Mark Makashane from the Eastern Cape topped both lists in August and was joined by a colleague from the same province, Sindile Magoda (3<sup>rd</sup>), while the Western Cape also managed two users (4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>) in the **National Top Ten Users** rankings.

Provincial top user rating for August 2013



Top users in each province: August 2013

Province	Top User
Eastern Cape	Mark Shoaipane Makashane
Free State	Griffith Hadebe
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Daniel Marumo
Limpopo	Tshivhathi Ndifelani Ivy
Mpumalanga	Lucas Shabangu
North West	Mompati Gabanakgosi
Northern Cape	Portia Jagom
Western Cape	Gcina Shiba