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FOUR STEPS TO COMPILING SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH FROM ESO

Jantus van der Linden

This **two-part series** provides tips towards undertaking successful research on ESO. For demonstration purposes it is assumed that the research is undertaken by an Extension Officer and aimed at finding information and solutions on how farmers can deal with common diseases found on their tomato crop.

The series will focus on the following four key steps of the research process:

- **Step 1:** Determining research needs
- **Step 2:** Defining the research topic and field
- **Step 3:** Undertaking the research and recording findings
- **Step 4:** Evaluating research results and determining how best to disseminate such to the farmers

This first article in the series will address Steps 1 and 2 whilst the next article will tackle Steps 3 and 4.

Step 1: Determining Research Needs

The first step in the research process is, determining your research needs. To this

end one must consider the purpose of the research and the profile of the recipient target group – i.e. who is the end user of the researched information and how will their profile influence the type, sophistication level, amount and format of information to be researched and provided to them. Such a purpose statement will help you to stay focussed and directed and keep you from getting side tracked or overwhelmed by all the information you may find.

Practical example:

Purpose Statement: Establish the most common diseases found on tomato crops grown in South Africa and how farmers could deal with such problems.

Target Group Needs: The majority of farmers who will receive the information are literate but have had limited experience in farming with tomatoes and almost none have had any previous experience in working with chemicals and/or pest and disease control.

Step 2: Define your Research Topic and Field

This step aims to define exactly what should be researched. This is achieved by developing an understanding of the topic and to then identify and select key words related to the topic. They are called "key words" because they can "unlock" the doors that will lead you to useful information. How do I develop and list key words?



Jantus van der Linden

Practical example:

- First, write one or two sentences about your topic which provides a good description of the problem experienced. Underline all of the specific words that describe your topic and then make a separate list of these specific words (e.g. tomato diseases, plant health, fruit rot, bacterial infection, botrytis, early blight, chemical treatment, etc.).
- Add to your list any other words that mean the same thing (synonyms) or are related terms. Think of more words or phrases that describe the larger topic (or sub-topics). Add those to the list (e.g. crop protection, herbicides, plant diseases, organic disease control, etc.).
- Now you should have a pretty comprehensive list of words and phrases that you can use to search for information.

In the next edition we will guide you through the process of actually researching the key words within ESO and recording and evaluating the findings.



TIPS FOR EXTENSIONISTS

Matsunke Malefane and Michèle Cloete

Why perform a feasibility study/enterprise selection?

As farmers will be able to make informed decisions about the following:

- Decide which business strategy to adopt,
- Identify the **optimal or most appropriate** mixture of commodities to produce and what inputs are required,
- Determine whether a business is worth the time, effort and the resources,
- Simply determine whether the farming enterprise selected is a viable option.

(Manstrat AIS offers courses on Feasibility Studies and Business Plan Development)

HOW TO TIPS: Speed up browsing with these keyboard shortcuts Kabelo

Using keyboard shortcuts could speed up your browsing immensely. One can use the following tips for quick navigation through ESO, other web pages and the Internet.

- When filling in the textboxes on a Web page (e.g. Username or Password), use the **Tab key** to jump from box to box and the **Shift + Tab key** to jump backwards through the boxes.
- **Up/Down Arrow keys** –will scroll a single line up or down on a web page (**Space bar key** also scrolls the page down).
- **Page Up/Page Down** - scrolls several lines at a time on a web page.



- **Home key** - goes to the top of a web page.
- **End key** - goes to the bottom of the web page.
- **Backspace key** - goes back to the previous web page. The **Alt + Left-arrow keys** also work for back and **Alt+right-arrow** for forward).
- **Ctrl + W** - close the current tab or pop-up window.
- **Ctrl and the plus or minus keys** - enlarges the text on any Web page.

There are more keyboard shortcut keys one can utilize, by learning how to use them to navigate will always save time.

MONTHLY NATIONAL ESO USER: FEBRUARY 2013

ESO utilisation is determined through monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces and by attaching values to Visits, Pages Visited and Duration of Visits; a rating is calculated to establish the National ESO USER of the Month. The monthly national ESO user will receive the

following prizes: First time National ESO User 2013: **4 Gig USB memory stick**, second time National ESO User 2013: **Sony Digital Camera**, third time National ESO User 2013: Blackberry cell phone, National ESO User 2013: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

Congratulations to **Mr George du Preez (Northern Cape Department Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development)**, who is the ESO National User for February 2013. During March we had the opportunity to conduct an interview with Mr du Preez on his usage of ESO.

This month's National top ESO user George du Preez is from the Northern Cape Department of Land Reform and Rural Development. George is not new to ESO honours and has already won the ESO National top user award in 2011 on two occasions, and once during 2012. So it's "welcome back on the winner's podium George" as National top ESO user for February 2013.



Mr George du Preez

George's home town, Jan Kempdorp, is situated approximately 132 km from Kimberley and he currently works in the Phokwane municipal area, of the Frances Baard District. Phokwane municipality is nestled in the lush green delta of the Hartswater region and boasts the second largest irrigation scheme in the Southern Hemisphere, known as the Vaalharts Irrigation Scheme.

George joined the Northern Cape department in February 2007, and currently advises a community group, 5 projects, 2 NGO's and 30 food security projects. His areas of expertise and interest lie mainly in plant production. George's district manager is Lillian Senosi and his Senior Manager is Aslam Tawana.

Our winner started using ESO because it provided him with the necessary information answer his farmer's/client's questions immediately. We asked George to described ESO in a few words, he said that ESO was mobile library.

Previous interviews with George as National Top User can be read on the ESO newsletter website www.newsletter.esuite.co.za under Archives section.

Manstrat AIS Information Centre Training Team

Xolile Dhlamini

ESO utilisation and the training of users go hand in hand. Two additions were recently made to the Manstrat AIS Information Centre Training Team. Allow us some time off from the usual utilisation report to introduce Matsunke Malefane and Xolile Dhlamini to our readers:



Matsunke Malefane

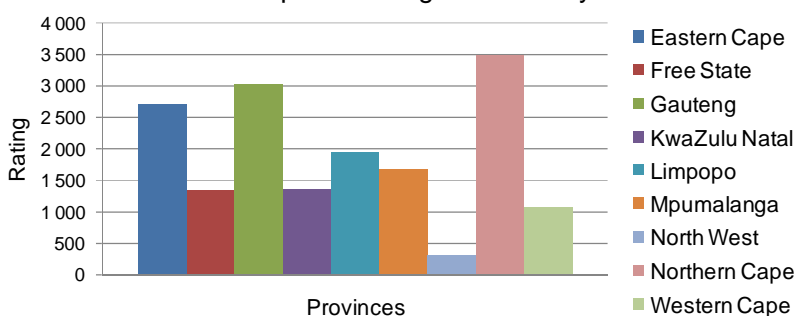
Matsunke holds a M.Sc. in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, a B.Sc. in Agriculture (General), and a Diploma in Agricultural Education, and has 14 years' experience in working with both small scale and commercial farmers. During this period she gained experience as an Extension Officer, trainer, public participation officer, a researcher and Agricultural Consultant. She has worked directly with affected communities in development, and income generation projects.



Xolile Dhlamini

Xolile holds a M.Sc. in Agricultural Economics, a B.Sc. in Agriculture and a diploma in adult education and training. She has more than 10 years' experience in vocational training, working with emerging farmers and has participated in a number of consultation projects. Her experience includes monitoring and evaluating small agricultural business enterprises; community development projects establishment; and extensive experience in the training and rendering of other support services to emerging farmers.

Provincial top user rating for February 2013



Top users in each province: February 2013

Eastern Cape	Sindile Magoda
Free State	Griffith Hadebe
Gauteng	Vhuthu Gavhi
KwaZulu Natal	Busisiwe Rebecca Hadebe
Limpopo	Tebogo Thobakgale
Mpumalanga	Petunia Magolela
North West	Dineo Mokgatthe
Northern Cape	George du Preez
Western Cape	Jacob Mapheto