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## 49th Annual Conference of South Africa Society of Agricultural Extension (SASAE)

Portia Phahlane

SASAE is the professional body for agricultural extension practitioners, and its mission is to promote science and vocation of Agricultural Extension, through its members. Every year SASAE members have the opportunity to share research publications, hold discussions and exchange knowledge through the annual SASAE conference.

The 49th annual conference of SASAE was held from 2 to 4 June 2015, at the Ingwenyama Conference and Sports Resort, in Mpumalanga. The conference theme was "The Changing Dynamics of Extension in line with the Objectives of the National Development Plan". The conference was attended amongst others by the MEC of Agriculture in Mpumalanga, the HOD of DARDLEA, and representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Also present were Fruit SA, Forestry South Africa, academic institutions, representatives of the private sector, international visitors (SASAE members) from Nigeria and Lesotho as well as members and managers from the different provinces.

In addressing the theme, The National Development Plan (NDP) objectives of chapter six were unpacked in detail by the different speakers and how South Africa can make these plans work. The main discussion points were the creation of the one million jobs in agriculture by 2030. The National Development Plan clearly states that agriculture is the primary economic activity in rural areas and has the potential to create close to this amount of jobs. Delegates discussed various ways of achieving the one million jobs targets by 2030 in some detail. Discussions included expanding irrigated agriculture, utilisation of underused land for commercial purposes, supporting commercial agriculture as it has the highest potential for growth and employment. Other interesting points of discussion included the sustainability of agricultural extension, a new cadre of extension advisors, changes in farmer's perception of extension services, and marketing channels for farmers.

The MEC acknowledged the pivotal role of extension services and highlighted how farming cannot succeed outside of extension services. He further stressed the importance of working together with commercial farmers, agribusinesses and promoting organised agriculture as this unity will "make things happen". The importance of public-private partnerships formed part of discussions and amongst other private sectors attending the conference was Manstrat Agricultural Intelligent Solutions (MAIS). MAIS, a silver sponsor for the conference, gave a presentation on allowing users to build their apps on MAIS products. Manstrat AIS is a full member of SASAE through the Central Branch. The Company plays an important role in the extension fraternity by developing and maintaining agricultural information systems that provide important linkages and information transfer mechanism between agricultural research and extension services and the farmers they serve.

Extension advisory services are vital to the agricultural value chain, and it is the mandate of extension advisory services to see that farming and farmers in the country have all necessary knowledge to succeed. At the same time, successful farming will lead to the creation of more jobs, increased living standards, and ensuring food security and in doing so, implement the objectives of the NDP: "Our future - make it happen".



Portia Phahlane

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## Tips and tools for advisors

Jeanne-Louise Bekker

### Assisting a farmer to make an informed decision

Here's a little helpful hint that advisors can use when assisting farmers in problem solving exercises and processes on the farm. It is called the **POCA** (Problem, Options, Consequences, Action) model:

- **Problem:** Identify what the problem is that the farmer faces.
- **Options:** Consider the different options available to the farmer to achieve a solution.
- **Consequences:** Take a look at what the consequences will be of implementing each of the different options.
- **Action:** The final step will be to take action and to implement the selected plan.

## TOP NATIONAL ESO USER:

The monthly national ESO user will receive the following prizes: First time National ESO User 2015: **4 Gig USB memory stick**, second time National ESO User 2015: **Digital Camera**, third time National ESO User 2015 **Nokia Lumia 520**, fourth time National ESO User 2015: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

Congratulations to **Mr Louis Khomola** (Limpopo Department of Agriculture), the ESO National Top User for June 2015.



Louis Khomola

June was a record-breaking month for Extension Suite Online utilisation. Our monthly ESO National Top User for the month, Mr Louis Khomola from Limpopo managed to accumulate a massive 21,443 points to win this month's award, by the proverbial country mile. Well done sir! (*Editor's note - the 21,443 points translate back to 72 hours and 37 minutes - or more than nine, 8-hour working days!*)

According to Louis, he uses ESO almost every time he needs information, accessing the system mostly from his mobile phone and his laptop. Louis says that ESO is his social/discussion network. He makes use of the discussion forum a lot to discuss topics and matters of importance to Extension Practitioners.

Louis first heard about ESO in 2013 during a workshop in Madzivhandila College of Agriculture and started using the system immediately after he registered as a user. "I use ESO as the system supplies me with the necessary information while offering explanations where required. The Discussion Forum on ESO also helps a lot, as posting one's problems, often lead to other ESO users assisting and resolving those problems."

ESO assists Louis in the execution of his duties. He was informed recently at very short notice of a farmer's day at Tuwani Primary School in Mulima. With the help of ESO, he quickly got all the required information together.

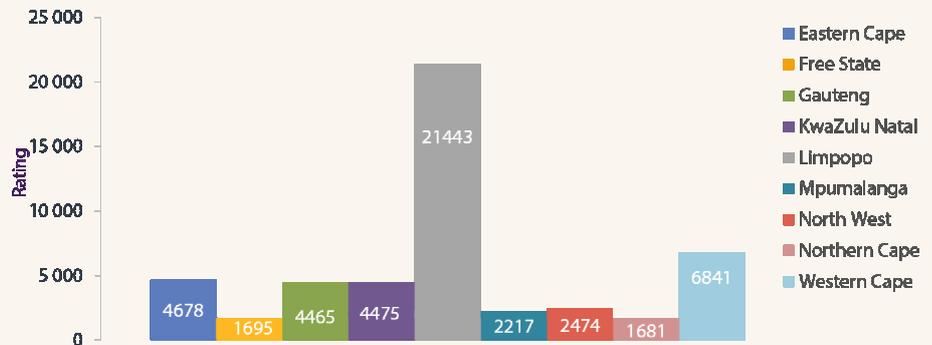
Louis encourages all Extension Advisors to start using ESO as it is a tool that will help them in achieving the goals that they have for their farmers. He also declared his willingness and availability to help any Extension Advisor who has difficulties in using the system, with accessing and utilising it.

Louis also thanked the Limpopo Department of Agriculture for introducing ESO to them and he hopes that ESO will, for many years to come, assist Extension Advisors in their work.

## EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE UTILISATION: JUNE 2015

Extension Suite Online (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 ESO National Top User of the Month.

### ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USER GRAPH



## ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USERS

Province	Name
Eastern Cape	Mzuthule Nobadina
Free State	Griffith Hadebe
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Dumisani Nzama
<b>Limpopo</b>	<b>Louis Khomola</b>
Mpumalanga	Sinekhaya Benson Makukule
North West	Mompati Gabanakgosi
Northern Cape	Amelia Viljoen
Western Cape	Riaan Nowers

## ESO contact details update competition

Congratulations to Mr Karel Abels, Western Cape DOA!

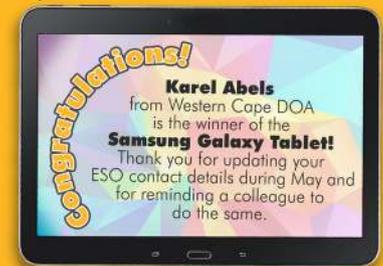
*Thapedi Setshedi*

Have you ever wondered why it was important for users to provide their contact details when activating their accounts on apps like Extension Suite Online (ESO)? Well, the answer lies somewhere between technical reasons, and some more general considerations.

Technically, ESO is a closed system available only to employees of the national department of agriculture (DAFF) and the nine provincial departments, as well as approved officials from other departments and organisations. Knowing who our users are, makes it easy to ensure that only authorised individuals access your systems.

More importantly for our users, is the fact that with profile information, app designers can improve the user experience by for example providing additional geo-referenced information on environmental and infrastructure data of farms. One can get an extension advisor community going where information and knowledge can be shared and distributed between extension professionals. Other information can also be made available to satisfy needs and interests of users.

With the correct contact details, we can issue fire, storm, fungal, disease and other warnings immediately to users and send notifications to them regarding improvements, additions, campaigns, competitions, tips, etc.



All this brings us to the recent ESO Contact Details Update competition during which users were asked to update their contact details, and to remind their colleagues to do the same. As an incentive, we offered a Samsung Galaxy Tab to one lucky user who updated their contact details. The lucky user, selected electronically, is Karel Abels from Elsenburg in the Western Cape. Congratulations Karel, your Tablet will be reaching you soon.

To all the other participants who updated and reminded their colleagues to do the same - THANK YOU. The response was overwhelming as more than six hundred entries were received, and more are coming in daily, even after the closing date! Please don't stop updating your details as it is important that we have your correct contact details when needed.

We will be contacting users with early warnings and tips, and who knows, more competitions and stuff to win?

**Do you have any technology related questions?** Send them to [newsletter@esuite.co.za](mailto:newsletter@esuite.co.za), with your name, province and the question and we will answer them in a following newsletter edition.



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