

05 October 2009

## CASUAL DAY

On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the SETA participated in the Casual Day. Casual Day is the biggest fundraising & awareness creating project for persons with disabilities. Every year on the first Friday of September people are asked to dress different than usual and wear the official Casual Day sticker, benefiting persons with disabilities. Also on this day, staff who attend a Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) were certificated for attending the one day course.



*The finance department*



*The ETQA Department receiving their certificates*



*Jerry Madiba giving his PA, Farhana a flower for spring day*

Those however who could not attend the PFMA Course, were given flowers also to celebrate spring day.

## ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Due to the high level of illiteracy in the agricultural sector at large, AgriSETA is engaged in one of the largest ABET initiatives in South Africa. Considering statistics from our sector one is stunned to learn that approximately 30% of all permanently employed and seasonal workers are totally illiterate and as much as 50% are so poorly educated that they cannot effectively engage in lifelong learning programmes.

We have set a target to reach out to at least 17 000 workers by March 2010. Since April 2005 we have however by now enrolled in excess of 20 000 learners. However, it should be realized that ABET poses a serious challenge: learners are generally old, they do not wish to participate in numeracy programmes and once they have completed the communication subject (at any level) they tend to drop off from the programme.

AgriSETA makes use of two modes of delivery. Firstly we engage learners with normal, traditional learning approach of "talk and chalk" – classroom type training. Secondly we have also adopted a computer based learning programme and today there are more than 1 000 sites (farms and secondary enterprises) where we have sponsored computers, software, workbooks and the training of facilitators through our appointed delivery agent, Media Works..

By March 2010 AgriSETA will have invested at least R35 million in ABET and considering the nature of our sector, this will continue in future.

### Read further of our success stories

Marissa Kok, AgriSETA ABET Administrateur vir die rekenaar gebaseerde projek het gedurende die maand van Augustus 2009 'n paar plase in die Wes Kaap besoek. Caroline Knoetze en Bertram September, projek bestuurders van Media Works, het saam met haar die besoeke gedoen. Haar eerste besoek was aan die perlemoen plase, Abagold (Seaview & Bergsig) en Aquafarm Development (Pty) Ltd, in Hermanus. Tans is daar 80 Leerders by Abagold wat deelneem aan die ABET program en 22 leerders by Aquafarm Developme nt (Pty) Ltd. Afgesien van 'n ontmoeting met die bestuur op die plase en fasiliteerders, het Marissa ook tyd saam met sommige van die ABET leerders gespandeer. (Abagold is tans die grootste verskaffer van perlemoen in Suid Afrika).



Haar tweede besoek was aan Oak Valley in Grabouw waar 21 leerders deelneem aan die ABET program. Sy het ook die bestuur, fasiliteerder en leerders ontmoet. Oak Valley boer met wyn, blomme en vrugte. Hulle spesialiteit is wyn maar hulle verskaf ook blomme aan Woolworths regdeur die Wes Kaap.



Die volgende besoek was aan Voorspoed in Robertson, waar daar 5 leerders is wat deelneem aan die ABET program.

Haar laaste besoek was aan Nuwerus in Worcester, waar 16 leerders deelneem aan die ABET program. Marissa het by Nuwerus die AgriSETA Sertifikaat van Erkenning oorhandig aan die fasiliteerder.

Tydens haar besoeke, het Marissa ondervind dat die leerders die ABET opleiding implementeer in hulle



werksomgewing sowel as by die huis waar hulle hulp verleen aan families en kinders spesifiek met hulle huiswerk. Dit maak hulle trots as ouers en laat hulle ook belangrik voel. Meeste van die leerders het die ABET program in 2004 begin en werk al tussen 16-20 jaar op die plase. Sommige leerders is nou in Bestuursposisies en as gevolg van die ABET opleiding kan hulle nou meer verantwoordelikheid aanvaar. Die Fasiliteerders is goed opgelei en hulle is bewus van wat van hulle verwag word en speel ook 'n baie belangrike rol in die ABET program met die ontwikkeling van hierdie ABET leerders. Marissa het ook baie goeie terugvoering van sommige werkgewers ontvang dat die Media Works span in die Wes Kaap baie goeie ondersteuning bied aan die fasiliteerders en dat die sukses van die ABET program nie sonder hulle hulp moontlik sou gewees het nie.

*Groete,*

*Marissa Kok.*

ABET Administrateur – Media Works.  
(Rekenaar Gebaseerde Projek).

## **APPRENTICESHIPS PROJECT**

The scarcity of well qualified artisans in South Africa is a well known fact. What is less known is that the average age of our artisan pool is most likely in excess of 50 years old. Thus apart from the fact that artisans are scarce, if we do not act now, the age of artisans will catch up with us and will in a few yers time leave a huge void in the labour market.

This is also true in the agricultural sector. By the end of 2007 AgrisETA called a meeting of some of our largest employers and indicated that we will expand our involvement in the development of artisans. We were hoping to get commitment from employers to collectively take in at least 100 apprentices (in various fields of study). We were overwhelmed when applications for in excess of 200 apprentices were received. This clearly underlines the need for the development of artisans.

AgriSETA, together with the National Skills Fund (NSF), subsequently engaged in a project to develop artisans in order to address this dire need for qualified artisans in the country. Agriseta has contributed R9,586 m and the NSF R8,172m to this project. These learners are enrolled on an accelerated program of 2 – 3 years and the aim is to have 227 learners qualified by March 2011. At the moment there are 205 learners in training of which probably 50 will qualify by the end of 2009. It is envisaged that the target of 227 will eventually be exceeded.

## **FEEDBACK FROM OUR APPRENTICES**

The increasing shortage of well qualified artisans has also been felt at Meadow Feeds Central region, with experienced artisans becoming sought after due to their training and experience. In order to ensure the ongoing productivity at the mills and address the skills shortage in the county, the Central Region embarked on an apprenticeship program in 2008. Due to the excellent response and success of this programme at the 3 mills, Meadow Feeds Central region recruited an additional 12 apprentices in mid-2009. This was done in conjunction with the AgriSETA.

Advertisements for potential candidates received an overwhelming response, with strict selection criteria and aptitude tests following the initial interview process. The result was a wonderful mix of candidates from various backgrounds receiving on-the-job training of the highest caliber. They will also attend approved training colleges, where they will receive the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge, the cost of which will be borne by the respective Meadow operations.

The project is driven by the Regional Engineering Manager, Neil Mienie, together with Luanne Smalle from Human Resources at Meadow Feeds. They are assisted by the respective maintenance managers and their mentors, Jaco Pretorius and Hennie Schutte (Delmas), Sakkie Ueckerman and Willem Joubert (Randfontein) and Abey Botha (Welkom).

We wish them well on this journey, the first intake of 11 apprentices completing their trade tests in March 2010

and the second intake in July of 2011. Meadow Feeds want to ensure that they deliver outstanding artisans, who may be employed either at their own operations, or be an asset to any company in the industry that appoints them.

This is what some of the apprentices had to say:

**Bonginkosi Jacson Matlala (Delmas 2009)** - "The apprenticeship program is a good opportunity but involves hard work. However it promises to ensure a better life for me and my family to be one day."

**Penuwell Thusi (Delmas 2008)** – "The apprenticeship program is a great opportunity to enrich my life by hard work but it is hard work in a very interesting environment."

**Lucia Kgasmin (Welkom 2008)** – "From my side this apprenticeship was okay for me. Thank you very much for the opportunity you have given me. This has been quite an experience."

**Topaz van Zyl (Welkom 2008)** – "This apprenticeship has been fine for me and has taught me a lot about engineering. I feel that this learnership is the start of what I always wanted. It is hard work at Meadows, but I enjoy it because the people that I work with make it nice for me."

The Apprentices from:



**Welkom**



**Delmas**



**Randfontein**

## **SPECIAL LEARNERSHIP AND SKILLS PROGRAMME PROJECT**

An amount of R46 million have been set aside by AgriSETA towards the end of 2008 as a focused drive to impact on the skill level of employed workers and under resourced farmers/businesses. After considering piles of applications, the approval process was concluded early in 2009.

A total of 25 learnership and 74 skills programme projects were approved. Apart from 10 projects, all have commenced. (Those that did not commence yet, are for seasonal reasons and will commence as soon as the enterprise moves into a "quieter" production period) Since March a total of R18 million have been paid out and the project will be concluded by June 2010. When concluded a total of 6 524 learners will have been reached (1 944 On learnerships and 4 580 on skills programmes).

This is one of the single largest projects tackled by AgriSETA to date and is closely monitored and progress continually assessed.

## SUPPORT TO LEARNING INITIATIVES OF A HIGHER EDUCATION NATURE

Whilst most worker activities are at lower skill levels in the agricultural sector, the sector is also in need of high level skills, requiring tertiary education. We need engineers, plant and animal specialists, veterinarians, laboratory specialists, agricultural economists and the like. AgriSETA recognizes this need and have instituted programmes to support those that are participating in these learning fields.

At the beginning of the financial year we budgeted for:

- 60 persons to receive bursaries
- 100 interns to be supported to complete their tertiary qualification by means of work based learning
- 50 specialists who have completed their studies to gain appropriate experience in order to improve their employability.

Due to excessive demand for support in these areas, the governing board have approved additional funding and the target will be well exceeded (estimated by approximately 75% more than originally planned). A total budget of R9 million is set aside for this purpose.

As this initiative is recurring each year, it is believed that through bursaries, internships and workplace experience grants AgriSETA will directly contribute towards eradicating our high level scarce skills.

## MGK/TEMO NEW FARMERS' MENTORING PROJECT

The Magaliesburg Grain Cooperative has a division, Temo, which focus its attention on the development of new farmers who are engaging in grain farming (maize, sorghum or sunflowers) in mainly the North West Province. Whilst MGK's core business is in secondary agriculture, Temo render a continued service to new farmers in the primary agricultural sector.

During 2003 the MGK's Board of Directors decided to establish a project to develop new farmers entirely at its own risk and without any outside financial assistance or subsidies. An agricultural economist, who spent his entire career working for MGK as an extension officer, was appointed to head the project on a full time basis. The project started with a group of 22 new farmers cultivating 2 117 ha of dry land.

Because the farmers have no assets and could not provide any security, they did not qualify for input cost finance in terms of any banking/financial establishment or in terms of MGK's credit policy.

The aim of the project was to use different criteria to evaluate farmers and to provide training by experienced project leaders (mentors) to enable farmers to cultivate produce. MGK hedges its risk through a session of the farmer's crop and close monitoring of the farming activities.

The project is now approaching the completion of its sixth year. Salient statistics to the project are the following:

Season	# of Participants	HA planted	Production Loans Approved
2003/04	22	2 117	R400 000,00
2004/05	45	3 967	R3 036 107,00
2005/06	75	8 820	R7 056 400,00
2006/07	128	16 300	R21 100 000,00
2007/08	129	17 100	R38 800 000,00
2008/09	174	17 500	R60 000 000,00

Temo is currently investigating to assist 450 up-and-coming farmers in the Taung district. This may add as much as 40 000 ha and the total input cost is estimated at R160 million.

As from 2008, AgriSETA, having considered the value and success of this programme, have commenced to partly fund the remuneration of mentors in order to contribute to the sustainability of this excellent initiative.

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