

## ESO TRAINING AT FORT HARE

Extension Suite Online is active in all the provinces of South Africa. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has indicated that ESO is regarded as the official decision support system for their Agricultural Extension Practitioners nationally.

Although the system is relatively simple to use, many users find the technology intimidating.

The University of Fort Hare has incorporated basic ESO training into its Extension Curriculum and in collaboration with Manstrat Agricultural Intelligence Solutions (Pty) Ltd, has developed two additional (and more advanced) certificate courses on the practical utilisation of Extension Suite Online.

These courses will be implemented during 2011 at pre-graduate level at the University of Fort Hare, as practical field training in the provinces and as a special advanced course at the university.

*Dr Roelof de Villiers*

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Well done”, is better than  
Well said.”  
*Benjamin Franklin*



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## ESO AND CLOUD COMPUTING

Cloud computing has grown far beyond a mere concept and in the world of hardware and software has become a reality. Cloud computing is a set of technologies which allow users to harness the processing power and storage capacities of powerful servers to perform the tasks that would have been done on in-house computers. As an example, Google's Gmail system has been running right under our noses for many years and is one of the best examples of cloud computing. Gmail allows the user to send and receive emails, chat with friends, store documents, create address books and schedule events. This is called “Software as a Service”, which means that the user is able to utilize the features and functions of software through a service, which is accessible from anywhere in the world.

To put this into perspective, Extension Suite Online has been built on this concept since version 1.01 by introducing the users to their own online email system, document storage area, chat facilities and information system.

The basic idea and concept is to centralize the user's information and the relevant functions and features required to process that information. Following this approach, it is possible to provide

extremely powerful computing power at reduced costs, to provide high volumes of storage space and increased mobility.

What cloud computing therefore does, is to make your life easier. Cloud computing eliminates the need for standalone software on your machine, thus enabling the user to spend money on more essential areas.

The best aspect of cloud computing is yet to come. On the internet there have been a number of Clouds that have commenced to “use” each other, meaning that these clouds are designed in such a way that they can be linked to each other to allow them to function as one, accessing each other's capabilities and functionalities, instantly scaling each cloud to new heights.

Combining clouds enable the user to utilize a much wider array of functions and features. There is only one setback to Cloud Computing and that is “Internetlessness” which will be overcome with time. Apart from that, I believe that our future depends on cloud computing...

*Francois van der Merwe*

The Extension Suite Online toolbar, located in the title bar, allows users to access global functionality in the application. These functions are discussed in order from left to right in the toolbar.

To print the active view in the content panel, which excludes the menus and sidebars, click the print button.

To reset the application to the main view, select the reset function. This is similar to the "home" function found in



many websites. To send a query or comment to the support centre, use the feedback form. A user can send technical production related queries as well as general queries on the use of the application. This form can also be used to quickly view support contact details

To change the user login password or to edit profile details, use the admin and profile function. Where authorised, group administrators can also use this function to add and manage users.

## TOP EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE USER FOR JANUARY 2011

By monitoring daily utilisation of all users in the nine provinces it is possible to select the country's top user monthly and ultimately the national winner (for the Grand Prize!) on an annual basis.

Congratulations to South Africa's top ESO user for January 2011!!!

[Mthobisi Jackson \(Eastern Cape\)](#)



Mthobisi using ESuite to transfer information to Noloyiso poultry farmers at Mazeni

During January, we had the opportunity to ask Mthobisi a few questions on his usage of ESO:

**What are your responsibilities at the department?**

My main duty is as an Extension officer for the department, advising farmers.

**How long have you been working for the department?**

I have been at the department for 3 years now and was part of a rural development program before starting at the department of agriculture in the Eastern Cape.

**How often do you make use of ESO?**

Extension Suite Online forms part of my day at least 4 times a week.

**What do you use ESO for the most?**

I do research on Extension Suite Online to advice farmers on the concerns that they have, within both animal production and plant production processes. I also provide assistance to other extension officers who

have not yet been registered on Extension Suite Online.

**How does ESO influence your relationship with farmers or clients?**

I have no words to explain the help that Extension Suite Online has provided to me, it is an excellent and very important program.

**Would you recommend ESO to your colleagues?**

As mentioned earlier Extension Suite Online is a very important program for an extension officer, and I would highly recommend that each and every extension officer has access to the software.

**What section or module in ESO do you use the most?**

I work with both the animal and plant sections, which provides me with the information I need to advice a farmer.

**What have you learned from ESO?**

Extension Suite Online has taught me a lot on the use of chemicals, diseases and especially on helping emerging farmers become commercial farmers, through the use of the enterprise budget section.

**Do you have any tips to other users regarding Extension Suite Online?**

We live in a world of new technology and Extension Suite Online forms an important part of the extension officer's world, so browse, search and research on Extension Suite Online.

**How would you describe Extension Suite Online as an Extension tool?**

Extension Suite Online is a library in your hands.

**Does ESO really make the execution of your duties easier?**

Extension Suite Online has made my research processes more effective.

## Utilisation Reports

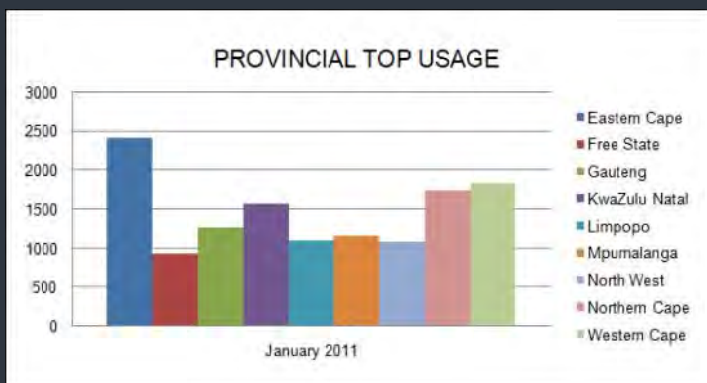
At the end of January 2011 Extension Suite Online (ESO) had 1,786 registered users in the nine provinces, of which 877 had their accounts activated. The challenge for the coming months is to increase the number of activated accounts to at least 80% – 90% of the total number of registered users.

If the enthusiasm, with which 2011 has started off in terms of the utilisation of ESO during January, is anything to go by, 2011 is going to be a good year for South Africa's premier Extension tool - ESO.

Growth in terms of new registrations has risen to 9.17% and activation of accounts by 10.5% since the previous month.

All provinces, with the exception of Mpumalanga experienced growth in terms of ESO pages visited and the duration of visits. Gauteng managed the highest growth in pages visited (84%), with Mpumalanga slumping to -41%. Gauteng was also ahead with an 87.5% growth rate for duration of visits and Mpumalanga lowest with -14.1%.

Piet van Zyl



PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Mthobisi Jackson
Western Cape	Dudley Adolph
Northern Cape	Oitsing Ernest
KwaZulu Natal	Unkown User
Gauteng	Dumisani Gideon Sithole
Mpumalanga	Mashudu Mathoho
Limpopo	Jabu Petunia Baloyi
North West	Unkown User
Free State	Griffith Hadebe