

TRAINING ADMINISTRATORS

As part of the training responsibility of the Manstrat AIS Information Centre, extension officials and IT support personnel from the provinces undergo instruction at Manstrat AIS in Pretoria as Extension Suite Online systems administrators.

ESO systems administrators are trained to create and administer user rights in their provinces, and instruction includes:

- The creation of provincial, district and municipal user hierarchies and the allocation of rights to the different levels of users;
- Adding new users to ESO;
- Activating user accounts;
- Changing of user rights and editing profiles;
- Transferring users to other districts and municipalities;
- Suspending rights of users for a range of reasons, from a user resigning to disciplinary action; and
- Cleaning and updating the user databases in the province.

To date all provinces with the exception of two have been trained, and the outstanding ones should be completed by the end 2011.

Piet van Zyl

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”

Theodore Roosevelt



AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION MODULE

Agricultural Extension has a long history dating back to around the 1700 century B.C. Extension has always been an important changing force in agriculture and still plays a significant role in social innovation, which has been created and recreated over the decades/centuries. Extensionism is considered to be an educational task, consisting of disseminating information from researchers to farmers, to guide them into adapting new methods and take full advantage of available proven technology.

Agricultural Extensionists are generally proficient in agricultural commodities such as plant or animal production. In order to provide the full scope of Extension, they also require knowledge of aspects such as human behaviour, organising and planning. Lacking these agricultural extension principles will unavoidably hamper agricultural development.

ESO aims to assist Extension officers with everyday production dilemmas. Margret Fuller once said, “**If you have knowledge, let others light their candles at it.**” Evolution in the product cycle requires a full fledged ESO Module for Extension that focuses on those aspects that from such an integral part of Extension work - communication, organisation and planning.

The Module will hopefully also help to encourage Extension Officers to fully enjoy their role of extending their knowledge to farmers and colleagues alike.

During the development of the Module, there were several factors that needed consideration, such as ensuring that it was user-friendly and that it included and explained the various roles played by Extensionists - teachers, facilitators, educators, instructors, coaches, trainers, advisors, etc. The different sections of the Module will be divided

into theory, basic knowledge, and will include tools, tips and guides as follows:

- **Introduction to Extension** providing the history of Extension, definitions, the art of good Extension and finally ethics and challenges of Extension as a profession;
- **Groundwork**, the aim is to provide (new) Extension Officers with factors to consider before or during interaction with stakeholders, such as understanding human behaviour, relationship building and understanding various other environments;
- The **Task and Duties** section will comprise of Extension activities such as workshops, demonstrations, field days, farmers days, communication tasks, organising projects and programmes, etc; and
- The **Problem Solver** which will provide diagnostic tools, steps, best approach and best methods to solve different problems in terms of plants, animals and even humans.

As Nelson Mandela said, “**A good head and a good heart are a formidable combination.**” Exactly what is needed by Extension Officers since agriculture will always be essential to humans as it works towards nutrition for humans and animals, fibre for clothing and job creation. ESO aspires to provide the necessary relevant information directed at grassroots level where it is most needed. We are therefore excited to introduce a new and exciting Module - **Agricultural Extension**, to be launched in early 2012.

Matsunke Malefane and Michèle Cloete

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www.newsletter.esuite.co.za

New and exciting internet technologies are developed and web standards are changing all the time to enrich functionality and user experience. To enable the use of these functionalities, browsers are constantly reviewed and updated, improving and integrating new developments.

Because of the strong market competition in the browser industry, development teams strive to deliver the best experience to users through their products, improving usability, speed and aesthetics. New versions of browsers offer enhanced security, as



vulnerabilities are addressed as soon as it becomes known.

Considering that updating browsers are mostly free, it is well worth the effort to have a better online experience in terms of usability, functionality, speed and security. It also allows the Extension Suite Online development team to integrate new technologies into the product, allowing us to have a richer user experience.

P.S. After writing this article, I checked to make sure all my browsers were updated.

NATIONAL EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE USER FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

By the constant monitoring of the utilisation of users in all provinces, Manstrat AIS can identify the country's top user monthly through a ratings system. These ratings are ultimately used to select an annual national winner.

Congratulations to, **Lesego Phakedi** (Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development), who is the ESO National Top User for September 2011. As Lesego Phakedi is a **third time ESO National Top User**, he will receive a Digital Camera.

During October, we had the opportunity to do a follow-up interview with **Lesego Phakedi** to find out more about his usage of ESO and the farmers that he is working with:

Q: Tell us about the farmers that you are currently working with and how you have managed to help them through ESO?

I work with quite a few farmers on a daily basis; currently we are mostly preparing land for summer crops. I make use of ESO to get the correct information for the land preparation processes. I am glad to say that many of my farmers are very adventurous, and want to learn more on how to produce different types of crops, especially the farmers who are now starting with hydroponics.

I have a few farmers who have also started with livestock production this year, through using ESO, I have taught them the important factors that one needs to look at when buying livestock, for example, the age, grade and breed characteristics. The ESO section on "Production schedules" has also aided me well to work out a production plan for these farmers.

Q: In which district of your province are you working? We are divided into different municipalities, and I am working in the Magalies and Randfontein municipal areas.

Q: Describe the production enterprises in these areas. In both the Randfontein and Magalies areas the farmers produce both livestock and small stock as well as vegetable crops. I work with a lot of pig farmers and poultry farmers, we even have rabbit farming. During the year I have helped with the rabbit farming by identifying the best housing techniques, production cycles, and disease control methods.

Q: Where do you access ESO, at the office or on site?

I actually access ESO both in office and on farm; I will take my laptop with me to the farmer, sit with him and show him on the system what needs to be done. When it is necessary for me to make print-outs and there is no printer available on the farm, I will go back to the office make the print-outs and return to the

farmer the next day. At times I will do my research in office and if necessary I will make print-outs to take with to the farmer.

Q: Do you have wireless internet? The type of wireless connection that we do use is 3G, and I must say that the speed is very fast. I seldom have problems with my 3G connectivity.

Q: Do you make use of the extension guides on ESO? I regularly check if the extension guides, which one finds at the bottom of each section, are relevant to the research that I am doing, I will definitely take a look and use them if appropriate.

Q: Do you think it is helpful to have information in pictorial format for farmers? I would say that it depends on the farmers that you are working with. Many of the emerging and aging farmers are illiterate; therefore having information in a pictorial format is very useful. A lot of the farmers give the information through to their farm-workers, who in many cases might be illiterate; it helps them to explain in an easily understandable format what they expect them to do and how to do it. I therefore think that it is a very good idea to also have information in illustrative formats.

Q: Where and in what area did you study? I did both my degrees at North-West University specifically the Mafikeng Campus. After studying I worked at the North West University for 6 years, after which I relocated to KZN for 5 months and afterwards I came to Gauteng in 2006.

Q: In what field did you specialize? I have a BSC Agric Animal Science and BSC Agric Animal Science Hon. Degree.

Q: What made you decide to become an extension officer? My first passion was to become an Animal Scientist, but through the years my path has led me to becoming an extension officer in the Gauteng province.

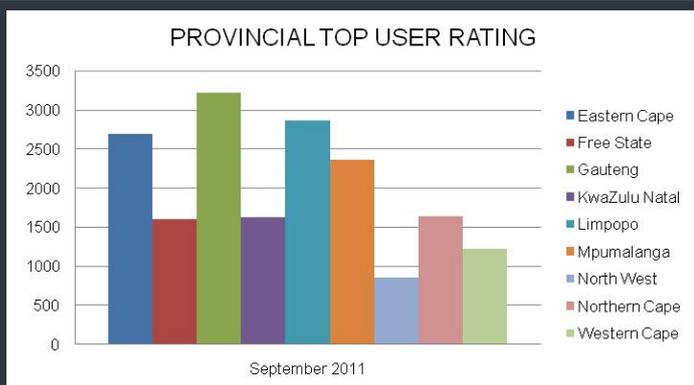
Q: What do you think is the secret to being a good extension officer? To be a good extension officer one needs to work hard at knowing your resources, where to get your information, to help your farmers as efficiently as possible.

SEPTEMBER UTILISATION

Well done again to Lesego Phakedi from Gauteng who has managed once again in starring as South Africa's number one user of Extension Suite Online. As you know, Lesego has now won the Top National User award three times in a row since the start of the 2011/2012 utilisation year, and has in the process won himself a Blackberry cell phone as well as a 12 Mega Pixel Digital camera from ESO.

Lesego is undoubtedly South Africa's king of ESO. Keep up the good work Lesego, and to all the other thousands of ESO users out there, remember that anyone, with enthusiasm and dedication can improve on Lesego's rating of 3,216 points for the month. Bye the way Lesego spends on average 1 hour every day studying the content of the best extension decision making tool on the Continent!

Keep on clicking!



NAME OF THE TOP USER IN EACH PROVINCE	
PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Mthobisi Zuma
Free State	Modupe Vincent Mbele
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Busi Xulu
Limpopo	SC Baloyi
Mpumalanga	Mashudu Mathoho
North West	Floris Klinck
Northern Cape	Christopher Robiyana
Western Cape	Petrus Klaaste