

TABLE GRAPES HARVESTING

Dr John Lapham

Table grapes are grown throughout the Western Cape and in some areas of the Northern Province. The majority of production comes from the lower Orange River valley and the Hex River valley.

The harvesting season starts in November in the northern regions and moves further south, finishing in the Western Cape in late March-early April. Most of the grapes are exported, mainly to Northern Europe, followed by the U.K., the Far East and the Middle East. The largest volumes exported are white seedless varieties, followed by red seedless, red seeded, black seeded, white seeded and black seedless.

Prospects for this season's exports appear good; peak volumes around weeks 49 to 50 are expected, coinciding with peak demand. Good control of the "cold chain" (farm to the customer) during export is critical. Harvested grapes deteriorate more in 1 hour at 32 °C than they will in 1 day at 4 °C, or in 1 week at 0 °C.

The post-harvest handling of table grapes is described on ESO under "Production Information". Best post-harvest practices avoid significant marketing losses, resulting from poor quality, in all fruit crops.



Sabhinah Mahlangu

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www.newsletter.esuite.co.za

CROP ROTATION ON EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE

Sabhinah Mahlangu

How to access crop rotation on ESO

Users of Extension Suite Online, ESO, can access information on crop rotation by clicking on the "plant production" icon. Under plant production, select any crop type (Vegetables, Fruits, Grains, Oil Seeds, Roots and tubers, Industrial, Pastures and Flowers).

Continue to the-Sidebar, and select "Organic Production", clicking on "Production Practices" to open "Nutrition and Soils". Nutrition and Soils describes cultural practices including crop rotation, cover crops, intercropping and composting. Select crop rotation.

What is crop rotation?

Crop rotation is a well-planned farming practice involving planting of different types of crops (e.g. legumes, root crops, leaf crops and fruit crops) in a rotation sequence on the same land. The rotation sequence is normally completed in three to five years and then repeated. Crop rotation is practiced on annual cropping systems such as vegetables, grain crops, roots and tubers, oil seeds, industrial crops, flowers as well as biennial fruits.

A combination of crops with different growth characteristics, like deep rooted versus shallow rooted and nutrient accumulating versus nutrient depleting, is the most effective practice. During planning, crops belonging to the same family are grouped together, since related crops have similar requirements and are prone to the same pests and diseases. The main goal of the crop rotation system, and the particular sequence of crops, is to improve soil fertility and prevent the build-up of pests, diseases and weeds.

Benefits of crop rotation

- Crop rotation improves soil fertility mainly through the planting of leguminous crops which fixes the atmospheric nitrogen into the soil.

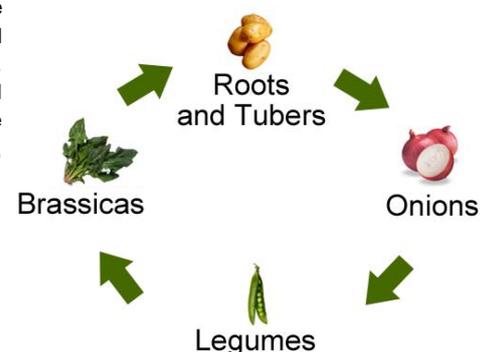
- Rotation helps to control pests and diseases by breaking the continuity of pest or disease lifecycles through planting of a following crop which is not a host of the pest or disease.
- Rotation reduces weed populations because some crops better suppress certain weeds than other crops.
- Better fertility and reduced pressure from pests and weeds reduces crop maintenance cost in terms of fertiliser, pesticides and labour.
- It brings about diversity in crop production within the same season, if rotations are done on separate fields (as shown below as "beds" in the example).

The table below shows a set crop rotation on four different areas (beds) which can achieve the goals discussed above.

Year	Bed 1	Bed 2	Bed 3	Bed 4
1	Brassicas	Other *	Alliums	Legumes
2	Legumes	Brassicas	Other *	Alliums
3	Alliums	Legumes	Brassicas	Other *
4	Other *	Alliums	Legumes	Brassicas

* "Other" in the table refers to the crops tomatoes, capsicums, corn and beetroot

Crop rotation sketch



USEFULL TIPS FOR EXTENSIONISTS

Matsunke Malefane and Michèle Cloete

Promotion campaigns

Promotion campaigns are important extension activities, as they endorse "new" ideas or technologies to people. Here are a few tips to a successful promotion campaign:

- Conduct a SWOT analysis.
- Define the aim.
- Understand the target group.
- Identify important stakeholders (i.e. opinion leaders and relevant government officials).
- Identify the method of persuasion.
- Identify the required resources.
- Identify and define the plan of action.
- Create a timetable.
- Monitor and evaluate the promotion campaign.



The Extension Suite Online (ESO) Infrastructure Module aids users to search for relevant infrastructure within a predetermined area. The function assists, amongst other things, users to determine the relative position in the province/district of their infrastructure selection, through an easily accessible map that indicates the position of the selected agricultural infrastructure item. To view them, the user can search by either selecting - Municipality Name, Farm Name, GPS Coordinates (DMS or DD) by following the steps below:

Step 1: Select the preferred search method; Municipality name, Farm name, or GPS coordinates (DMS or DD).

Step 2: Enter or select the area, farm or coordinates to search within.

Step 3: Select a radius from 1 km to 1500 km.

Step 4: Select the preferred Agricultural Infrastructure (e.g. Abattoirs, breeders, cooperatives).

Step 5: Click the 'Search' button.

Step 6: Once the results are displayed in the content area, a small map icon  is made available in the top right-hand corner of each Infrastructure Data box. By clicking on the map icon a pop up window will open displaying the positions of the searched for results on the map. The positions are indicated with a small red dot  on the map. Hover over one of the red dots to view the name and coordinates of that position. A green pin  indicates the user's selected position.



MONTHLY NATIONAL EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE USER: OCTOBER 2012

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.

Congratulations to **Vhuthu Gavhi** (Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development). He is a **fourth time** ESO National monthly user and therefore receives a **Samsung Galaxy Tablet**.



During November, we had the opportunity to ask Vhuthu a few questions regarding his usage of ESO:

What is your secret to being the monthly national ESO user?

I often log in every morning and check issues discussed on the Discussion panel, then check the plant production and animal production sections, then enterprise budgets. I normally spent 1-2 hours daily, depending on my needs.

What do you enjoy about the industry?

Agriculture being the main production of food, I thoroughly enjoy seeing food taking different stages of production. I like to observe a Broiler chick growing from 1 day old until it becomes a meal on the table, or a tiny seed of Spinach when it grows until it is cooked and enjoyed.

What are the most frequently asked questions that you get from farmers/clients?

My farmers normally ask me production related questions like 'how long does a certain crop take to reach maturity, when can we start to harvest?'

What techniques do you use in the field to support farmers?

I used to use Manuals and info-toons, lately I rely on ESO, especially the pictorial guides.

What section of ESO normally answers a farmer's questions directly?

Question and answer section, discussion panel, production related information as well as pictorial guides.

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

Both in office and on site. I use my Nokia C6 phone on site, I use it to access ESO.

Do you make use of the pictorial guides on ESO?

Yes I do, they are very helpful because mostly I deal with adult farmers and school kids. They thoroughly enjoy seeing the pictures in the guides.

Do you develop training courses from ESO for your farmers/clients?

Yes I do. For my Homestead food garden farmers I mostly use the Production Schedule and the pictorials when training them.

Do you make use of the problem solver module?

Yes, especially regarding Broiler diseases and general management.

How do you keep current and informed about your industry?

I mostly surf the net and check ESO and Safex, I also read Agricultural related Journals and newsletters.

UTILISATION OVERVIEW FOR OCTOBER 2012

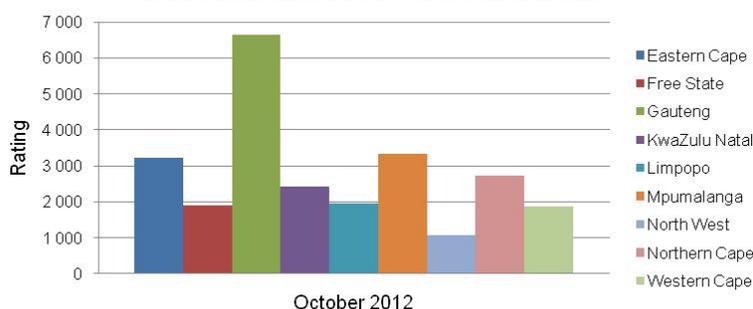
Thapedi Setshedi

During October, 71 users were added to the system by mainly KZN, resulting in a slight growth in ESO user numbers. There was also a 4.7% increase in account activations of the registered users, which is really encouraging for this time of the year. The number of pages visited was (8 631) and the time spent on ESO was in excess of 350 hours. This last minute activity hopefully points to serious growth in ESO utilisation for next year.

The ESO Home Page, or Landing Page as the genius types (programmers) like to say is really enjoying support from extension officers and many of them are becoming regulars in discussions. Thank you ladies and gentlemen. We can see who takes extension, farming and our country's future seriously. The discussion Forum attracted 2,174 views and 174 replies since inception.

Once again, the National Top User is Mr. Vhuthu Gavhi from Gauteng with a rating of 6,648 points. Mr. Gavhi is now the proud owner of a **Galaxy Tab** which he earns through his usage of South Africa's number one Agricultural decision making tool. Well done to a real champ.

PROVINCIAL TOP USER RATING



NAME OF TOP USER IN EACH PROVINCE OCTOBER 2012

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Sindile Magoda
Free State	Griffith Hadebe
Gauteng	Vhuthu Gavhi
KwaZulu Natal	Busisiwe Rebecca
Limpopo	Edgar Sebei
Mpumalanga	Sibusiso Themba Ngele
North West	Monametsi Rakgase
Northern Cape	George du Preez
Western Cape	Pieter Burger