

FROM THE ESO DISCUSSION FORUM

Jeanne-Louise Bekker

Each month the Extension Suite Online (ESO) Discussion Forum boasts a variety of new topics and discussions. During the past couple of weeks a number of topics definitely caught the attention of many a user, including mine. Questions regarding tomato cultivars for tunnels, how to test borehole delivery in the field, and information on using sawdust as fertilizer, were prominent.

However, the topic that I want to highlight in this month's newsletter is the question presented by Gorden Godfrey: "Can you please assist me with information regarding registration of a poultry abattoir? (Where to register and how much does it cost?)". To highlight the effectiveness and value of discussion forums the following is the response to Gorden's query: "The Red Meat Abattoir Association (RMAA) – www.rvav.co.za is a representative forum for abattoir owners in South Africa and works hard to apply measures to maintain high standards in respect of abattoirs. They are a good source of information and will be able to guide you with regards to regulations and applications depending on your business plan. If you are planning to build an abattoir, you should also apply to the Department of Agriculture for a license to convert livestock to meat to be sold as a product suitable for human consumption. The Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act no. 40 of 2000) addresses measures to promote the safety of meat and animal products and to establish and maintain essential national standards to which abattoirs must abide." Extension Suite Online expands further on the Meat Safety Act, 2000 in the Animal Production module, under the sidebar information option "Legislation and Policy framework".

This was the ultimate aim we had in mind when we first created the ESO Discussion Form. This is how the agricultural advisory community can get answers to their queries, assist their colleagues across South Africa, and in the process build on the intelligence and agricultural knowledgebase of a decision support system that belongs to the agricultural advisors and farmers of our country.

USEFULL TIPS FOR EXTENSIONISTS

Matsunke Malefane and Michèle Cloete

Conducting workshops

Workshops help individuals with common problems to interact and to find solutions while building relationships. To improve the effectiveness of a workshop, these may help:

- Start with an "icebreaker" (activity).
- Move around to get the "mood" of the discussions and to help clarify any questions.
- Let participants know, there is **no** right or wrong answer.
- Watch the clock and give advance notice on when the time has almost run out.



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www.newsletter.esuite.co.za

AN EXCITING 2012 FOR THE EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE TEAM

Dr Roelof de Villiers,

Managing Director: Manstrat Agricultural Intelligence Solutions (Pty) Ltd.

During 2012, we have made a number of improvements to Extension Suite Online, all based on feedback from the users of the system. We have added a new start-up page to ESO that contains a general overview of information contained in the system; we have moved the Search and Q&A sections to the start page menu; and have added a very popular Discussion Forum.

New, easier to find information sections were added under, "What is new in ESO"; the most popular discussion topics are displayed under "Hot discussion topics"; market prices have been upgraded; and various Departmental Publications are available directly from the start page.

The Discussion Forum became extremely popular during the first two months of implementation. Here, Extension Practitioners can ask questions and share their views on a National Basis. Interesting discussions can be followed or contributed to on a wealth of topics important to users in South Africa.

Manstrat has also developed a range of new information components to be launched in the New Year. Users can expect to find brand-new sections with

agricultural news feeds, as well as an agricultural market place where suppliers of agricultural infrastructure and input resources will be displayed.

All these developments have been done based on the feedback from ESO users. As in the past, I once again invite you to provide us with your comments, recommendations and specific needs and requirements. You are welcome to send me an e-mail at, roelof@manstrat.co.za. Tell me how you find ESO, about any new information that you would like to see on the system, or any other issue that you would like to bring to my attention. Extension Suite Online is your system and we would like to hear from you as much as possible during the next year. If you tell us what you would like to find on ESO, we will endeavour to create it for you. So, come on, don't be shy. Send me an e-mail.

I trust that all ESO users will be able to find time to spend with their families over the festive season and enjoy a well-deserved December holiday period. We are all looking forward to an exciting 2013. On behalf of all Manstrat Personnel and myself I wish you all a wonderful December break and are looking forward to work with all of you during next year.

HOW TO TIPS: NAVIGATE THE GROSS MARGIN BUDGETS ON ESO *Xolile Dlamini*

Extension Suite Online (ESO) allows a user to do a gross margin budget for both plants and animals. A gross margin budget guides the farmer on relative profitability of an enterprise and can be used as a planning tool to evaluate different options. It is calculated by subtracting variable costs from gross income. Clients should be reminded that gross income cannot be regarded as profits because it excludes fixed and overhead costs. To navigate the crop gross margin in ESO, these steps can be followed:

Step 1: Select the **Plant Production** tab in the main navigation bar and select the type of crop e.g. **vegetables, fruits, grains** etc in the main menu bar;

Step 2: Click on **crop selection**, in the side bar and then select the specific crop using the drop down arrow;

Step 3: Click on **Economics** in the side bar and then select **Enterprise budget**. Under the enterprise budget tab click on **Explanatory notes** or

Provincial combuds, read and understand the content before using the gross margin template;

Step 4: Click on **Gross margin budget**, a template will open where the user can make changes to the following:

Costs of production and income: Sections with drop down arrows allow the user to select the type of activity that is applicable to the specific enterprise. The user can click on the input boxes, change quantities and prices per unit relevant to a specific enterprise e.g., pre and post harvest costs, labour costs and marketing costs. The system will automatically calculate totals in the final column of the template and sub totals (at the bottom) for each type of cost. *Budget summary* – provides summary of the enterprise budget to give total production costs and gross margin. The user does not enter any figures here.

It is important for the user to **print the changes** and output generated as these cannot be saved in the system for future reference.



NATIONAL EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE USERS OF 2012

For the fifth time this year, we congratulate **Mr Vhuthu Gavhi (Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development)** on being the Top National ESO User for November 2012. Further more; well done to all the National Top ESO Users of 2012, thank you for the commitment that you have shown towards improving agricultural advisory services in South Africa, we salute you. Lastly, but definitely not least, we say thank you to each Extension Suite Online user and agricultural advisor (extension officer) for the efforts that you have made to enlarge the Extension footprint in agriculture.

UTILISATION OVERVIEW FOR NOVEMBER 2012

Thapedi Setshedi

With the holidays around the corner, one realises that the countdown to the festive season and New Year is in full swing. Wherever you look there seems to be lots of "holiday fatigue" about.

Despite this, ESO utilisation figures seem to be unaffected by this human condition and not even labour issues in the farming industry could prevent officers from spending 348 hours and accessing 7 639 pages on the system in November.

The provinces managed to register an additional 105 users and ESO registrations reached 2 789 in November, while users spent 3 687 hours (equal to 460 - eight hour working days!) and accessed 83 344 pages (7 576 pages on average per month during the past 11 months) on ESO.

The ESO Home Page that was launched in August 2012 has already attracted in excess of 2 400 views and 150 responses to questions and statements made by users.

My wish for every user of ESO is that you may have a blessed and safe holiday season, and that 2013 will be the year in which we will make a real difference to those who are dependent on our knowledge, skills and enthusiasm.



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

George du Preez
Northern Cape

"Extension Suite Online is 'jou biblioteek op voete' (mobile library)"



JUNE 2012

Jacob Mpheto
Western Cape

"It's a quick access gateway to agricultural expertise and data."



MARCH 2012

Sesi Virginia Tsela
Mpumalanga

"Extension Suite Online is my web of information where I can find answers to agricultural related challenges."



JULY - AUGUST 2012

Vhuthu Gavhi
Gauteng

"...it is highly advisable for us as EO's to always consult with ESO before going to the field."



APRIL 2012

Sindile Magoda
Eastern Cape

"Just by the click of a mouse you can solve a farmer's problems in the field within seconds."



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2012

Vhuthu Gavhi
Gauteng

"I used to use Manuals and infotoons; lately I rely on ESO, especially the pictorial guides"



MAY 2012

Pieter Burger
Western Cape

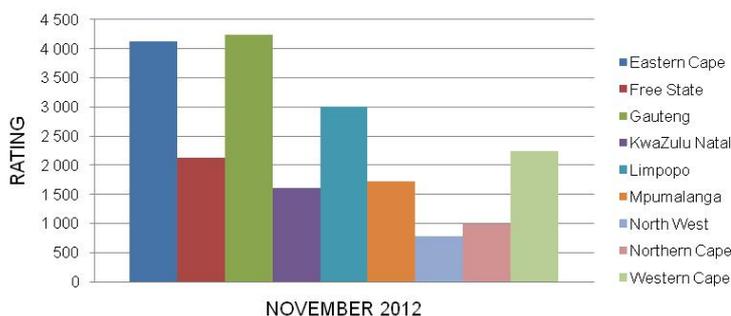
"It is a good offset point for any agricultural enterprise as it provides basic information on all the major fields..."



NOVEMBER 2012

Vhuthu Gavhi
Gauteng

PROVINCIAL TOP USER RATING



NAME OF TOP USER IN EACH PROVINCE NOVEMBER 2012

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Mthobisi Zuma
Free State	Gabaiphiwe Gorden Godfrey Kgang
Gauteng	Vhuthu Gavhi
KwaZulu Natal	Busisiwe Rebecca
Limpopo	Tebogo Thobakgale
Mpumalanga	Zanele Lusibane
North West	Monametsi Rkgase
Northern Cape	Boikanyo Gae
Western Cape	Pap Protopapas