

New developments on Extension Suite Online

Exciting new developments were implemented on Extension Suite Online (ESO) during March.

Regional Data - Infrastructure:

The new mapping function under the infrastructure section was finalised and implemented. The map shows the positions of searched for infrastructure, which falls within a chosen radius, in relation to a local municipality, farm or GPS point. When the map is opened, the specific infrastructure description and coordinates can be viewed by moving the mouse cursor over the infrastructure point on the map. Maps can be accessed by clicking on a small map icon in the infrastructure header bar after searching. The map can be enlarged by increasing the zoom level on the browser.

Dirk Pretorius

Plant Production - Problem Solvers: The Pest and Disease Problem Solver on ESO has now been split into the different crop commodity groups (vegetable, fruit, grains, etc). The purpose of this was to add a more logical approach to the already existing, well-organised approach of the ESO Problem Solver. The split will enable the ESO user to eliminate the process of searching through the various crops, saving time.

Wendy Malatji

Visit the ESO Plant Production Problem Solver and Regional Data Infrastructure to view and try out these new developments.



USEFULL TIPS FOR EXTENSIONISTS

Matsunke Malefane and Michèle Cloete

Guidelines to identifying crop production problems:

1. COMMUNICATE with the farmer to gather information regarding:
 - The type of crop affected;
 - Extreme conditions prevailing; and
 - Possible involvement of agro-chemicals.
2. Physically VISIT the field, OBSERVE and COLLECT information on:
 - Extent of affected plants in the field i.e. whole field, lines, blocks or patches
 - Plant part(s) affected
 - RECORD OBSERVATIONS
3. FIND the problem's answer on the ESO plant problem solver.
4. EXPLAIN the problem and provide possible solutions (remember to mention the estimated cost).



This issue

Building of Lasting Relationships **P.1**

How to use ESO Tools, Tips and Guides **P.2**

National ESO User **P.2**

To receive the Extension Suite Online newsletter via email, register your details on:

www.newsletter.esuite.co.za

BUILDING LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS, THROUGH COMMUNICATION

In the article on extension in the January 2012 edition, effective communication was discussed together with advice on elements to be considered before sending out a message. It is for this reason that emphasis is placed on the importance of building strong relationships with the beneficiaries of Extension Advice. Solid relationships enable extension officers in communicating new agricultural technologies and methods more effectively and thus enhancing progress and innovation efforts. Strong relationship building is one of the primary responsibilities of extension as it leads to self-sustainable and empowered individuals.

"It is of the utmost importance to provide accurate and relevant information to farmers as quickly as possible as it strengthens relationships. ESO, the agricultural Extensionists' decision making tool, provides all the updated accurate and relevant agricultural information for improving stakeholder relationships." -- National User: ESO 2011

For Extensionists, these relationships should naturally be extended to other stakeholders including NGO's, governmental and private organisations for the effective utilisation of resources and goal achievement.

For our purposes, two important components in reaching mutually beneficial relationships are, **knowing the self** and **knowing the client**.

1. **Knowing the self:** Identifying, recognising, accepting and managing one's own personal disposition, to prevent motives, intentions and emotional triggers from affecting objectivity and focus. Knowing oneself leads to:
 - Respect for other people, their actions and ideas.
 - Equal treatment of all individuals.
 - A positive attitude towards fellow creatures and situations.
 - A relaxed, constructive and calm approach to issues.

- Non-judgemental and non-assumptive attitudes.
- Only making promises that one can keep.
- Being seen as genuine, supportive and encouraging.

2. **Knowing the client:** Knowledge gained about oneself, ultimately helps in the building of relationships with others. In the February 2010 edition of the ESO Newsletter, the 5 fundamental principles (**Needs, Fears, Constraints, Priorities and Expectations**) in understanding the empowerment of beneficiaries were briefly mentioned.

To determine these, one needs to:

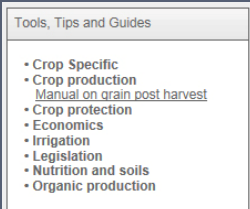
2.1 Listen actively, and then listen some more:

- Give undivided attention.
- Acknowledge verbal and non-verbal messages of the speaker.
- Don't be distracted by the environment, own thoughts and other influences.
- Show positive body language.
- Exhibit attention by verbal or non-verbal reaction.
- Exclude assumptions and/or judgement during feedback.
- Repeat the message to prevent misunderstanding and misinterpretation.
- React with empathy and understanding.
- Do not interrupt or finish a speaker's sentences.

2.2 Speak clearly and understandably:

- Use only terminology and language that the listener knows and understands.
- Use de-briefing techniques such as open-ended questions and frontloading techniques.
- Keep tone and volume at appropriate levels.

Matsunke Malefane and Michèle Cloete



The menu item “**Tools, Tips and Guides**” in the Extension Suite Online (ESO) sidebar is home to all the Extension Guides contained within ESO. When researching information in ESO, relevant Extension Guides are also available at the bottom of each page, but in the case where one

quickly needs to find a specific guide the “**Tools, Tips and Guides**” menu item becomes very handy.

The “Tools, Tips and Guides” menu item is divided into different sections to facilitate the search for a specific guide. Each section contains guides relevant to that specific section. When searching for an Extension Guide, click on the “**Tools, Tips and Guides**” menu item, a list of the different sections will be displayed. Now

click on a relevant section to display all the guides that are related to that section. To view one of the guides, click on the guide name, and a new page in the content area with a short description of the guide, will be displayed. The selected guide can now be downloaded by clicking on the provided link.



All the ESO guides are in PDF format, a link to download the PDF reader is also supplied on this page.



NATIONAL EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE TOP USER: FEBRUARY 2012

The top monthly ESO user is determined by monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces. Values are attached to Visits, Pages Visited and Duration of Visits to establish the National ESO USER of the Month.

FEBRUARY ESO

UTILISATION OVERVIEW

Congratulations to, **George du Preez** (Northern Cape Department Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development), who is the ESO National User for February 2012, George is a second time National User for 2012 and therefore will receive a **Blackberry Cellular Telephone**.



During March, we had the opportunity to ask George du Preez a few questions regarding his usage of ESO:

Q: What tips do you have to your fellow extension officers to become a monthly national ESO user?

I advise colleagues to start using ESO more frequently; this will definitely make your work easier and more enjoyable. I can do research work for farmers immediately and I know that I always have my ESO “library” at hand. If fellow colleagues have forgotten or lost their usernames or passwords they should phone the ESO help desk to retrieve their login information.

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

I get up early in the morning and do my research on ESO. To be honest, most of the research work that I do, I get from Extension Suite Online.

Q: Which enterprise projects are you farmers more interested in?

The farmers that I work with farm mostly with crops such as cotton, lucerne, maize and beans, but furthermore I advise farmers on general agriculture related topics.

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

To give an example, I have a small number of farmers who farm on communal ground with a few goats or cattle, to whom I give assistance regularly regarding diseases, I will consult with our local health technician and together with ESO problem solver be able to advise these farmers accordingly.

Q: What are the most frequently asked questions that you get from farmers and are you able to help them through ESO?

The questions that I get from farmers are mostly of a technical nature, what type of technique to use for a certain task or what new developments are there in a specific field. I am able to address these questions through ESO, I know that ESO will supply me with information that is up to date and will give me adequate knowledge on different farming techniques.

Looking at the increases in the utilisation of ESO registered during February we can prepare for a bumper year in agricultural extension in South Africa. The nine provinces on average upped their utilisation from January's figures as follows:

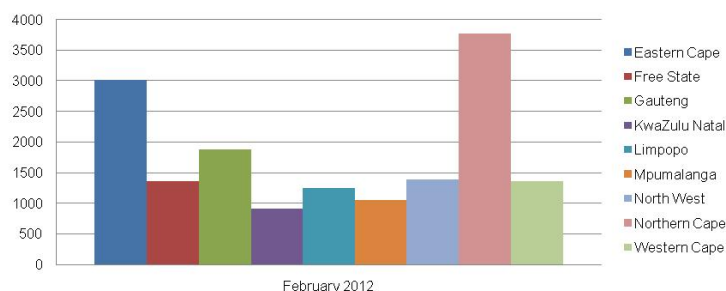
Unique Visitors increased with 43.9%; Visits with 64.3%; Pages Accessed with 77.2%; and Duration of Visits with 133.7%.

These figures are very positive and make good reading, and will hopefully set the pace for the rest of the year and beyond. Well done and good luck!

The focus required from extension management and supervisors is now to get registered users to activate their accounts and secondly to use ESO. Increasing the number of active users will definitely improve the quality and the quantity of the service we render to our farmers and their dependants. This will also be the theme of the Monthly Awareness Meetings between Provincial Extension Managers and Manstrat AIS.

Piet van Zyl

PROVINCIAL TOP USER RATING



NAME OF TOP USER IN EACH PROVINCE FEBRUARY 2012

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Bonisiwe Patience Mbanjwa
Free State	Griffith Hadebe
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Abegail Vuyisile Mthembu
Limpopo	Nicholas Charles
Mpumalanga	Michael Mohuba
North West	Monametsi Rkgase
Northern Cape	George du Preez
Western Cape	Antony Louw