

Top User Additional Give-aways

Users of ESO who repeatedly win top national user honours during a 12 month period qualify for additional prizes. During the period July 2010 – June 2011, Petunia Jabu Baloyi from Limpopo managed to win for a third time and will receive a Digital Camera as well as a Cell Phone for her efforts. Well done Jabu!

The second competition started on 1 July 2011, and will run until the end of June 2012. Any user can qualify for one or more of the following prizes by becoming a regular national top user of ESO:

First Time National Top User:

Flash Disk

Second Time National Top User:

Digital Camera

Third Time National Top User:

Cell Phone

Fourth Time National Top User:

Galaxy Pad

Don't forget: These prizes serve as tokens of recognition for diligence exercised by officers in using a system to help the most important people in developing agriculture, our farmers.

Keep on clicking.

Piet van Zyl

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure."

George Edward Woodberry



ESO DEVELOPMENT TEAM

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DEVELOPING FOR ESO

Servers are monitored to ensure that the software runs optimally, and that it is always available to you, the user.

Extension Suite Online plays an important role in many people's lives, regarding daily assistance with decision making processes in agriculture through providing information that is useful and relevant. It does not only impact users of the system however, but also those who have the honour to develop for the system. This includes a team of dedicated software engineers that develop, improve and maintain the ESO system.

With the development of new modules or tools for Extension Suite Online, programmers have the chance to really exercise their creativity and skills. This is the process where new technologies are researched, adapted or developed for use in the system. As part of the design cycle, graphic artists, developers, information specialists, and other relevant people are involved to make sure that the end user will benefit from the best possible solution. After planning, the component is designed to show what functionality could be expected from it. After approval (and criticism), functionality is added, and tested thoroughly within a development version of Extension Suite Online. The testing team includes developers and non-IT people, to make sure that the functionality makes sense to all users. This cycle can be repeated many times, small tweaks and changes being implemented all the time. After final approval, the software will be updated, and once

again tested.

Developers are constantly working on their code to improve performance of the software itself, and to add new features to existing modules. This includes the implementation of new technologies or adaptation of existing technologies. Any programmer will tell you that he/she is proud of making a difference to even the smallest increase in efficiency of the product.

Maintenance of Extension Suite Online is an important role for the Information Centre as well as the Development Team. Data updates are performed on a regular, scheduled basis, and technical staff assists in the process to ensure data integrity is maintained. Servers are monitored to ensure that the software runs optimally, and that it is always available to you, the user. Whilst software are being updated, processes are followed to limit interruptions of availability to the minimum, and proper testing of the system on various levels ensures the best possible experience to the user of Extension Suite Online.

All of these processes make for hard work and long hours, but it is immensely satisfying to see the impact of one's work and to enjoy doing it.

Vincent Victor

Extension Suite Online is packed with a wide variety of tools that will ease your use of the application. For those of you that have not yet discovered this little helpful tool called the "Report Back Form"; here is a basic description of how it works: The feedback form was developed especially for the user to notify us of any errors or any problems that they may encounter while using the system, in a fast and easy manner. The Report Back Form is located in the toolbar at the top on the left hand side of the ESO application. Click the icon  to open the Report Back Form, insert your



email address, add a subject to your message and compose your message. The most effective structure to compose your message would be to describe the problem in short and supply us with information such as the module that you found the problem in (e.g. Plant Production), and the specific page header (e.g. Vegetables: Production Information: Production and Maintenance: Crop Description: Cowpeas). You are urged to communicate problems to us to insure continued improvement to the value and accuracy of ESO.

TOP EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE USER FOR JUNE 2011

By monitoring utilisation of all users in the nine provinces Manstrat AIS selects the country's top user monthly. These tables will ultimately be used to select an annual national winner.

Once again, congratulations to **Jabu Petunia Baloyi** from Limpopo for being the **NATIONAL TOP ESO USER** in South Africa for the third time running this year!

Impact of Extension Suite Online on farmers in Sekhukhune District: Observation in Fetakgomo Municipality *by Jabu Baloyi*

Extension Suite Online is a handy tool that I personally recommend to every individual extension officer who has access to internet and colleagues, who on daily basis, interact with farmers who are our main clients. I have been interacting with farmers and through observation found that they also have their way to develop their knowledge in terms of access to useful information to improve their approach of doing things or farming practices. I have come across tools and models designed to assist farmers but I notice that ESO has more to offer as it touches on real immediate needs in terms of information.

The product and its services is a one stop shop, it's actually everything at a click of a button. Most of my farmers are not able to read and/or write, but with the approach that Limpopo Department of Agriculture has taken in terms of access to information technology in the province with services like E-agriculture, I think Limpopo is on the right track to improve access to information.

ESO allows extension officers with access to the internet to immediately access information related to the challenges of their farmers and to acquire information to remedy certain situations, it also allows Agricultural

technicians to redress challenges exposed to on the ground, as quick as possible to assist the farmers they serve.

Extension Suite Online is very handy, for both technical and economic advisory to the user. I am now very efficient in giving advice, on the spot, regarding most economic agricultural related matter without having to go back and refer to tons of materials available out there. ESO has added and improved the level of information I give to farmers and now farmers have access to more relevant and reliable information that is more close to their experiences on the ground to assist them in running their farm businesses.

Inspired by ESO, there is currently a group of farmers who have decided to form a mini forum where they are going to share ideas on finance, production, and marketing of their agricultural products as small scale farmers and my colleagues and I are willing to continue and engage in advising them, with the help of ESO, regarding the issues they might come across. I think ESO is the product of the future in terms of the information hub and extensionists should embrace it for its existence.

UTILISATION REPORTS

The overall provincial utilisation outlook for June was impressive, with usage ratings of the top users in five provinces surpassing the 2 000 mark.

This shows increasing utilisation by the top users in the provinces, proving that serious users are increasingly enhancing their information intake and broadening their own agricultural knowledge bases.

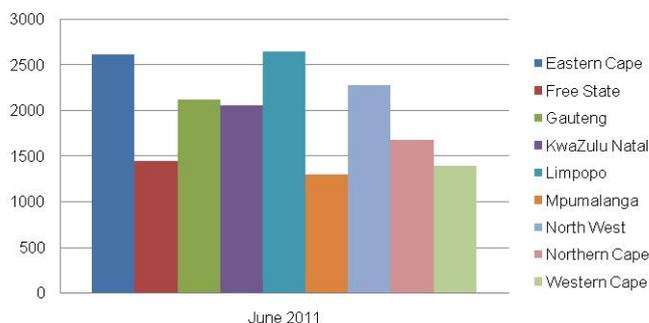
Personnel from three provinces (Gauteng, North West and Limpopo) were trained as systems administrators to register users, extract utilisation reports for departmental managers, track utilisation progress of users and assist those experiencing challenges with ESO, accelerating the assistance process to their users.

In general, ESO utilisation is increasing with more users logging in and a growing number of them spending more and more time on the system.

With this sort of dedication we are confident that we will report in excess of 2 000 point usage ratings for all the provinces in the next issue!

Amanda Shokane

PROVINCIAL TOP USER RATING



TOP USER IN EACH PROVINCE

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Mark Shoaipane
Free State	Griffith Hadebe
Gauteng	Makita Makaepea
KwaZulu Natal	Jetro Ngcobo
Limpopo	Jabu Petunia Baloyi
Mpumalanga	Clement Sithembiso
North West	Molemoeng Diratsagae
Northern Cape	Vuyo Mphemba
Western Cape	Malebogo Phethu