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A WINTER'S MESSAGE

Genesis 8:22

"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

NUFARMER Africa

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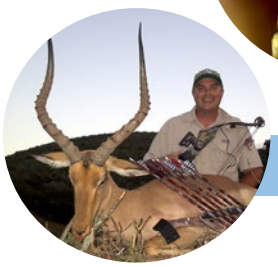

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FROM NUFARMER'S PEN

Winter is setting in fast and even though autumn only just commenced, the high rainfalls around the major parts of the country will bring about the endurance of high moist content in the upper crust of the soils. This, together with a lower percentage of sunshine and subsequent heat measures, will urge farmers to keep their livestock well-fed and as warm as possible. The winter crop farmers have the benefit of planting cabbage and similar vegetables in softer well-rain fed soil. Cabbages remain one of the most popular items in the consumer basket and forms part of the typical warm food preparation in winter. This season is also SA's high season for hunting. Our country prides itself for being the number one destination in the world for its big variety of game which is in itself a major attraction to viewers, but more importantly brings much needed revenue to the country. Along with this, tax-paying hunting farms, lodges, hotels and above all, many employees are involved in this positive economic system. Why curb it with red-tape from government institutions with all kinds of 'green and animal conservation' regulations? This, while there is proof that the very powers to be rolling out the red tape are also keen hunters? South Africa remains an interesting country! Even the flourishing medicinal cannabis industry is under fire for non-compliance of certain regulatory measures. This all, in a country where every cent is needed to stimulate economic and employment progress (which the President so regularly mentions). In closing, content appears in this edition of Nufarmer Africa of much importance to farmers and those involved in agriculture, even where Mrs. Farmers is concerned. We remind you once more to visit the Nufarmer Africa website, look out for latest news or advice snippets and kindly tell your friends and communities to participate!

A well-managed cabbage field - note the irrigation lines and weed-free spaces.

CABBAGE FARMING – HOW TO AND WHAT NOT TO

Cabbage belongs to the Cruciferae family, which includes broccoli, mustard, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and kale.

Brassica (cabbages, etc.) is a cool season crop, but new varieties are extending the seasonal range. Farmers with little experience however, find it difficult to grow cabbage during hot months, when more insects attack the crop. Cabbage is very popular and consumers use it in various ways. It can be eaten with pap, mixed with meat and added to stews or salads. Cabbage has high fibre content, and also contains vitamin C, calcium and folic acid.

Preparing the soil

Cabbage can be grown in virtually all types of soil. The crop can be grown successfully in well-drained fertile soil containing lots of organic matter. A soil pH of 6,5 to 7 is recommended. Although cabbage is a cool weather crop, it can be grown throughout the year in most areas, especially when suitable cultivars are used. It is fairly resistant to frost and can survive temperatures as low as -3°C without harm, but thrives in an optimal temperature range of 15 -20°C. Poor environmental conditions during the growing period can lead to quality problems when the cabbages are harvested.

High temperatures and low moisture levels may result in small plants and a low yield. Too-low temperatures during the growing period can also lead to long stems and bolting (flower stalk formation and seeding).

Crop Rotation Important

Rotate cabbages with non-related crops such as tomatoes, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, beans, peas, potatoes or maize. Cabbage is a heavy nitrogen feeder and should be rotated with leguminous crops such as beans, which fix nitrogen, as well as with grain crops such as maize for their production of organic matter.

Avoid cruciferous crops such as broccoli, Chinese cabbage and cauliflower, as they can act as hosts for pests and diseases.

Spacing

The planting distance depends on the cabbage variety and the target market. Varieties that have big heads need more space than cultivars having small heads. Plant small-head varieties 30cm in between in a row and 50cm space between rows. These varieties are ideal for fresh produce market purposes. Plant big-head varieties at 50cm space in a row and 70cm between the rows. These varieties are ideal for informal traders' markets.

Planting times

In South Africa, cabbage can be grown throughout the year, except on the Highveld where the crop should preferably not be sown from May to July because of the cold, and also not in the summer months in the Lowveld, or any other region which experiences very hot and humid conditions.

Sowing seeds versus buying seedlings

The serious farmer wanting to produce cabbages should consider purchasing seedlings from a renowned seedling grower. Sowing by oneself have the disadvantages of the time for seedlings to grow, possible loss of a percentage of seedling not appearing well and having to plant out seedling with the possibility of further losses due to poor planting or growing. By planting quality seedlings less labour is required and with proper management, good production figures are made possible.

Planting seedlings

Soil should be irrigated before planting. At this stage plants should be about 10cm high. Planting should take place during the morning or late in the afternoon when it is cooler.

Remove the seedlings from the seed trays with soil or growth medium adhering to the roots. Make holes in the soil and transplant the seedlings in the holes. Plant them a little deeper than they stood in the nursery. Press the soil down around each plant, but not too close to the stem. Water the plants immediately after planting.

Fertilising

Cabbage is regarded as a heavy feeder and does very well if fed with manure and compost, as well as with organic fertilisers. A correct fertiliser recommendation can only be made after soil analysis.

The following is a general recommendation: before planting, dig in 2:3:4 (27) at 600 — 900kg/ha or 60 - 90g per m2. Consider this as the minimum needed to ensure that the plants get a good start. About 1 200kg of 2:3:4 (27) per ha (120g/m2) is, however, optimal.

The plants respond well to an additional top dressing of nitrogen LAN at two, four and six weeks after transplanting. Start with 4g per plant and increase later to 10g per plant. Spread 20cm around plants. Applying the top dressing late, when the cabbages are already forming heads, can cause splitting or the development of more leaves, resulting in poor or loose head formation.

Irrigation

It is crucial to supply sufficient water at critical times, such as immediately after sowing or transplanting. Young plants should get enough water for vegetative growth before forming heads; the bigger the plant is at this stage, the larger the eventual head will be. About 35mm per week is optimal.

Over-watering

Important to remember is that too much water, once the heads have formed, can cause cabbages to crack, which is unwanted. Cracking can also result from watering inconsistently, e.g. first giving the plants a lot of water, and then giving them a little. Use drip irrigation to conserve water.

Harvesting

Cabbages are harvested 90 - 110 days after transplanting. Cut with a sharp knife when the heads are firm and hard. Harvesting may continue selectively over several weeks and should always be done early in the morning. Harvested cabbage heads should not be left in the sun to wilt. Cut heads with two to three layers of outer leaves for protection during transportation. Store heads in a cool, shaded place. With efficient management practices, good yields of 60 — 80t/ha can be obtained.

Crop management

Start weeding when the plants are established and continue at least until the leaves cover the ground. Take care not to damage the roots when weeding is done mechanically. Irrigate as required throughout the growing period. Mulches can also help conserve moisture. Crop residues should be destroyed immediately after harvesting by incorporating them into the soil.

Control pests and diseases

Various pests and diseases attack cabbage, and this can lead to serious economic loss. Generally speaking, integrated pest management strategies, including scouting, crop rotation, good crop management, chemical and mechanical control of pests and diseases can be used. If you use chemicals, make sure they are registered. An updated list of chemicals can be obtained from the Department of Agriculture.

Pests on cabbages

Aphids suck the leaves of the plants and cause serious damage to the plants. Bagrada bugs suck sap from the leaves of the plants, and can damage the growing points of the seedlings, causing the cabbage to make several small unmarketable heads. Diamond back moth's small greenish larvae eat window-like holes in cabbage leaves, damage the growing points and may cause serious damage to the crop.

Bacterial leaf spot.

Damage caused by Diamond back moth.

Cabbage Bagrada bug

To control, growers must check their seedlings, young plants and growing plants regularly (scouting). Window-like patches in the leaves are sure signs of the presence of diamond back moth larvae. Consult an agricultural supply store about chemical control.

Watch out for diseases!

Black rot is caused by Xanthomonas campestris pv. Campestris – almost unpronounceable name but dangerous to crops! The leaf edges turn yellow-brown and dry out, and the veins turn black. When cut open, the xylem (woody area of stem) shows blackening.

No treatment is effective if the plants are already infected. Remove infected plants immediately and destroy them. Control by planting disease-free seed through crop rotation. Apply field sanitation and plant resistant cultivars.

Downy mildew is caused by Peronospora parasitica. The downy mildew fungus can live in the soil until the next crop. Pepper- spot lesions are present on the upper leaf surface, with white growth present on the lower leaf surface. Control through chemical control and plant disease-free seedlings only.

Remember; don't over-irrigate!

Source: ARC-VOP Roodeplaat.

Save money, time and labour – buy seedlings from a reputable seedling grower.

MARITIMO RZ F1 BY RIJK ZWAAN EXCEEDS ALL EXPECTATIONS

One of Rijk Zwaans' (RZ) main goals is to share a healthy future in developing seed for high quality products for its world-wide clientele. The South African Medium and High Tech English cucumber production industry plays a great role in this and the Maritimo variety of RZ has been helping them accomplish this goal.

Maritimo RZ combines highquality fruits with endurance. This variety was one of the first varieties of RZ with high resistance to CGMMV (BonDefense).
However, that is not all Maritimo RZ has to offer as it also displays high resistance to Cca/ Ccu and Px (ex Sf) combined with intermediate resistance to CMV and CVYV.

Maritimo RZ has proven to have the genetic potential to perform year-round, in heated Autumn/ Winter protected cultivation and Spring/ Summer protected cultivation, in the South African climate. This outstanding variety produces attractively ribbed, dark green, high-quality English cucumbers throughout its production season.

Maritimo RZ is a fast-growing, wellbalanced variety with good vigour and steady generative behaviour to ensure continuous stamina and high yield.

Maritimo RZ has shown to have great fruit succession, comes in a strong disease resistance package, and the ability to adapt to the heat and cold experienced in the South African climate.

This variety also has the added benefit of carrying the Blueleaf trait that aids the grower in maintaining a healthier cucumber crop. This trait allows for the formation of large dark-green leaves, which aids in increasing photosynthetic activity. Increased photosynthesis results in a healthier plant that is consequently slower to succumb to diseases such as Fusarium and Downy Mildew.

The Blueleaf trait also allows for increased adaptability to environmental changes and increased root uptake power. In addition, the formation of darkgreen leaves is less attractive to pests such as whitefly and thrips. All of these qualities associated with Blueleaf help the grower to ensure a good and prolonged production season.

Maritimo RZ is not the only highperforming cucumber cultivar that Rijk Zwaan has to offer. For the Autumn/Winter segment, Litoral RZ remains the go-to variety for many heated Medium and High Tech tunnel cucumber growers in South Africa.

Litoral RZ is a productive, vigorous, fast-growing, Blueleaf variety with high resistance to Cca/ Ccu/ Px (ex Sf) accompanied by intermediate resistance to CVYV. This variety is very wellbalanced and fast-growing with plenty of stamina to ensure high yield throughout the colder seasons.

For the Spring/Summer segment, Durance RZ is a Blueleaf variety with high resistance to Powdery Mildew making it a leading summer variety in South Africa. It also offers high resistance to Cca and Ccu with intermediate resistance to CVYV. Durance RZ produces well-filled long cucumbers with an attractive dark green colour and good ribbing. Durance RZ is strong against tip burn and can withstand extreme summer conditions.

Greenhouse clients around the globe strongly believe in Rijk Zwaans' range of superb quality and well-researched seed ranges. The Maritimo cucumber variety by RZ is therefore another jewel in their crown.

Marilyn McDermott |
Crop Specialist Cucumbers |
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Professor Omolola Fayemi of the North West University.

One thousand-millionth of a metre, or to put it differently: one billionth of a metre. This unthinkable small number is called a 'nanometre' and the world of nanotechnology operates at between 1 and 100 nanometres. This is also where the North-West University (NWU) is unearthing new ways to combat disease, to help protect the environment and to develop materials that will promote sustainability.

LESS TOXIC AGRICULTURAL INPUTS - NWU

The focus area Material Science Innovation and Modelling (MaSIM) at the NWU has endeavoured to become a leading research and development centre in the area of materials, metal initiatives and nanotechnology initiatives to solve industry-related problems on a regional, provincial and national level. In addition, research at the NWU investigating solutions to long-term food security questions extensively incorporates the use of nanotechnology, such as the development of less toxic agricultural inputs, which include fertilisation approaches. But that is hardly where the NWU's exploits into the field of nanotechnology stop.

Professor Omolola Fayemi and her team from the School of Physical and Chemical Sciences at the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences are focused on nano sensors. Here, they fabricate electrochemical-based sensors with different nano-composites such as green-based synthetics, chemical-based synthetics and electro-spun nanofibres to sense biological molecules such as environmental pollutants, adulterants in food and contaminants in waste water.

"Basically," says Fayemi, "we are dealing with nanomaterial for sensing applications." The applications of nanotechnology are nigh on endless. "When you look at neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin in the body, we can use nano sensors to detect abnormal levels of these neurotransmitters, which in turn can help us to determine the psychological well-being of a person." Nanotechnology also has huge implications for illnesses such as Parkinson's disease and cancer.

"We can also use nano sensors to pre-emptively warn people not to use water that has been adversely affected by pollutants such as industrial waste. The same applies to food, which is sometimes laced with adulterants that can be detrimental to your health. Too many food suppliers are neglecting to uphold the requisite standards and nano sensors can help detect this," says Fayemi, from her office at the NWU's campus in Mahikeng.

"NWU is an institution that strives for excellence in all its endeavours and one that encourages academic freedom. It is also an institution that cares. We have had great outputs in the field of nanotechnology and this helps us to spread our ethic of care to our wider community, both locally and abroad. I cannot recommend the NWU highly enough, especially if you want to pursue a career in nanotechnology."

If ever there was a slogan for the exciting uses of nanotechnology, then it is perfectly encapsulated by Fayemi when she says: "Nanotechnology might be small, but it is mighty." Now that is no secret.

NWU

Improve your knowledge of farming – Subscribe to Nufarmer Africa now and obtain your bi-monthly copy on your smart phone or tablet – See P19

KENYA'S FARM-TO-FORK REAPS SUSTAINABLE BENEFITS

Food production represents one of the world's most environmentally damaging industries, considering the waste that goes into growing, packaging and transporting food. Tsebo Kenya embarked on a farm-to-fork initiative to source locally and now ensures optimally fresh produce while substantially lowering its carbon footprint.

THE CHALLENGE

As with other countries in the world, Kenya has been experiencing rampant food inflation, making it increasingly challenging to retain the level of quality and cost-effective pricing for which Tsebo (Tsebo: A workplace that works for you) is known. At the same time, Tsebo Kenya's chefs expressed a need to update their menus with fresh, seasonal fruit and vegetables. However, they found that their legacy wholesale suppliers were inconsistent in their provision in terms of quality and timing.

THE SOLUTION

In line with Tsebo Solutions Group's renewed sustainability drive, Tsebo Kenya realised that by circumventing the middle man and going directly to the source, they could ensure the provision of the best quality products at the most reasonable prices. By initiating a farm-to-fork programme, they would not only provide cost-saving and reliable provision for Tsebo Kenya's catering solutions, but it would also have direct benefits for the local farming communities in which they operate.

What is farm-to-fork?

The farm-to-fork (also known as farm-to-table) movement encourages the use of natural, locally produced foods over imported or processed alternatives. It supports community-based food systems by buying directly from growers to support local economies and farming communities that observe sustainable farming practices.

This helps to decrease the physical distance produce needs to travel, thereby reducing the environmental impact of transportation. It also helps to create sustainable food systems that support ethical labour practices, community upliftment, and environmental conservation. For a commercial caterer like Tsebo Kenya, farm-to-fork allows auditable traceability for produce as it moves through the food supply chain.

Tsebo Kenya initiated relationships with dependable local suppliers, markets and farms. All fruit and vegetables (ranging from potatoes, carrots, and spinach to lychees, apples and tomatoes) are sourced from suppliers at the local markets or, for bulk quantities, directly from local farms for distribution by Tsebo to its client sites.

All suppliers are thoroughly vetted to ensure the quality and freshness of their organic produce. Tsebo Kenya's Health and Safety Manager and procurement teams work closely with the relevant chefs to ensure that an auditing process is followed, particularly when it comes to bulk suppliers who need to provide consistent quantities and quality.

Local farmers are given guidelines to help them consistently meet Tsebo's high expectations for freshness, quality and quantity in terms of ripeness levels, size of produce, and packaging, among other stipulations. Chefs inspect the local markets and identify suppliers that produce fresh, seasonal fruit and vegetables that will revitalise their dishes and allow them to create inspiring seasonal menus.

SUPPLIER TESTIMONIAL

"I met one of Tsebo's sourcing people at the Kagio market. They bought 100 kgs of spinach and 80 kgs of kale from me. This was 80% of my stock, and I was overjoyed. The quantities they have been sourcing from my farm have increased threefold as they now buy 500 kgs of spinach and 350 kgs of kale weekly.

"I am unable to meet their demand and now buy from neighbouring farms, thus empowering more mothers like me. This has allowed me to contribute to the household's financial needs and reduced my husband's financial strain.

"I am proud to be associated with Tsebo and hope for them to grow the business more and to empower more mothers like me." - Rose Mburu, Kirinyaga County, Kenya.

BENEFITS AND RESULTS

The relationship between Tsebo Kenya and local farmers has yielded symbiotic benefits for both Tsebo, its communities, and its clients, as well as a reduced environmental impact.

The four main items currently being sourced in metric tones per week are:

Potatoes:	2.5 ton
Watermelons:	0.5 ton
Pineapples:	0.5 ton
Spinach:	0.5 ton

For Tsebo, the benefits of being able to procure fresh, higher-quality fruit and vegetables were immediately obvious to clients through inspired, frequently updated menus using seasonal ingredients.

Other benefits include: a faster supply and on-demand procurement of produce, strong and sustainable relationships with local communities, a competitive edge in the market – procuring the best quality products at a fair price, a 7% reduction in procurement costs and environmental benefits and a lower carbon footprint.

Moreover, regular demand helps farmers prioritise which crops to focus on and reduces waste, prioritising small, organic farmers, mostly women-owned enterprises or cooperatives, small farmers can grow their businesses and receive fair prices for their produce and lastly, the facilitating of developing of farmers' businesses by teaching them how to upscale, deliver on time and achieve compliance with health, safety and quality standards.

By developing a local food supply chain, Tsebo Kenya has reduced its carbon footprint and improved the reliability and freshness of produce used in its kitchens while significantly and sustainably contributing to the livelihoods of small-scale farmers in the communities in which it operates.

Fostering enabling legislation across the value chain should fuel the cannabis sector to new highs.

SA CANNABIS COULD PROVIDE 130 000 JOBS, BUT....

South Africa's cannabis industry could emerge as a powerhouse, generating a myriad jobs and income opportunities: here's why there is still work to be done!

The cannabis industry in South Africa is touted as a potential saviour of the country's ailing economy. There is R107-billion of value in the local industry waiting to be unlocked. In 2019 Prohibition Partners released their African Cannabis Report which forecasted the South African Medicinal Cannabis Market Value and the Recreational Cannabis Market Value at R11-billion and R20-billion by 2023, respectively. The projected growth rate is 28.4%.

Some advanced economies and sophisticated markets have not been shy to bestow their faith in South Africa's medicinal cannabis industry as it grows across the globe. Germany for example has recently become the most developed market to allow the use of cannabis to treat medical conditions, with recreational cannabis (adult use) to be ratified within the next 12 months. A number of European countries have also relied on South African producers to source medical cannabis products.

This may explain why the JSE-listed cannabis giant Labat Africa Group has been on an investment drive in the Eastern Cape worth R11.5-million.

It's also funding its own Biodata observational study that looks at medicinal cannabis replacing opioids for pain management.

130 000 Jobs?

Ever since the Constitutional Court decriminalised cannabis in 2018, discussions around regulation have been ongoing. The Cannabis for Private Purposes Bill was drawn up and is still waiting on parliament to be ratified. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development presented parliament with a master plan in 2021 detailing how cannabis can be incorporated into the business sector. And in last year's State of the Nation Address, President Cyril Ramaphosa said government is looking to streamline the cannabis regulation process, which can unlock 130,000 jobs.

Slow legislative drive

Labat Africa Group's Van Rooyen said the enabling framework needs to be changed as soon as possible so that growers can be involved in every part of the value chain. "South African businesses can obtain a licence to grow, cultivate and export cannabis. All levels of government are saying how much money can be made out of cannabis. But they will not make that money if the legislation is not changed."

The sluggish regulatory process is due to cannabis's stigma as a narcotic tied to illicit trading. "Development banks and potential financiers are reluctant to invest in cannabis because of its legacy reputation, and is not yet dealt with as a new economic /category. They do not have a clear picture of what the commodity can bring to the economy," said Van Rooyen.

Labat Healthcare Director for Business Development, Herschel Maasdorp said changing legislation means amending a number of laws, for best regulatory reform. Cannabis can be regulated through the Drugs Control Amendment Act or decriminalised through safety and security legislation, among other. "All of these different regulations where amendments can be issued on behalf of cannabis will inform the commodity's commercial trajectory."

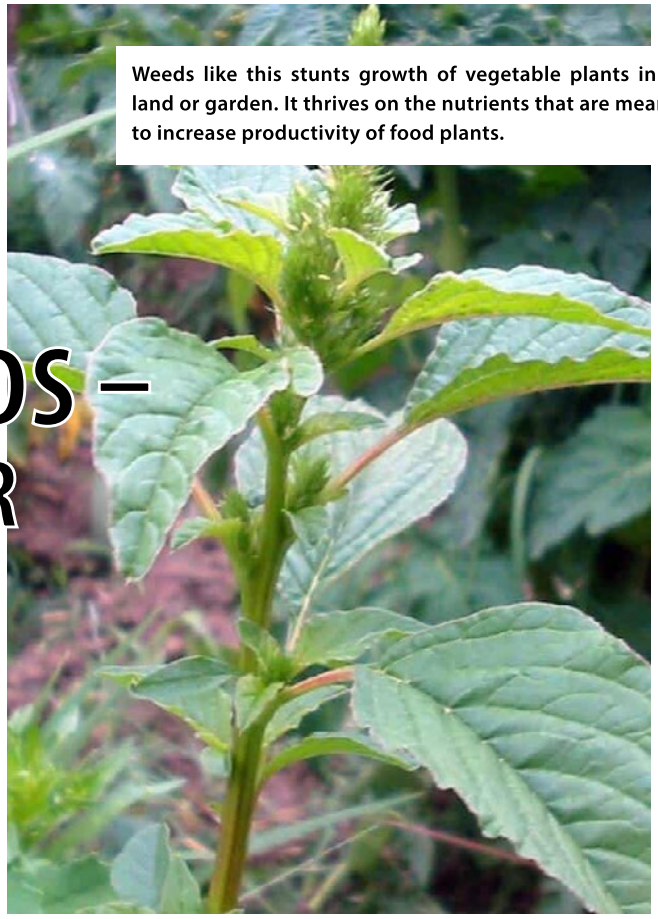
He added that the new auditing metrics for cannabis can potentially land the industry in the same dilemma as the wine industry whereby high-quality products were under-priced for the international market. Labat currently sells to dispensaries in Brisbane, Australia at a locally competitive price per gram. But those very same dispensaries sell the pre-packed finished product at a margin as high as 600%. Labat's Healthcare division has recently received an additional off take order for a monthly supply of 200kg of product to Switzerland.

"South African companies should not allow the international market to dictate the price of our commodity," said Maasdorp. "We should not booby trap ourselves by compromising on an abject price point to suit their needs. We will run the risk of becoming the backyard for the global pharmaceutical cannabis industry."

"If we can get the laws right, market enablers and the regulations aligned, we can attract the ideal investors. When that happens, cannabis can begin to navigate its way out of the dark alleyways of the illicit trade and into the formal economy, as legitimate economic category", Maasdorp said.

The country simply needs to get serious about the industry. Fostering enabling legislation across the value chain should fuel the cannabis sector to new highs and in doing so, boost the economy and assist with economic recovery. The country already boasts high altitude, plenty of sunlight, and an abundance of land suitable for industrial hemp, making it an ideal location for productive cannabis crops. **Source: Labat AG (SA)**

With large parts of South Africa soaked by rains, one can only imagine what exorbitant weed growth we can expect! Important to know is the different weeds and how to control them specifically in order not to harm grazing areas.



Weeds like this stunts growth of vegetable plants in a land or garden. It thrives on the nutrients that are meant to increase productivity of food plants.

CONTROLLING WEEDS – PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Weed types

An important part of caring for the garden is the controlling of weeds. People say: "One year's seed, is seven year's weeds."

This is why controlling weeds is such an important part of managing your vegetable garden. Some may say that weed is just a plant growing in the wrong place, but when your vegetable garden is full of weeds, it will make your gardening less enjoyable and you may end up hating it.

There are three basic weed types:

Annual weeds are weeds which grow, produce seeds and die within a single year or season. Annual weed seeds can remain dormant in the soil for many years. They will germinate as soon as they are brought to the surface, receive light and moisture.

Biennial weeds live for two years. The first year vegetative development will take place, and flowering and seed forming in the second year.

It is best to eliminate them the first year so they never have a chance to produce seeds.

Perennial weeds live from season to season and can remain in the soil for several years. Perennial weeds grow from vegetative structures such as underground bulbs, tubers (rhizomes), and runners. Perennial thistles come back each year from roots that survive the winter. They bloom and set seed yearly.

Perennial weeds are usually more difficult to control and all the bulbs and roots must be removed because even the tiniest piece of root left in the soil, sill grow to a whole new plant.

Weed management

Weeds function just like any of our vegetable plants. They also need water, nutrients and sunlight to grow. If left to grow among your vegetables, weeds will rob your vegetables of water, nutrients, sunlight and root space. Some weeds also harbour diseases and insects that can harm your vegetable crops.

If weeds are allowed to go to seed, you may be dealing with thousands of weeds the next season. To clear your garden of weed looks like a huge job, but once done, the important thing is to keep the weeds under control.

There are two basic categories of weed management, namely control and prevention.

Controlling weeds

Controlling weed can be done in three ways, namely mechanical control, chemical control or organic control.

Mechanical control

Mechanical control includes removing weed by hand, or using a hand-hoe, garden fork or a spade. Hand-weeding when the soil is still moist is the most effective way of removing small weeds from vegetable beds. A hoe is preferred for larger areas to get rid of small weeds.

Established weeds should be removed by hand or dug out with a spade or garden fork. Weeding must always be done by hand when vegetable plants grow close together, for instance among young carrot seedlings.

Perennial weeds are best dug up as deeply as possible to remove all roots.

Remember; remove weeds when the soil is damp, but not wet. Working wet soil damages soil structure. On the other hand, when soil is too dry, weeds are hard to remove by hand.

Annual weeds can be composted, but not when they have already formed seed. Never put perennial weed roots or seed-heads onto the compost heap as they will start growing again.

Chemical control

Chemical control is done by spraying herbicides. Herbicides are very effective, but use them with care and only for very troublesome areas. It is often just as easy to remove the weeds by hand.

Herbicides are divided into two main categories: systemic and contact herbicides.

Systemic herbicides enter the plant through the roots and leaves and move throughout the inside of the plant.

Contact herbicides kill from the outside in. they kill weed by reducing its ability to feed itself through photosynthesis.

Organic control

Organic control of weeds can be done by smothering the weeds with a thick layer of newspaper followed by at lest 12 cm of mulch. It will help to keep sunlight from reaching the surface of the soil and help keep weed growth to a minimum. These mulches will smother small annual weeds so that they will not grow further.

An all purpose weed-killer that can be tried out, is the following. Boil a litre of water; add 2 tablespoons of salt and 5 tablespoons of vinegar. Pour directly on weeds on sidewalks, driveways, etc.

Source: Growing Vegetables: W T Nell and D M Du Plessis

DO BREEDING MEAT GOATS PAY?

When deciding to set up your farm to include goats or, indeed, any new enterprise, it is essential to do some in-depth research. In order to obtain finance for your new enterprise, your bank manager will ask you for your business plan. If you do not have the expertise to create a business plan, contact the SA Boer Goat Breeders Association (see details at the end of this editorial) for more information.

As with any new production line, the first and perhaps most important step are to investigate your potential market. Look at whether your target market is a year-round market, such as the restaurant trade, or seasonal, such as an export market. Enquire about the age and type of stock preferred by each market, and the maximum and minimum numbers buyers will purchase at any one time. Be sure to take into account the distance from your nearest stock auction, abattoir or port.

There are several factors to be taken into account when looking at the costs and inputs of setting up and running a goat meat production enterprise. Firstly, distance; the distance to the nearest abattoir should be as short as possible. If goats are on a transport for more than 12 hours, they can become very dehydrated and will lose several kilos in bodyweight. Some goats will die if very dehydrated. Your profit will decrease considerably; in most markets, the price paid for goats is calculated on the hot-dressed carcass weight (HCW). Dehydration can be reduced significantly by transporting the goats at night, when conditions are cooler. Transporting goats at night is therefore good practice in summer.

Secondly, transport costs have to be considered. Most companies charge per kilometre, so the longer the distance to the auction yard, abattoir or port of embarkation for the goats, the higher the freight cost.

Thirdly is the cost of set-up, including fencing, dams, plant, buildings and stock, must also be considered. Farming meat goats in marginal areas subject to dry conditions, will the possible future profit justify the cost of feed and supplements? These can be considerable and must be taken into account.

It is useful to look at the average rainfall in the area where you intend to buy land. It is of course more difficult now to estimate rainfall in a particular area, due to climatic change. However, past records will give a rough guide to what can be expected. The cost of labour must be considered. If you are running up to 500 breeding goats, you may need help only occasionally, at drenching, marking (castrating) or tagging times.

Frequently, this help is provided by family or friends. If you are running a larger enterprise then you may need more assistance than can be given by family or friends. If so, you will need to employ paid workers and thus the cost of wages, insurance and healthcare will have to be taken into account.

Management inputs include such things as ear tags, foot rot shears, vaccines, medications and labour. These are just some of costs involved in setting up and carrying on a meat goat enterprise. In a goat meat breeding enterprise, the main income usually derives from the meat goats, whether bred for the domestic or export market. However, not all goats sold for meat come from producers who breed exclusively for the meat market.

The SA local cultural demand for goat meat by far exceeds the supply of live goats. Goats for meat are mainly marketed to the informal sector in Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal which is driving the goat industry.

Another source of income is the sale of replacement does for breeding, or stud bucks to improve bloodlines within a herd. Most producers breed with full-blood South African Boer Goats, but some are beginning to use Kalahari Red Goats. The Kalahari Red has a similar appearance to the South African Boer but is mainly red, slightly lighter in bodyweight and longer-legged. They may be a little more resistant to harsh conditions.

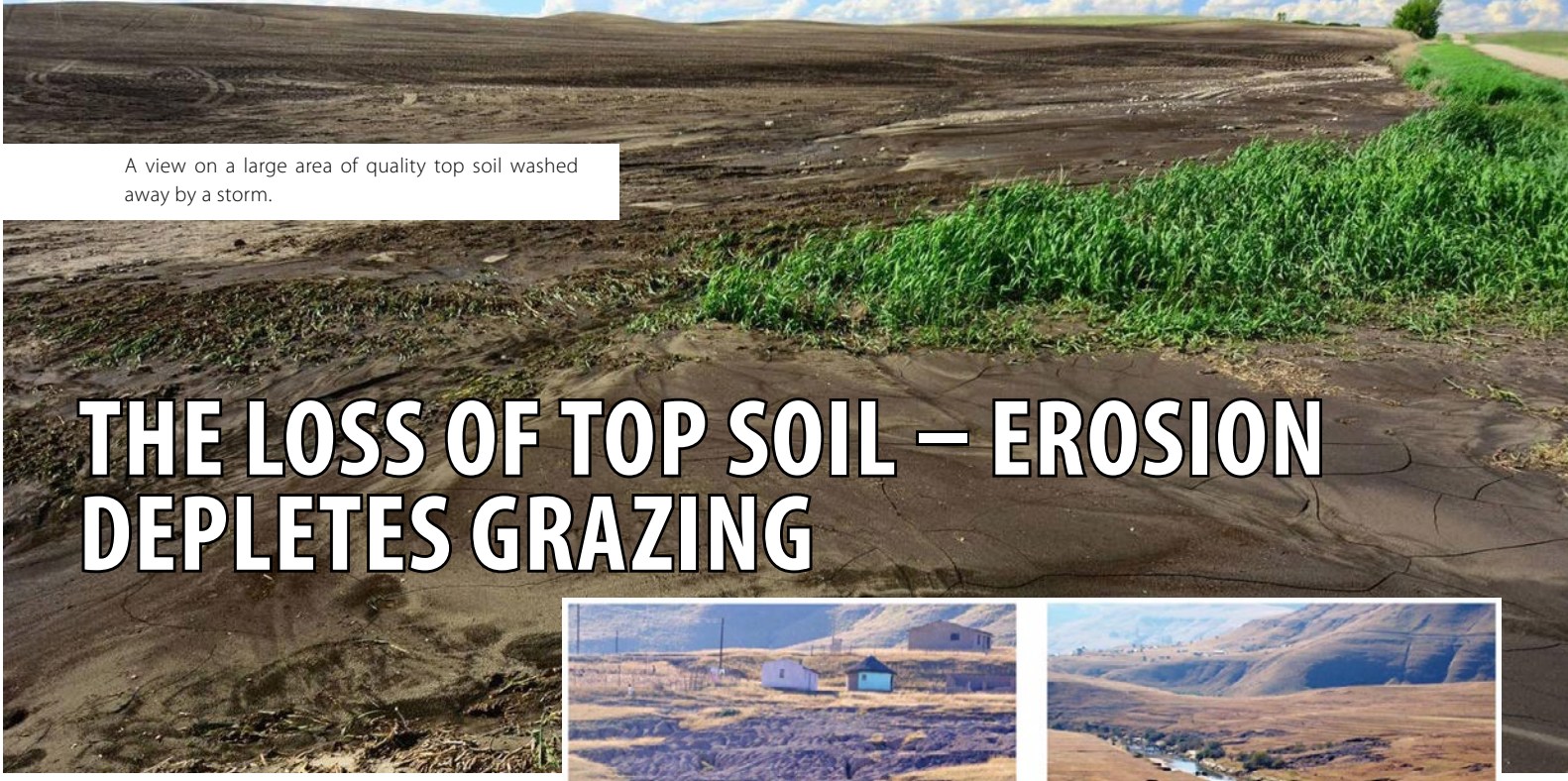
Selling service from your goats or hiring them to other breeders can also earn a welcome extra income. It is a good idea to be very cautious about this, because there are several diseases and parasites that can be transmitted. Before the farmer or breeder allow his goats to service one or more nannies, you need to know the producer, the herd and the source of his goats (and the hygiene measures on his farm).

Always thoroughly examine the nannies to be serviced and, if in any doubt whatsoever, refuse service. It is too late for regrets once footrot, coccidia or a contagious disease is introduced into your herd.

Sale of fleece from your goats is another source of income. Because many of the feral goats used as foundation stock in meat goat herds carry good-quality cashmere (as do a number of South African Boer goats), their fleece can be harvested by shearing before shedding season. Shearing is not difficult to learn and classes are held in various Boer Goat Production areas (consult SA Boer Goat Society) to teach the technique.

There is also a good domestic market for cashmere fleece. The sale of goat manure can also be a good extra source of income. If goats are kept in sheds each night, there will a considerable build-up of manure in the pens. This can be regarded as either a problem or an asset. Goat manure is excellent for citrus trees and always have willing buyers for this goat by-product. Citrus growers buy it by the trailer-load and usually do the raking and shovelling themselves. Nurseries that specialise in native plants also buy goat manure, as it releases its nutrients more slowly than chook manure, for instance.

A more accurate way to calculate whether it will be worthwhile and profitable to breed meat goats is by calculating a gross margin for your proposed enterprise.
Source: Farming Meat Goats by B Vincent (via SA Boer Goat Society), contact info@boerboksa.co.za



A view on a large area of quality top soil washed away by a storm.

THE LOSS OF TOP SOIL – EROSION DEPLETES GRAZING

A large area in South Africa, encompassing vast grazing lands are currently under threat of losing top soil due to heavy downpours and down-stream flooding. The minerals required for quality grazing are therefore depleted. Here are a few general suggestions and design requirements for small soil conservation structures.

▲ Gullies in the Eastern Cape, Tsitsavalley.

▲ Tsitsavalley gullies.

Soil erosion is quite a common appearance everywhere in South Africa. In certain regions it has already become catastrophic and loss of topsoil is much more than the natural process of soil formation. Unless the farmer take notice of this important aspect, his precious cropping land or grazing land is lost and becomes economically unjustifiable to replace. He might also have impact on his neighbour's land.

It takes 12 to 40 years to form one millimetre of topsoil, which is equal to 0,31 ton per hectare per year, while soil losses on natural veld is approximately 0,7 ton per hectare per year.

Periodic droughts have an effect on soil erosion, as vegetation is destroyed and droughts are usually followed by heavy rain. The human factor is however the greatest contribution to soil erosion. Overgrazing, poor grazing practices, improper camping of veld, inappropriate placing of stack watering systems, mechanical exposure of the veld, inappropriate placing of stock watering systems, mechanical exposure of the veld and the building of the major causes of soil erosion.

The role of vegetation in the prevention and combating of soil erosion cannot be emphasized enough. Correct veld management and grazing capacity leads to a more sustainable existence for the soil as well as for the owner.

All the mechanical works done to stabilize soil erosion, is only to create a more favourable environment for natural vegetation. A good practice is to establish vegetation as soon as silt begins to collect against a structure.

Types of structures for the prevention of soil erosion Soil erosion can be stabilised by means of large or small structures. Large structures are usually erected from concrete or gabions, which can handle heavy floods. It is very expensive and individual farmers are not financially able to erect such structures.

Small structures are not only more economically viable, but larger areas can be rehabilitated with smaller inputs. Small structures can be further subdivided in temporary, semi-permanent or permanent structures. Each of these can again be utilised as a drop inlet or weir (overflow structure). A key structure is usually a permanent structure, as it has to handle heavier floods and the success of the rehabilitation process depends on it.

Smaller structures are planned in the side dongas or gullies, above the key structures. These smaller structures can be erected fast and is made of cheaper materials. If this structure breaks, the damage is minimal and can be intercepted by the key structure.

Weirs (overflow structures) are erected in dongas where sediment is caught on the upstream side and the water flows over the spillways. The purpose therefore is to place sediment on the bottom of the donga, in order to settle a growth medium. This will retain moisture, so that vegetation can be established more easily.

Retaining walls or drop inlets are placed to stop the donga head. Sediment is not collected against such a structure but it prevents the advancing of the donga head.

The choice of the type of structure depends on many factors, of which the following are but a few to be considered:

- The size of the donga and the total expected run-off as well as the requirements that the building area have for the structure;
- The degree of stabilization intended; e.g.; Is the donga to be partially stabilized, or must further erosion be prevented;
- The amount, type and fertility of the expected sediment;
- The economy; few soil conservation works are economically justifiable, but if it is not done, the situation will deteriorate and the entire catchment area will be eroded.

Moreover, often the availability of building materials such as suitable stone or timber poles, as well as its accessibility becomes major problems during country-wide storms, as is the case currently.

Farmers are advised to inspect all areas on the farm which may lead to severe top-soil losses during possible storms and take preventative action.

Source: ARC- AEI

(pic: Graham Sales Safaris)

HUNTING IN SA OFFERS FINEST DESTINATIONS

Globally and locally it is known that hunting areas in Southern Africa offer exceptional trophy quality hunting opportunities. With over 45 species to choose from, including some of the Big Five, tailor-made safaris are on offer from various hunting safari bureaux.

CAMPS AND AREAS

Most popular species are not likely to be found in one area, and it is necessary to plan your safari according to your trophy requirements. Specialized Safaris may require movements to a number of different camps and areas. Clients will be advised of these changes and individual descriptions of the camps and areas will be given. They are comfortable and cater for the visitors' every need. Laundry is done every day.

LIMPOPO

The Limpopo Province is best known for the trophy quality that it produces and is the heart South Africa's hunting areas. Kudu, Eland, Waterbuck, Gemsbuck, Nyala, Blue Wildebeest, Zebra, Impala, Giraffe, Red Hartebeest, Bushbuck and Warthog all occur in good numbers and hunters can expect to shoot high quality trophies.

EASTERN CAPE

The Eastern Cape has a wonderful climate, which consists of warm days, cool nights and the occasional snow in winter. Due to the favourable climate one find rare species such as Bontebok, Vaal Rhebuck, Black Wildebeest, Lechwe, Cape Bushbuck, Mountain Reedbuck, Eastern Cape Kudu and Cape Mountain Zebra. An added advantage is that the area is Malaria free.

Due to the areas being well managed, game is abundant. This makes it unnecessary to participate in arduous long drives between areas. Your valuable time is therefore spent hunting and experiencing the joys of the African bush with its abundance of game. During your hunt you will stay in comfortable lodges where you will enjoy delicious local cuisine.

NORTHERN CAPE

In recent years this province has become one of the most popular hunting destinations in South Africa, with open plains, savannah thorn veldt and rolling hills. Hunters are offered luxury camps on large hunting blocks with a great variety of species available. Access is simple with daily jet service from Johannesburg to the historical town of Kimberly where clients are met for a short transfer to the hunting areas.

KWAZULU-NATAL

Home to the Nyala, Red Duiker and Livingstones Suni amongst the more common species such as Kudu, Common Reedbuck, Rhino, Wildebeest and Zebra. Hunting safari operators will arrange a quality hunt on a concession area which will cater best to your priority requirements.

BUFFALO HUNTS

In recent years South Africa has become a destination to be considered for visitorse keen to hunt a buffalo on a 7 or 10 day hunt in addition to plains game. Over time, private land owners have built up large herds of Cape Buffalo with quality hard bossed bulls becoming available for hunting on an annual basis. Hunting areas offered to clients are large with challenging hunting and high quality trophy bulls.

HUNTING LICENCES AND EXPORT OF TROPHIES

Hunting licences are obtained through experienced hunting expedition operators and are included in the trophy fee. Most have no hidden charges. Some species require a CITES import and export permit. Operators will assist with these once a Safari is confirmed.

FOREGN VISITORS

TRAVEL INFORMATION AND FIREARMS

In addition to a valid passport, South Africa generally requires an entry visa, however, you should consult your travel agency beforehand regarding this. We recommend that you check with your travel agent regarding any current inoculations that may be required. Prior to your departure your hunting safari operator of choice will put you in touch with their agent in order to obtain a temporary import firearms permit prior arrival in South Africa.

The visitors are met by an agent and should have their rifles cleared hassle-free. Unless hunting one of the Big 5, it is recommended choosing a calibre in the .270-.300 ranges. A good variable scope is essential. Transportation is by hunting vehicle, but in some instances a private charter is best to save hunting time.

The above are only a few tips for hunters visiting South Africa. Visit web pages by PHASA and Hunters and Guides for more information and contacts.

ABC HANSEN AFRICA LAUNCHES NEW AFFORDABLE HAMMER MILL AND SILAGE CHOPPER – HIPPO PYGMY

A proudly South African company, ABC Hansen Africa is owned by the second generation of a local family and has a partnership with ABC Hansen A/S in Denmark.

The Hippo Pygmy Hammer Mill and Silage Chopper is the smallest mill in the milling range. Selling for R11,220.00 – R13,317.00, this mill is ideal for small holders and start-up businesses who are looking for an affordable and versatile milling solution.

The mill can run as a hammer mill and can be set up with an infeed hopper at the top, and the milled product dropping out the side of the machine through a milling screen.

The Hippo Pygmy Hammer Mill and Silage Chopper has the added advantage of also being able to run as a silage chopper.

The mill is fitted with a blanked out screen and an outlet chute, then the silage is fed in through the side inlet, where it is chopped by two blades fitted onto the rotor. The blades and the hammer mill tips are replaceable when they get worn.

The Hippo Pygmy is available in two drive options:

1) Single phase (220V) 2.2KW, 2800 RPM direct drive and
2) 4HP Briggs & Stratton, 3000RPM Petrol motor drive.

The Hippo Pygmy Hammer Mill and Silage Chopper has been designed with durability in mind.

This mill is constructed with a simple and straightforward operation, making it easy to use and maintain. With its affordable price, this mill is the perfect choice for small businesses and budget-conscious consumers.

By: Cynthia van Straten

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Weight: 55 kg
Dimensions: 60 x 45 x 60 cm
Hippo Capacity / Model: Hippy Pygmy 2.2KW Electric, Hippy Pygmy 4HP Petrol

In addition, for any enquiries or for more information on our product range, visit our website at www.abchansenafrica.co.za or reach out to us at info@abchansenafrica.co.za.

VISIT US AT NAMPO

ABC Hansen Africa is a proud exhibitor at this year's Grain SA's Nampo Harvest Day from 16-19 May 2023, so feel free to drop by at stand C34a should you have any further questions.

Recycle – do not let go for 'landfill'!

ALCOHOL ABUSE STEALS YOUR HUMAN LIFE! STOP BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

Every drop counts!

SA'S PROGRESS BROKEN BY WATER MISMANAGEMENT

Water is essential to life, and while it is estimated that as much as 70% of the Earth is covered in water, this resource remains critically scarce in some regions and countries. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Six pledges "clean water and sanitation for all".

Despite being surrounded by two oceans, South Africa is categorised as a water-scarce country. Compounded by the triple challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty, only 7.3 million (43%) households have access to water services across all dimensions of the 2016 Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS) survey.

Reduce, reuse or recycle: water sustainability

Water is also central to a business' and farmers' life, particularly that of a spirits manufacturer or wine producer. It is the key ingredient in its products. "We get our water from the municipalities where our offices, centres and sites are located. This means we are in competition with local communities for access to this scarce resource," explains Bayanda Cwazibe, Supply Chain Director at Edward Snell.

Solid waste

"Unlike liquid waste, solid waste is more difficult to recycle. We currently recycle as much as 75% of our solid waste. Our engineers and product design specialists continuously strive to develop alternative product designs that could allow for an additional 15% of our solid waste to be recycled," Bayanda revealed.

Empowering the community

Inclusive growth should be inherent to sustainable development. This translates into the importance of empowering and upskilling the local communities located within a company's vicinity. "K1 recycling is a township-based recycling company which has been absorbed into Edward Snell's enterprise development programme. The company is one of the biggest buyers and sellers of all kinds of waste scrap in Katlehong, and they also teach communities about the importance of recycling, separation-at-source and the countless entrepreneurship opportunities available to young people within the green economy," explains Bayanda.

South Africa's drinking culture a threat

South Africa has the sixth highest adult per capita consumption in ml of absolute alcohol, although only 43% of adult men in the country drink, as do about one in five women, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Put differently, the country has a drinking culture that threatens its future prosperity.

"We've initiated various initiatives to make the public conscious about drinking responsibly. We fully support and participate in Aware.Org and its efforts to create a socially responsible drinking culture. We're also reducing the spirits percentage of our products and our partnership with Lyres, the world's leading non-alcoholic spirits manufacturer, is a continuation of these efforts to help consumers drink more responsibly," Bayanda concluded.

ESPR

PROCESSING OPTIONS FOR CUCURBITS GROWN BY OUR LOCAL FARMERS

The Cucurbitaceae family encompasses 965 species in around 95 genera of plants known collectively as gourds or cucurbits. It includes squash, pumpkin, zucchini or courgette, some gourds, calabash, watermelon, cucumber, melons, bitter melons, and luffa and are some of the earliest plants cultivated for human consumption.

Cucurbits supplies humans with food as well as useful fibres, and although plants in this family are very similar in their development, they possess a high genetic diversity for fruit shape and fruit characteristics, which results in a variety of uses.

PROCESSING OPTIONS

Butternut

Butternut squash are increasingly being processed to meet today's fast-paced consumer's demand for more convenience, as the vegetable is difficult and time-consuming to peel and prepare.

The ideal butternut cultivar for processing should have a relatively soft rind (when picked young) with the minimum greening, rich orange colour and firm flesh.

Cultivars with cylindrical shape, small or no "bulb" and small seed cavities are ideally suited for mechanical peeling and cutting, rendering the minimum losses due to irregularity in shape.

- Fresh cut butternut pieces are fresh fruits that have been physically altered from its original form but remain fresh. It has been trimmed, peeled, washed, and cut to make a product that is 100 % usable, with no wastage. The pieces are packaged for consumer convenience but require refrigerated storage.

- Butternut is commercially frozen in cubes (dice) or slices. Different freezing techniques can be used including blast and plate freezing as well as individual quick-freezing. The packaging ranges from 300g retail packs to 13 kg bulk packs.

- Butternut puree is dehydrated on drum dryers to produce a dry, flaked product with long shelf life that is easy to re-hydrate into a vegetable side dish, filling for pies or baby food.

- Canned butternut is refined butternut puree that is preserved in a can by means of a heat treatment.

Courgettes (Marrows)

Baby marrow, courgettes, or zucchini (Cucurbita pepo) is one of the most popular types of summer squash. It can be found in dark, medium, and light green colours as well as yellow-orange varieties. Courgettes are harvested at a very immature stage.

The plants start producing in about 50 - 60 days from planting, depending on the cultivar and temperature. Processing options are limited to minimal processing, pickling, and freezing.

Baby marrow have become very popular additions to salads, pastas, stir-fry dishes and grilled vegetable

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dishes. It is increasingly being processed to meet today's fast-paced consumer's demand for more convenience. The ideal baby marrow cultivar for processing should have a dark green colour, long straight shape, and firm flesh.

- Baby marrow can be frozen in sliced or diced form. This is usually done in combination with other vegetables as part of a stir fry pack.

- Courgettes (baby marrow or zucchini) are common ingredients in vegetable pickles. It can either be pickled alone or in combination with other vegetables such as onion, gherkins, cauliflower, green beans, carrots etc. The product is preserved by the low pH (< 4.5) of the packaging liquor and a pasteurisation treatment. It is sealed in cans or other suitable container such as glass jars.

- Minimally processed baby marrow is cleaned, sorted, and packed in a ready-to-use state either as whole fruit or in slices and stored under refrigeration. Sliced pieces may be mixed with other sliced vegetables in stir fry or salad packs.

Cucumber

Cucumbers are basically divided into two categories, namely pickling cucumbers and slicing cucumbers. Pickling cucumbers are used for processing or pickling.

They have thin skins and are short and blocky. Their colour gradually changes from dark green at the stem end to light green at the blossom end. There are basically two kinds of pickles that can be prepared from cucumbers, namely fermented pickles, or fresh-pack pickles.

Slicing cucumbers are sold fresh for immediate consumption, usually as a salad item. Their skins are thicker and dark green.

Slicing cucumbers are longer than pickling types and their thicker skins are more resistant to damage during handling and transport. Slicing cucumbers may be produced in the field or in greenhouses.

- Fresh-pack pickled cucumber and gherkins are made by the addition of an acid such as vinegar and not by the natural fermentation of the vegetable. The product is further preserved by pasteurisation.

- Fermented cucumber pickles or brined pickles undergo a curing process for several weeks in which fermentative bacteria produce acids necessary for the preservation of the product. These bacteria also generate flavour compounds that are associated with fermented pickles. Initial fermentation may be followed by the addition of acid to produce such products as half dills or sweet gherkins.

Pumpkin

The Cucurbitaceae family is made up of hundreds of species including pumpkin, melons, squash, marrows, and gourds. Plants of this family are generally annual or perennial vines and are adapted to the arid and semi-arid regions. These plants are easily damaged by frost and the range is limited to warm climates by the length of the growing season.

- Pumpkin puree is dehydrated on drum dryers to produce a dry, flaked product with long shelf life that is easy to rehydrate into a vegetable side dish, filling for pumpkin pie or baby food. Pumpkin cultivars with firm flesh, high total solid content and intense orange colour are preferred for drying.

- Pumpkin pieces can be frozen with success, provided the best suited cultivar is used. The flesh must be an intense orange colour and firm with a high total solids content. Watery pumpkin varieties must be avoided.

- Fully ripe pumpkins are cooked and then pureed to produce a product that can be eaten as such or used in various other products. The puree is preserved by freezing.

- Roasted pumpkin seed is a by-product from various other pumpkin products where the flesh is processed, and the seeds discarded. The seeds are dried, cleaned and roasted. Flavouring is optional. The seeds are consumed as a nutritious snack along with nuts and dried fruit.

Sweet Melon

Melon is the common name for any one of numerous varieties of sweet fruits of the gourd family that grows on two species of trailing vines. One of these vines bears the sweet melons (muskmelons, winter melons and the European cantaloupe) and the other bears the watermelon.

Muskmelons have a soft, ribbed rind with distinct netting and musk flavour. The flesh colour varies from salmon-pink to deep orange. They are the most perishable of the melons.

Winter melons, of which the honeydew is best known to the SA market, are less aromatic than muskmelons, take longer to mature and have harder rinds that preserve them well after the growing season. The honeydew has a smooth rind with green pulp. Winter melons are classified as Cucumis melo var. inodorus.

The processing options for sweet melons are limited to the production of pulp and ready-to-use salads with or without syrups. The pulp may be further processed into sauces, beverages, and desserts.

- Melon is cut, peeled, and cored and the flesh cut in pieces or shaped into balls for salads. The pieces are then rapidly frozen.

- Fresh market muskmelon has a soft, ribbed rind with distinct netting and musk flavour. The flesh colour varies from salmon-pink to deep orange. They are the most perishable of the melons.

The sheer pleasure of processing foodstuff that was grown by local farmers and dishing it up to your family, makes a farming family and suburban dweller proud of 'local is lekker!'

By Theresa Siebert, ARC-Agri Engineering

RISING DIESEL PRICE HOLDS GREAT DANGERS

Every resident, especially farmers of South Africa are harmed by the rising diesel price and agricultural production faces an extra challenge, as several farmers are currently rethinking whether they can still plant profitably, and this is compromising food security.

The new winter planting season has begun, and input costs generally increased, but the umpteenth rise in the diesel price may be for some farmers the straw that breaks the camel's back.

"There is no doubt that there are several farmers who now must look at the numbers to see if it is still profitable for them to plant with all the input costs that are increasing. The government must realise that there are big problems here if the situation is not addressed," says Mr Bennie van Zyl, TLU SA General Manager.

"TLU SA wants to know what the government will do to stabilise the rising diesel price, keep farmers in production and thus ensure food on people's tables."

Mr Henk van de Graaf, TLU SA Regional Chair: North adds: "The diesel price is influenced by the increase in the oil price, but also the weakening of the Rand. And this is due to poor economic policy and uncertain economic conditions created by the government. It is the government's responsibility to create environment of confidence so that the Rand does not continue to weaken."

While the rising diesel price – a rise almost R10 since this time last year - is affecting agriculture on a large scale, there are also concerns about the implications for the public in general.

"Economic growth is counteracted, and every resident of the country is harmed. In fact, the government is impoverishing the country's citizens. There is a large part of our population that can no longer afford the basics, and this can result in major negative events," says Mrs Erika Helm, TLU SA Local Government. One of the first options to bring relief is an increase in the diesel rebate.

TLU communication

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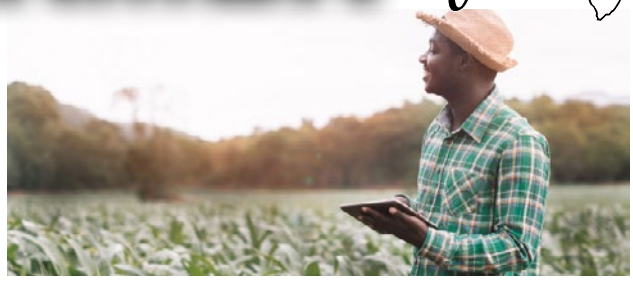

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