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IMVULA

GROWING FOOD • PEOPLE • PROSPERITY

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PGP
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We wish all our readers a wonderful festive season.

Merry Christmas and may the new year be a productive one!



Top tips FOR FARMERS

While most people look forward to a long break over the festive season, farming operations never stop. Planning for the festive season is very important, as everybody wants to spend time with family, but completing the daily tasks on the farm are as important as spending time with your loved ones.

Some of the team members of the Farmer Development Programme share advice on how to make the best of the festive season on the farm.

✓ Get the seed in the ground

If you haven't been able to plant yet and are waiting for the rain to fall, here are some guidelines. 'Don't rush your planting. Concentrate on the accuracy of seed placement for a good yield,' says **Graeme Engelbrecht**, regional development manager in KwaZulu-Natal.

Du Toit van der Westhuizen, regional development manager in North West, emphasises the importance of sticking to the planting window – if it's too late, don't plant. 'Make sure you don't rush and neglect any part of the production process.' He also reminds farmers that the most important thing a farmer can do for a healthy harvest is weed control.

It is always better if you can do as much as you can by yourself, but if you have to make use of a contractor, be there to ensure the job gets done properly. 'Remember the contractor is there to get the job done, so he can be paid and move on to the next opportunity,' says Graeme.

✓ Plan ahead

'Try by all means to get the main work on the farm done before the start of the festive season,' suggests **Eric Wiggill**, regional development manager in the Eastern Cape.

He also shares the following good advice:

- Work has to continue – planting, spraying, milking, caring for the animals – so staff must be aware of what is expected of them.
- Never start a new project during these times. Nobody is going to give you 100% work, and you will be paying much more for 50% work done on a public holiday.
- Keep a good skeleton staff (good all-rounders) for emergencies.

✓ Make it a merry Christmas

The festive season is around the corner. Make sure that all staff are aware of their off days and workdays ahead of the festive season to avoid disappointment. Eric advises that the staff should be split into a Christmas and New Year's team if possible.

'Make sure the attendance register is up to date. Pay wages and bonuses (if applicable) on time and give staff time to do their Christmas shopping,' says Eric. 'When paying staff, avoid cash payments and rather use bank accounts. Remember to make staff sign for their salaries.' ■

COMPILED BY LOUISE KUNZ, ASSISTANT EDITOR: PULA

KEEPING RECORDS IS VITAL

AS A FARMER, YOU ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST BECAUSE YOU WOULD LIKE THE BEST POSSIBLE YIELD. KEEPING LAND RECORDS WILL ENABLE YOU TO LOOK BACK OVER A SEASON TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED.

There are some things that you can do to improve your yields, but the weather plays a very big role and farmers have no control over this.

There are a number of things that you can record. Here are some examples:

1. LANDS

- What is the size of the land/field? (Keep a separate record for each different field.)
- Give each land a number or a name so that you can differentiate between them – this is also important when you do crop insurance.
- Remember to record the date each time you do something in the field.

1 An example of a recordkeeping list for planting season.

PLANTING INFORMATION: 2024/2025 SEASON			FARMER:		
Crop:					
Land preparation	Yes/no	Yes/no	Starting date	Finishing date	Comments
Was the lime applied?					
Was the land disced?					
Was the land ripped?					
Seedbed cultivation before plant					
Planting					Comments
Date started and finished					
Cultivar planted					
Plant population					
Hectares planted					
Land number					
Topdressing					Comments
Was topdressing spread?					
What product was used?					
Kilogram per hectare					
Spraying					Comments
Were chemicals sprayed with planting?					
Which chemicals were used?					
How much per hectare?					
Post-emergence spray					Comments
Was it applied?					





2. CULTIVATION

- Did you do your soil sampling? If yes, when did you apply the soil corrections? For example, the liming.
- How did you prepare your soil and when did you do each operation?
- On what date did you start planting and when did you finish planting?
- What cultivar did you plant?
- What plant population were you aiming for?
- What plant population did you achieve (it may be less or more than you planned)?

3. FERTILISER, TOPDRESSING AND SPRAYING

- Which fertiliser did you use and how much did you apply?
- Did you apply topdressing?
- What topdressing did you use and how much did you apply on the field?
- Did you do pre-emergence spraying (before the crop emerged, after planting)? What chemicals did you use and how much of each?
- Did you do a post-emergence spray? What chemicals did you use and how much of each?

4. HARVEST TIME

- When you harvest, how many tons did you get from this field?

The records above are the physical records of the activities in the field. You can also keep other financial records, so that at the end of the season you can calculate the gross profit you made per field. This information can assist you to compare different crops in different fields, which will enable you to make better plans to take your farming business to the next level.

The PGP team appeals to you to keep records in the future – you can use the template on page 4. Make additional copies of the records. Keeping records is key to success. ■

**JANE MCPHERSON,
PGP ADVISOR**



THE PGP TEAM IS A CLOSE-KNIT FAMILY WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO HELP THE FARMERS USE THE LAND THEY HAVE AVAILABLE TO GROW CROPS. THESE CROPS ARE PRODUCED FOR HOUSEHOLD USE AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY.

IT'S PLANTING TIME

The planting dates are among the most important dates on the agricultural calendar – if you plant late, you will not manage a good crop. Farmers are urged to plant as soon as the soil moisture allows them to make a good seedbed.

EARLY DELIVERY OF INPUTS

This year the deliveries of inputs for the farmers in the Beyond Abundance Project have been earlier than ever. A big thank you to all the regional development managers and particularly to Eric Wiggill from the Eastern Cape office, who co-ordinated all the orders.

This year the farmers in this project will be planting 1 570 ha of maize. Hopefully the numbers can be increased every year as farmers realise the benefits of having good quality inputs delivered on time.

SO LONG TO A TRUSTED FRIEND

With the passing of years, times change, people join the team and some leave the team. Johan Kriel has been the regional development manager in the Free State since 2006. Under his guidance, the Free State produced many Farmer of the Year winners and many members of the 250 Ton Club.

Ntate Johan, as he is fondly known amongst the farmers, is loved by all who have known him. At the end of December, he is retiring from his position and will take up a role as mentor for various projects that require mentors.

Although it is almost like saying 'goodbye', everybody know that it is really 'until we meet again' because they hope that Johan will be around as a mentor for many years to come. ■



It is important to choose THE RIGHT TRACTORS for your farm

THE INVESTMENT IN TRACTORS AND IMPLEMENTS IS VERY HIGH FOR ANY GRAIN FARMER. A NEW 70 KW TRACTOR CAN EASILY COST R1 MILLION AND THEN ALL THE IMPLEMENTS MUST STILL BE BOUGHT. IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT THE TRACTOR YOU BUY CAN PERFORM THE NECESSARY TASKS OVER THE YEARS.

If the tractor is too big or too small for the farm's work needs, it is going to cost you dearly. To find and buy the right tractor(s) for your farm is a difficult task, but it can be done. Since the introduction of tractors to the agricultural sector, the following question is asked: How many and what tractors should you buy? It makes sense to use a demo tractor to test it on your farm.

FIELD CAPACITY

For every cultivation activity and every tractor size, there is a field capacity listed. The field capacity is how many hectares a tractor can work during a 10-hour day.

With just a few calculations, you can determine a tractor's field capacity. **The field capacity is ha/10-hour day = speed in km/h x working width in metres x field efficiency.** The field efficiency factor allows for time spent on turning on the headlands, refuelling the tractor, filling seed and fertiliser bins on a planter etc., and therefore it is measured as a decimal. In practice, if the field efficiency is one it would mean the tractor would work the whole 10-hour day without stopping or turning.

Farmers know that this is seldomly possible. It was determined in several field studies that with a tractor only pulling implements, where there is no need to upload or offload fertiliser or seed, the turning at the headlands and refuelling the tractor will take up 17% of the working time. This means that only 83% of the possible work can be done.

With planting, the uploading of the seed and fertiliser can take up to 40% of the time. With the spraying of the crop, only 60% of the time available can be used to spray and the rest of the

time is for filling the sprayer. From these efficiency figures it is clear that farmers must make sure everything possible is done to increase the efficiencies of the actions.



For every cultivation activity and every tractor size, there is a field capacity listed. The field capacity is how many hectares a tractor can work during a 10-hour day.



With this knowledge, the question of which combination of tractors to buy can be answered. In **Table 1** and **Table 2** the average field efficiencies for the different operations are given. In practice, these figures may differ from the actual values, depending on how efficiently the operations are conducted, but it is a very good norm. Provision has also been made in the tables for different soils.





1 *Table of field capacities for different implements.*

Implement	kW required			Speed (km/h)	Ha/10-hour day	Tractor size (kW)
	Sand	Firm soil	Loose soil			
Field cultivator (75 mm depth at N = 83%) and light disc harrow (65 mm depth at N = 83%)						
Width 1,6 m		24	28	8	10	30 - 35
3 m		36	43	8	20	45 - 54
3 m		45	54	9,2	23	56 - 68
3,7 m		48	57	9	28	60 - 71
4,5 m		55	64	10	38	68 - 80
6 m		70	80	10	50	88 - 100
Chisel plough (200 mm depth, 300 mm, spacing and N = 83%)						
Width 2,2 m	38	48	60	5,5	10	48 - 75
3 m	47	60	74	5,5	14	59 - 92
3,4 m	60	71	108	7,0	20	75 - 135
4 m	70	82	125	7,0	23	88 - 156
4,5 m	88	105	170	7,6	29	108 - 188
Maize planter (full fertiliser and N = 60%)						
2 x 0,91 = 1,82 m (mounted)	21	20	19	8	9	35
4 x 0,91 = 3,64 m (mounted)	33	40	29	8	18	40
4 x 0,91 = 3,64 m (trailed)	50	46	44	12	26	55
6 x 0,91 = 5,46 m (trailed)	74	68	65	12	39	75
Mouldboard plough (250 mm depth and N = 83%)						
2 x 406 = 0,81 m		34		5	3,37	35 - 40
3 x 406 = 1,22 m		40		5	5,0	50
4 x 406 = 1,63 m		48		5	7,0	60
5 x 406 = 2,03 m		60		5,5	9,0	90
5 x 406 = 2,03 m		72		7	12,0	125

2 *Table of field capacities for a boom sprayer.*

Implement	kW required	Speed (km/h)	Ha/10-hour day	Tractor size (kW)
Boom sprayer (N = 60%)				
6 m boom	20	6	22	40
8 m boom	25	6	29	50
12 m boom	25	6	43	50



It is important...

In the table of field capacities, the column 'kW required' gives an indication of the actual power required to conduct the operation at a specified field capacity. It should be kept in mind that a naturally aspirated engine working under Highveld conditions can only deliver approximately 80% of its rated power as measured at sea level. A turbo-charged engine is assumed not to lose any power with an increase in altitude.

Therefore, if the table indicates that 40 kW is required, a tractor with an advertised rated power of $40/0,8 = 50$ kW has to be used. If the tractor is fitted with a turbocharger, a 40 kW turbo-charged tractor would suffice.

A recommended tractor size is specified at some places in the table of field capacities. This is for certain operations where the physical size of the tractor (and not the power of the tractor) determines the field capacity for the operation.

- In Mpumalanga and the eastern parts of the summer rainfall area a rule of thumb is that a farmer will need between 1 kW/ha and 1,5 kW/ha grain produced.
- In the western regions of the summer rainfall area of the country farmers get along with between 0,5 kW/ha and 0,75 kW/ha grain produced. This is mainly because of the time available to do primary cultivation and to be on time to plant the crop.

Example

Farmers can make use of contractors to do some of the work, but it makes sense for every farmer to do his own planting and spraying within the planting window of the crops, which is normally 20 working days.

If a farmer is planting 100 ha and the planting must be done in 20 working days, this would mean that at least 5 ha per day must be planted. To plant 5 ha per day, a 5 ha seedbed must be prepared, 5 ha must be planted and 5 ha must be sprayed.

Two 50 kW tractors, such as a Ford 6600 or Massey Ferguson 188, should be enough to do all the work in time. One tractor can prepare the seedbed, while the other one can plant and do the spraying. It is calculated that a 50 kW tractor can prepare a 20 ha seedbed, plant between 18 ha and 26 ha and can spray at least 26 ha per 10-hour day.

So it can work perfectly if one tractor starts with seedbed preparations and the other one starts to plant. The tractor used for planting can then be used to do the spraying of the planted crops later in the day. The next day, the tractor that was used for the seedbed can do the spraying while the planting continues.

If both tractors can do the ploughing of the fields and one tractor can do between 5 ha per day and 7 ha per day, it would mean that the field will be ploughed within 20 days.

By making use of the field capacity figures in the tables, farmers can calculate which combination of tractors to buy. These figures can also be used to check whether the farmworkers are doing their job. ■



PIETMAN BOTHA, INDEPENDENT AGRICULTURAL CONSULTANT



WORDS OF WISDOM



Protecting existing agricultural land and maximising its potential is an important focus for the Department of Agriculture.

~ JOHN STEENHUISEN
minister of agriculture



The Unemployment Act: Much more than a blue card

IN THE LABOUR RELATIONS ENVIRONMENT THAT FARMERS OPERATE IN, THERE ARE MANY MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE LAWS THAT THEY NEED TO COMPLY WITH. ONE EXAMPLE OF SUCH AN ACT IS THE *UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT (ACT 63 OF 2001)*. THIS ACT GOVERNS THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND OR, AS MANY EMPLOYEES REFER TO IT, THE 'BLUE CARD'.

It is important to mention that the 'blue card' is no longer in existence and that it was replaced with a more streamlined and technological system, enabling a faster and more efficient claims process.

UIF? WHAT IS IT AND WHY DO YOU NEED IT?

The Unemployment Insurance Fund's (UIF's) main purpose is to provide short-term relief for people who cannot earn a living under certain circumstances. One must note that it is short-term relief and not long-term and/or permanent relief, as is sometimes afforded by SASSA.

Both the employee and the employer contribute to this fund. Employees contribute 1% of their salaries and the employer contributes a further 1% of their salaries. These contributions are paid over to the fund.

There are five different types of benefits payable to employees by the fund:

1. **Unemployment benefits** can be claimed when an employee loses his or her job. If a person is dismissed, retrenched or terminated due to the expiration of a fixed term contract, they will have access to the fund and can claim accrued benefits.

It is very important that farmers and their employees are aware of the fact that they will not be able to claim any of the unemployment benefits if they resign.

Employees contribute 1% of their salaries and the employer contributes a further 1% of their salaries.

However, in order for a person to be able to claim, there are certain prerequisites that you need to comply with. Employees must have been contributing to the fund and money must have been deducted from their salaries for this purpose on a monthly basis.

2. **Illness benefits** can be claimed by employees who are off from work due to illness for a period of longer than two weeks. These benefits are paid from the date that the employee stopped working. Once again, the requirements are that the contributions must have been paid over to the fund. In the event that the employer paid the employee, the benefit payable will be the difference between the available benefit and what the employer paid.
3. **Maternity benefits** can be claimed from the fund when an employee

is pregnant. The *Basic Conditions of Employment Act* states that an employee can take maternity leave at any time from four weeks before the expected date and may not return for six weeks after giving birth. In order for an employee to claim this benefit, the claim must be made no longer than eight weeks before the birth of a child and/or longer than six months after the birth of the child.

Parental benefits are a new claim category that came into effect on 1 January 2020. These amendments now give employees who do not qualify for maternity leave parental leave of ten days. The employer is not liable for this payment and it can be claimed from the UIF for a period of ten days.

4. **Adoption benefits** are another new benefit and enables employees adopting a child younger than two years the opportunity to claim from the fund, if they need to leave work to look after the adopted child. This benefit is, however, only available to one of the adoptive parents. In order to qualify for this, the adoption had to take place in terms of the *Children's Act (Act 38 of 2005)*.



Choose the best SOYBEAN CULTIVAR

SOYBEAN PRODUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA HAS INCREASED NOTICEABLY OVER THE PAST YEARS. A COMBINATION OF IMPROVED YIELDS TOGETHER WITH FAVOURABLE SOYBEAN PRICES, AS WELL AS THE BENEFIT OF INCREASED SOIL HEALTH IN A CROP ROTATION SYSTEM, ARE THE MAIN DRIVERS FOR THE RAPID EXPANSION OF SOYBEAN PRODUCTION.

Soybeans (*Glycine max*) are one of the most important sources of oil and protein in the world. The production of soybeans is mainly for use in the animal feed industry, driven by the demand for animal protein.

However, the increased input costs also contributed to the expansion of soybeans to the drier and non-traditional soybean production areas. This resulted in the Free State being the largest soybean production area (545 000 ha during the 2023/2024 season).

Soybeans were the second largest grain crop produced during the 2023/2024 season (1 810 790 tons on 1 150 500 ha), with an average yield of 1,57 t/ha. This is much lower than the previous season (2,4 t/ha) due to the severe drought.

LOCALITY

The productivity of soybean cultivars varies from one locality to the other, owing to locality-specific genotype x environment interactions. Soybeans are sensitive to daylight and the prevailing temperature, resulting in the division of the soybean production areas into cool, moderate and warm. This is also why the planting date will influence the length of the growing season of a given cultivar.

Cultivar evaluation trials are an indispensable source of information for farmers, given the yield benefits that accumulate to farmers

by virtue of being able to adequately identify cultivars with reasonable adaptability that fit in their localities, to ensure optimum yield and profitability.

When cultivar selections are conducted, it is important to establish which locality has similar climatic conditions and to use these tables representing the same region. See **Table 1**.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

A few other important characteristics to consider during cultivar selection are:

Days to 50% flowering and days to harvest: The number of days from planting to flowering is an important and critical stage in the development stage of the soybean plant. The number of days to harvest maturity is used to determine the length of the growing season of a cultivar – however, it is influenced by the climate and planting date.

The **pod- and plant height** has an impact on the ability to harvest the crop. A relationship exists between the pod- and plant height and the relative length of the growing season. Cultivars with a shorter growing season tend to have lower plant and pod heights compared to longer growing season cultivars under similar growing conditions. Both characteristics are also influenced by production practices, Narrower inter- and intra-row spacing will increase the pod height significantly.

Seed shattering: Tolerance against shattering can play an important role during unfavourable harvesting conditions. Shattering is one of the most challenging aspects in soybean production. Therefore it is recommended to plant a package of different maturity grouping cultivars to stagger the harvesting process.

Standability (lodging) is influenced by the plant height, which tends to increase when overcast weather occurs, as well as extreme wet and

1 Grouping of localities according to warm, moderate and cool production areas during the 2023/2024 growing season.

Warm	Moderate	Cool
Brits Agri Seeds (B/I) NW	Barberspan (D) NW	Alice Fort Hare University Stellenbosh (D)
Hoopstad (D) FS	Cedara Dept (D) KZN	Bapsfontein PD1 (B/I) MP
Lichtenburg Agricol (D) NW	Greytown (D) KZN	Bapsfontein PD2 (B/I) MP
Schweizer-Reneke PD1 (D) NW	Greytown Kranskop Lake Agri (D) KZN	Belfast (D) MP
Schweizer-Reneke PD2 (D) NW	Heilbron Agri Seeds (FS)	Bethlehem PD1 (B/I) FS
Warrenton Limagrain (NC)	Kroonstad (D) FS	Bethlehem PD2 (B/I) FS
	Kroonstad Agricol (D) FS	Clarens (D) FS
	Leeudoringstad (D) NW	Delmas 1 (D) MP
	Potchefstroom Limagrain (B/I) NW	Kinross (D) MP
	Umtata (D) EC	Kokstad (D) KZN
	Winterton (D) KZN	Marquard United Seeds (FS)
		Standerton (D) MP
		Zanyokwe University Stellenbosh (B/I)

I (Supplementary irrigation)

D (Dry land)

Key:

NW: North West
MP: Mpumalanga
EC: Eastern Cape

FS: Free State
KZN: KwaZulu-Natal

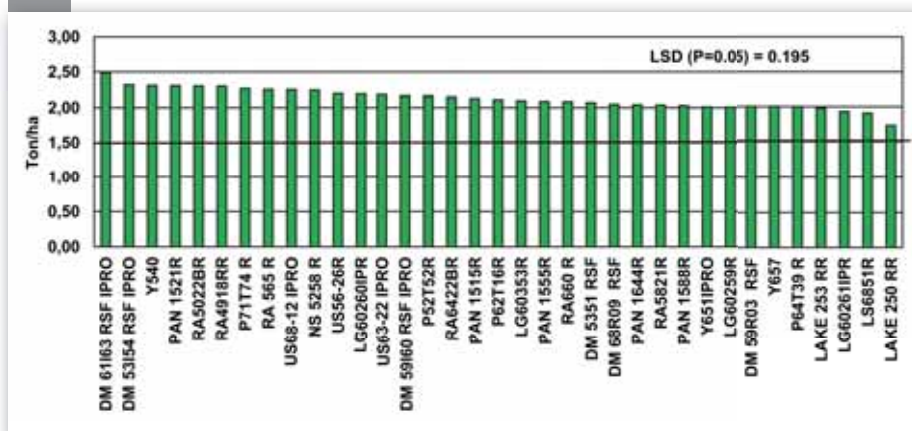
L: Limpopo
G: Gauteng



2 Yield probability (%) of cultivars evaluated in 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 for the cooler production areas at different yield potentials.

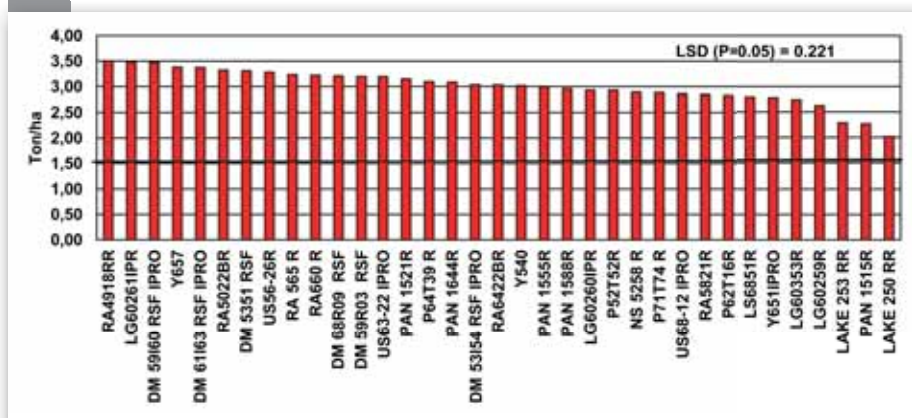
Cultivar	Yield potential (t/ha)							Regression line	
	1,5	2,0	2,5	3,0	3,5	4,0	4,5	Fprob	R ²
RA4918RR	61	59	56	55	52	51	48	<0,001	0,85
NS 5258 R	62	57	51	46	41	36	31	<0,001	0,78
DM 5351 RSF	62	60	57	54	52	49	47	<0,001	0,78
Y540	53	51	49	48	46	45	43	<0,001	0,73
RA 565 R	51	53	53	55	55	56	58	0,0008	0,66
LS6851R	51	49	45	41	38	35	32	0,0006	0,67
PAN 1521R	56	56	55	55	55	54	53	<0,001	0,97
PAN 1555R	35	36	37	39	41	42	43	<0,001	0,91
RA660 R	43	45	46	49	50	51	53	<0,001	0,95
DM 59R03 RSF	49	51	54	56	58	60	62	<0,001	0,93
P62T16R	39	37	35	32	31	29	28	<0,001	0,74
P64T39 R	46	48	50	53	55	57	59	<0,001	0,91
Y657	46	51	55	60	64	68	72	<0,001	0,93
PAN 1644R	45	48	51	53	56	59	61	<0,001	0,93
P71T74 R	43	47	51	55	59	63	67	<0,001	0,93

1 Average 1 year yield for moderate areas.



Execution of the trials discussed in this article was made possible through the financial support of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Oil and Protein Seeds Development Trust (OPDT), the various seed companies, UPL (inoculant) and numerous collaborators who conducted trials. We would like to thank Heila Vermeulen of the ARC-Grain Crops for her technical assistance.

2 Average 1 year yield for warm areas.



windy weather conditions, which can result in a higher lodging percentage of plants. Some cultivars withstand lodging better than others under the same conditions.

The **yield** indicates the genetic adaptation and suitability of a cultivar that will be planted in a specific area. During the 2023/2024 season, 35 cultivars were included in the National Soybean Cultivar Trials.

It is recommended to use the yield results with the yield probability and stability values for a more accurate cultivar choice (Table 2 as well as Table 3 and 4 on page 12). Determine for which yield potential recommendations must be made. The next step is to consult the yield probability table at the determined yield potential. From the yield probability table, cultivars with above-average probability values and yield stability should be selected. This will provide the farmer with the best chance for a stable, successful yield.

Choose the best...

3 Yield probability (%) of cultivars in 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 for the moderate production areas as different yield potentials.

Cultivar	Yield potential (t/ha)							Regression line	
	1,5	2,0	2,5	3,0	3,5	4,0	4,5	Fprob	R ²
RA 4918 RR	54	54	55	55	55	55	56	<0,001	0,93
NS 5258 R	45	46	48	49	50	51	52	<0,001	0,90
DM 5351 RSF	36	39	42	45	49	52	56	<0,001	0,86
Y 540	52	54	56	58	60	61	63	<0,001	0,91
RA 565 R	61	59	59	57	56	55	54	<0,001	0,95
LS 6851 R	43	43	43	42	42	41	41	<0,001	0,93
PAN 1521 R	62	60	58	55	53	51	48	<0,001	0,88
PAN 1555 R	50	47	45	42	39	36	34	<0,001	0,95
RA 660 R	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	<0,001	0,94
DM 59R03 RSF	52	49	46	44	41	38	35	<0,001	0,94
P 62T16 R	53	53	53	52	52	52	52	<0,001	0,87
P 64T39 R	49	48	48	48	48	47	47	<0,001	0,88
Y 657	56	56	56	55	55	54	54	<0,001	0,87
PAN 1644 R	51	50	50	49	49	49	49	<0,001	0,92
P 71T74 R	50	51	52	53	54	56	57	<0,001	0,87

4 Yield probability (%) of cultivars in 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 for the warm production areas at different yield potentials.

Cultivar	Yield potential (t/ha)								Regression line	
	2,0	2,5	3,0	3,5	4,0	4,5	5,0	5,5	Fprob	R ²
RA 4918 RR	65	63	61	59	56	54	51	49	<0,001	0,83
NS 5258 R	47	46	44	43	42	41	40	39	<0,001	0,74
DM 5351 RSF	62	58	54	49	45	41	37	33	<0,001	0,79
Y 540	42	43	45	47	48	50	51	53	<0,001	0,94
RA 565 R	41	43	46	48	51	53	55	58	<0,001	0,92
LS 6851 R	40	41	42	44	45	46	47	49	<0,001	0,81
PAN 1521 R	56	56	55	54	53	52	51	51	<0,001	0,88
PAN 1555 R	51	47	43	38	34	31	27	24	<0,001	0,79
RA 660 R	68	66	64	61	59	57	55	52	<0,001	0,86
DM 59R03 RSF	49	49	50	51	51	52	52	53	<0,001	0,89
P 62T16 R	40	40	40	41	41	41	41	42	<0,001	0,85
P 64T39 R	54	55	57	58	60	61	62	63	<0,001	0,96
Y 657	52	56	59	63	66	69	72	74	<0,001	0,90
PAN 1644 R	39	44	49	54	59	63	68	72	<0,001	0,93
P 71T74 R	46	48	50	52	54	55	57	59	<0,001	0,91

* Cultivars coloured in tables 2, 3 and 4 can be regarded as 'all-rounders' and have the potential to perform above average at all yield potential scenarios.

Cultivar stability: The stability of a cultivar is determined by the closer the R² value is to 1. The smaller the Fprob value (preferably <0,1) is, the more stable the cultivar will be.

Yield probability: The yield probability of a cultivar is the potential to achieve an above-average yield at a particular yield potential. For instance, if the yield probability of a cultivar at a particular yield potential equals 60%, the chance to get a yield above the mean of all cultivars is

60%, with a 40% chance of obtaining a yield below the mean. Since new cultivars are introduced and some are removed annually, a multi-season yield probability is only possible for a limited number of cultivars. ■

ANNELIE DE BEER, ARC-GRAIN CROPS; NICOLENE COCHRANE, ARC-AGRIMETRICS; AND LIZETTE BRONKHORST, ARC-GRAIN CROPS

Plant Health Day identifies challenges and future priorities

GRAIN SA'S RESEARCH DEPARTMENT HOSTED A PLANT HEALTH DAY ON 16 AUGUST. THE EVENT FOCUSED ON ADDRESSING THE MAJOR CHALLENGES IN PLANT HEALTH, REVIEWING ONGOING ACTIONS, AND ENHANCING COLLABORATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS.

The event successfully identified the challenges in plant health as well as critical areas for enhancement, such as developing more comprehensive pest control strategies, while outlining actionable plans for improvement.

Plant health-related research at Grain SA currently focuses on three key areas and formed the basis of discussions on the day:

1. Surveillance, diagnostics, and extension.
2. The biology of diseases and pests.
3. Integrated management approaches.

Biological control was also discussed. This article gives the highlights of the discussions.

SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING

Surveillance and monitoring are crucial for early detection of new pests and diseases that could enter South Africa, as well as for monitoring existing pests and diseases to detect any potential resurgence. Effective monitoring depends on strong communication between farmers, researchers and government bodies.

South African grain farmers have access to several disease clinics for grain, such as the Disease Diagnostic Clinic at FABI (University of Pretoria), the Agricultural Research Council's ARC-Grain Crops, and

Stellenbosch University. These clinics play a key role by providing accurate and accessible pest and disease detection and identification.

Active farmer engagement in reporting issues to these clinics improves early detection and management of diseases. This is crucial for addressing new and emerging threats and maintaining biosecurity.

In addition to the clinics, modern tools such as mobile apps and automated traps have improved the ability to improve pest and disease surveillance by enabling a real-time detection of pests and diseases. Data and information from these tools can be consolidated and centralised, enabling users to make informed decisions in their practices.

Active farmer engagement in reporting issues to these clinics improves early detection and management of diseases.

PESTS AND DISEASES IN THE GRAIN INDUSTRY

Pests and diseases significantly impact the grain industry by reducing crop yields, increasing costs, and affecting grain quality. The comprehensive list of threats presented during the second session, shed light on the array of pests and diseases affecting grains and highlighted the diverse challenges farmers face.

Key insights from the session emphasised the importance of understanding the biology and favourable environmental conditions of the pest or disease of interest for effective integrated pest and disease management.

Furthermore, the discussions emphasised the importance of South Africa improving its preparedness for emerging pests and diseases, while also anticipating future risks to the nation's grain industry. This can be achieved by staying informed about global agricultural challenges and closely monitoring international developments.

AGRO BIOLOGICALS: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

Plant beneficial microorganisms or agro biologicals are becoming increasingly important in agriculture due to their ability to improve soil health and boost plant growth. This session had four focus areas:

- **Adoption trends:** Agro biologicals have advanced from early scepticism to growing acceptance. While the market for agro biologicals is growing – particularly in regions like Brazil, a leader in global adoption – there is still work to be done to build trust and demonstrate efficacy.
- **Challenges in South Africa:** Despite a mature market, South Africa faces hurdles such as inconsistent product performance, high costs, and difficulties integrating agro biologicals into traditional farming practices. The strict regulatory environment ensures product reliability but



Participants of the Plant Health Day hosted by Grain SA's research department.
Photo: Nolo Bakwa

Plant Health Day...



Dr Dirk Strydom, managing director of NAMPO, with the Grain SA's research team – Dr Godfrey Kgatle, Pfano Mutshetso and Dr Lavinia Kistein.
Photo: Nolo Bakwa

like nitrogen fertilisers is needed. Trials and demonstrations that show tangible benefits are essential.

- **Regulations:** These are essential for ensuring product efficacy and safety, building market confidence, facilitating local adaptation, and fostering innovation. Ultimately regulations support the successful integration of products into agricultural practices.

CONCLUSION

Grain SA will continue to identify priority pests and diseases for solution-driven research projects. Sclerotinia diseases of soybean and sunflower remain a priority alongside determining the most prevalent soilborne diseases and nematodes.

It is critical that farmers have easy access to diagnostic clinics for the early detection and management of pests and diseases. Furthermore, engagements with the research community will continue to ensure industry relevant research is conducted on economically important pests and diseases to identify management approaches that can protect crop yields and contribute to farmers' profitability. ■

can also limit market entry. There is a need for local testing to adapt products to South African soil conditions.

- **Accessible information:** To boost adoption, accessible information on the benefits of agro biologicals compared to conventional methods

**DR LAVINIA KISTEN AND
PFANO MUSETSO, RESEARCH
COORDINATOR INTERNS,
GRAIN SA. FIRST PUBLISHED IN
SA GRAAN/GRAIN OCTOBER 2024.**



The Unemployment Act...



5. **Dependent's benefits** are payable to the dependents of the employee in the event that the employee passes away while employed. In terms of the Act a dependent can be:
 - The deceased employee's spouse.
 - The deceased employee's child under the age of 18.

WHAT DO I NEED TO CLAIM THESE BENEFITS?

Application for any of the mentioned benefits must be done at the closest Department of Labour to you and on the specific application form for the benefit claimed. It is also important that the employee must register as a job seeker and be available to work. An unemployment register needs to be signed every four weeks confirming the employment status of the person.

The most important form is the UI19, which is typically the form that is still sometimes referred to as the blue card. It must be completed by the employer and forwarded to the Department of Labour. A copy can be given to the employee.

The UIF is therefore much more than just a fund – it gives employees the opportunity to earn an income whilst looking for alternative employment. Spend time with a newborn and/or look after families in the event of death.

This is the UIF in a nutshell. For any clarity or more information, you are welcome to send your questions to dirk@nvbd.co.za. ■

DIRK COETZEE, LABOUR RELATIONS SPECIALIST

Mobile units

change livestock management

THE RED MEAT INDUSTRY SERVICES (RMIS) HAS LAUNCHED AN INITIATIVE AIMED AT TRANSFORMING LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT FOR SMALL-SCALE AND COMMUNAL FARMERS ACROSS SOUTH AFRICA. THE NEW MOBILE PROCESSING UNITS (MPUS) ARE DESIGNED TO BRING ESSENTIAL LIVESTOCK SERVICES, INCLUDING TAGGING, BRANDING, DEHORNING AND VACCINATIONS, DIRECTLY TO FARMERS.

The RMIS is a not-for-profit company responsible for delivering industry services with statutory funding to enhance the South African primary value chain from farmer to abattoir. Its inclusive growth pillar focuses specifically on the upliftment of small-scale and communal farmers and the concept of mobile processing units was developed to optimise and support this mission.

With over R9 million in funding committed to the project, the RMIS is set to roll out nine new mobile processing units (MPUs) across all provinces in 2025. These fully equipped mobile facilities deliver essential livestock management services right where farmers need them. Each unit is designed to provide efficient, humane livestock handling and processing services, including tagging, branding, dehorning and vaccinations.

A successful pilot phase, conducted in 2024, saw over 2 000 cattle processed across various emerging farms and communal dip tanks. This critical test provided invaluable insights into the operational efficiency of the MPU and helped refine the logistics and technical aspects of the project. The feedback from small-scale farmers during the pilot was overwhelmingly positive, reinforcing the project's potential to drive meaningful change in local livestock management practices.

Beyond just testing equipment, the pilot also provided an opportunity to engage with local farmers, helping to build trust and gauge interest. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with farmers expressing strong support for the project.

INTRODUCING THE MOBILE PROCESSING UNITS

The MPU is outfitted with:

- A body crush and neck clamp for safe animal handling.
- An electronic scale to ensure precise weight measurement.
- A high-frequency tag scanner to support traceability and animal identification.
- A range of animal handling tools for efficient, humane treatment.

MPUs are operated by trained production specialists, ensuring that all procedures follow proper specifications and biosecurity standards. This allows farmers to manage their livestock more effectively, improving both health and productivity while adhering to the highest standards of animal welfare.

How the MPU benefits farmers

These units help bridge the gap between farmers and much-needed livestock services, offering tangible advantages such as:

- Improved livestock health: Vaccinations, tagging, and other services delivered on-site mean better animal care, leading to healthier herds.
- Enhanced productivity: With proper livestock management, farmers can increase their production, enabling more consistent supply to markets.
- Increased market access: By improving livestock traceability and overall health, farmers can enter formal markets, both locally and internationally.
- Cost and time efficiency: Bringing services directly to farmers reduces the need for long, costly trips to far-off processing centres.

PROJECTED OUTCOMES FOR 2025

In 2025, RMIS plans to expand the MPU programme to every province in South Africa, deploying nine units across the country. Each MPU will target centralised locations, such as communal diptanks, while supporting existing projects like the Land Development Support Programme.

The projected impact of the national rollout includes:

- 9 MPUs processing an average of 150 animals per day.
- 27 000 animals processed per month.
- 297 000 animals processed annually.
- 1 485 000 animals processed over five years.

This initiative has the potential to revolutionise livestock management in South Africa, directly benefiting farmers and significantly contributing to the country's agricultural sector.



The RMIS invites potential funders and stakeholders to join this collaborative effort. To find out more or to get involved, please visit the website, www.rmis.co.za.

Source: <https://rmis.co.za/news/introducing-the-rmis-mobile-processing-units/>

Consider SORGHUM as an alternative crop

SORGHUM IS AMONG THE MAJOR TRADITIONAL FOOD CROPS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. IN SOUTH AFRICA, DRYLAND GRAIN PRODUCTION IS IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE KEY PRIORITIES TOWARDS FOOD SECURITY. SORGHUM REQUIRES LOW NUTRIENT INPUTS AND FAR LESS WATER THAN COMPARABLE CROPS SUCH AS MAIZE, AND ITS UNIQUE BIOLOGY MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO PRODUCE GOOD YIELDS, EVEN UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS.

As water resources become more constrained and as the fast-growing human population requires more productivity from less arable land, sorghum is a crop poised to meet the growing needs of both traditional agriculture and bio-industrial processes. The causes of low sorghum production in South Africa are a lack of technology, the insufficient use of fertilisers, low soil water content, soil erosion, environmental stresses and poor market infrastructure.



Seedbed preparation before planting.

Grain sorghum and maize are comparable in costs of production – therefore, the growing environment is the largest determining factor for choosing which one to grow. Sorghum requires less water than maize, so it is likely to be grown as a replacement for maize and produce better yields than maize in the hotter and drier areas of South Africa.

CLIMATIC REQUIREMENTS

This crop can withstand high temperatures better than most other crops, but extremely high temperatures during flowering may be harmful. For optimum production, grain sorghum requires a maximum daily temperature of 25°C to 30°C.

Low temperatures reduce yields. It is therefore important that the planting dates are chosen in such a way that the crop attains maximum advantage of prevailing climatic conditions. The sorghum plant is very sensitive to frost, so crop maturity should be achieved before the first frost occurs.

MOISTURE/RAINFALL REQUIREMENTS

Grain sorghum is a tropically adapted plant that can survive during drought. Because of its ability to survive in unfavourable conditions, sorghum is often relegated to poor soils and poor management.

However, to be profitable, a sorghum crop needs sufficient water at the critical stages in its development. Adequate soil moisture at planting helps to assure uniform stands and contributes to early plant growth. If the seedbed contains sufficient moisture for good germination and early plant growth but subsoil moisture is lacking, water may be supplied by irrigating after emergence.

Encourage deep rooting by maintaining only moderate soil moisture levels during early vegetative growth. Whether irrigating before or after planting, apply no more water than required to fill the effective root zone.

In South Africa, sorghum is produced on a wide range of soils, and under fluctuating rainfall conditions of approximately 400 mm in the drier western regions to about 800 mm in the wetter eastern regions.

SOIL REQUIREMENTS

Deep, well-drained, fertile sandy-clay loam soil with a pH of approximately 5,0 (KCl) is an ideal soil type. However, grain sorghum adapts to a wide range of soils, provided the soil fertility is reasonable. Grain sorghum can be grown with greater success than maize on less fertile soils, shallow soils, heavy turf soils and soils subject to waterlogging.



Pre-emergence herbicide spraying operation.

Heavy soils produce the best yields in good seasons, but during times of stress (such as waterlogging) sandier soils are better. However, during a normal drought grain sorghum will still produce satisfactory yields on soils with a clay content of more than 50%, whereas maize will yield very little grain.

The sorghum root system is very fibrous, and can extend to a depth of up to 1,2 m. The plant finds 75% of its water in the top metre of soil, and because of this, in dry areas, the plant's production can be severely affected by the water-holding capacity of the soil.

PRODUCTION

Soil preparation

Soil preparation should be similar to that of maize, but as the seeds are smaller, the seedbed, particularly on clay soils, must be finer to ensure good germination and the soil crust that may develop after planting must be broken to enable the young seedlings to emerge.

Planting date

Planting can start when the soil temperature is at least 15°C and the soil moisture is sufficient for germination. In most areas planting should take place during late October to mid-December. It is impossible to determine the outcome of climatic conditions during a specific growing season at the outset of the season. However, one can choose a planting date taking long-term climatic conditions into consideration.

Time planting so flowering avoids the hottest, driest period of the summer. Utilising several planting dates is recommended to spread the risk of one planting date flowering during a stress period.

Fertilisation

The nutrient requirements of grain sorghum are equivalent to these of maize, and roughly the same quantities of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) are removed from the soil by these two crops. However, grain sorghum can utilise soil nutrients more efficiently than maize.

Therefore the recommendations for maize may also be applied to grain sorghum, except for slight adjustments depending on the soil and moisture conditions of the farm. As in the case of maize, the fertilisation programme must be based on the projected yield and a reliable soil analysis.

Harvesting

- Generally, smallholder farmers harvest by hand – for example, cut heads with a sickle or knife.
- If the grain moisture is high, heads are spread on a drying floor in the sun.

CONTROLLING WEEDS, DISEASES AND PESTS

Weed control

As the sorghum plant grows very slowly in the early stages, it can easily be smothered by weeds. The young sorghum seedling is not capable of competing with weeds. Therefore it is important that weeds are effectively controlled, particularly in the early stages (during the first six to eight weeks after planting). A well-prepared seedbed largely prevents weeds from becoming a problem soon after planting.

Weeds can be controlled by mechanical, cultural practices or chemical methods. Wild sorghum in a sorghum field can only be controlled mechanically or by hand hoeing.

Major insects

Insect problems in sorghum vary from field to field, from season to season, and in different parts of the country. Stalk borers (both African and spotted) can attack grain sorghum and cause serious damage. The control measures for both pests are the same, although spotted stalk borers are more difficult to control.

In both cases, early October and late December/January plantings are most susceptible to infestation and yield reductions. Chemical control measures are necessary for the well-timed control of both pests. It is recommended that control measures for both insect pest species should be applied when a maximum of 10% plants in a sorghum field are infested.

Diseases

Diseases of sorghum vary in severity from one place or field to another and from season to season, depending upon the host plant's resistance, causal organisms and the environment. The total eradication of diseases in sorghum is not economically feasible, so growers must try to minimise their damage through an integrated disease management system.

These measures include:

- Proper seedbed preparation.
- Planting resistant varieties.
- Planting disease-free seed.
- Providing optimum growing conditions.
- Rotating with other crops.
- Removing infested debris.

The accurate application of herbicides, insecticides and fungicides are all methods that can be used to minimise losses from diseases.

Birds

Birds are a major cause of yield losses in sorghum. Varieties with a higher tannin content and growing the crop in large fields are solutions used to combat the birds. ■



**DR NEMERA SHARGIE,
ARC-GRAIN CROPS,
POTCHEFSTROOM**

A programme that is changing lives



Big smile from a winner

AT THE 2024 PGP DAY OF CELEBRATION, PETRUS RANKO TSOTETSIS'S DEDICATION, RESILIENCE AND HARD WORK WERE RECOGNISED AS HE WON THE PRESTIGIOUS GRAIN SA/ABSA/JOHN DEERE FINANCIAL NEW ERA COMMERCIAL FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD.

On 24 October, Ranko proudly received a brand new John Deere 5075E utility tractor from John Deere Financial on his farm near Kestell. The event was characterised by a celebratory mood, as fellow farmers from the Free State region gathered in big numbers to honour his achievement. This moment not only highlighted Ranko's hard work and dedication, but also fostered a sense of community and pride among local farmers.

This prestigious prize is a symbol of his journey and commitment to promoting agricultural excellence. For Ranko, it is more than just equipment – it is a tool for growth and productivity that will enable him to cultivate his land more efficiently, expand his production and embrace advanced farming practices.

With this new addition to his farm, he is set to achieve remarkable milestones, contributing significantly to his community's food security and economic stability.

Reflecting on his achievement, Ranko expressed gratitude towards Grain SA and John Deere Financial for recognising his efforts. 'This tractor is a dream coming true. It symbolises hope and progress for my family and farm,' he shared.

His story serves as an inspiration to emerging farmers, highlighting the impact of persistence and the value of support from organisations like Grain SA.



Pieter Pienaar, credit sales and marketing manager at John Deere Financial, hands Ranko the keys to his brand new John Deere 5075E utility tractor at the Day of Celebration in September this year.

NOLO BAKWA, COMMUNICATIONS INTERN AT GRAIN SA

AT GRASS ROOTS



Ranko thanked everyone who has been involved in his development as a farmer during his acceptance speech. Here he shares the joy with some of his farm workers.



A mentor who played a huge role in Ranko's success story, Jacques Roux, with his winning farmer. (Read more about Jacques on page 20.)



The John Deere Financial team, Willem Roets (finance specialist) and Lariska Hallat (marketing communication administrator), with the winner.

Training is key at these meetings

A total of 25 study group meetings took place in September. In Dundee five of these visits were held to prepare for the Beyond Abundance (BA) project, where planting was discussed. Training was also done and confirmation of payments that had been made for inputs was controlled. Inputs were also delivered during some of the study group sessions.



The first input deliveries took place in the Louwsburg area. These farmers from the Sheepmore Study Group were excited about the early delivery of inputs and look forward to the coming season.



The farmers of the Luphisi Farmers' Association were reminded about planting the correct plant population by knowing the measurements of distances. They learned more about measuring weight in kilogram and volume from millilitres up to kilolitres. They were also taught more about climate and soil characteristics.



The Ntabamhlope Study Group had a training session named 'An introduction to measuring'. A practical demonstration was also held with a knapsack, showing the farmers how to determine the nozzle height, spray width and volume sprayed per 50 m walking.

GETTING READY TO PLANT

IT has been a very busy time for the Farmer Development Team, with a total of 109 farm visits taking place between 4 September and 11 October. The regional development managers and mentors were making sure that soil preparations have been done and that all implements are ready to go after the first rain falls. Proper care and maintenance were also addressed.

The Dundee office made 28 trips to ten different farmers. In the Eastern Free State, nine farmers had 22 visits, while eleven farmers in the Western Free State had 16 visits from the team. In the Lichtenburg region, there were ten visits to nine farmers. The Louwsburg office serviced the most farmers, with 33 visits to 24 different farmers.

Du Toit van der Westhuizen paid Serema Organ a visit in the Lichtenburg area. Serema is getting ready to plant 100 ha of maize and about 40 ha of sunflower. The farmer is also awaiting a quote to have his old tractor's gearbox repaired.



Johan Kriel, regional development manager, visited farmer Johannes Motlhabane, who used to farm with his father. He now has his own land but will still work with his father and use his equipment. The high potential lands need to be tilled before planting can begin. This will be done once it has rained.



Ranko Tsotetsi from Kestell was busy spreading lime when mentor Johan Roux, paid him a visit. Johan and Ranko recalibrated the spreader again after Ranko discovered that the quantity that was spread, was more than what was calibrated. They found that the driver was driving too slowly, so the RPM was adjusted to 1 500, which solved the problem. ■

Corner Post

BY LOUISE KUNZ, ASSISTANT EDITOR

WHEN PETRUS RANKO TSOTETSI WAS ANNOUNCED AS THE 2024 GRAIN SA/ABSA/JOHN DEERE FINANCIAL NEW ERA COMMERCIAL FARMER OF THE YEAR, HIS MENTOR, JACQUES ROUX WAS FILLED WITH 'FATHERLY' PRIDE.

Although Jacques did not grow up on a farm, he spent a lot of time on farms during his school years, as he became friends with the farmers' sons, who were also boarders. Farm visits definitely sparked his interest in farming. When his father retired, he bought some land and Jacques could try his hand at farming.

To learn the agricultural ropes, he spent six months at Glen Agricultural College, but soon realised that he wanted to learn about farming with practical experience and not through books. So he started working on farms as a farm worker and later became a farm manager, which made his desire to farm even stronger.

He later farmed with his brother and a friend near Bethlehem in the Free State, but sadly both his farming partners passed away. This was a turning point for Jacques and a time when he learned a valuable life lesson – if things do not work out, you have to get up and keep going. 'Perhaps this is why I can relate to the farmers in the programme. I have travelled the rocky roads of life. If things don't work out as you hoped, you can't give up – you have to get up and try again.'

To Jacques mentorship has become a lifestyle and his favourite topic of conversation. 'It's wonderful to see the difference you make. Sometimes you arrive on a farm where nothing



is in a working condition and within three years fences are repaired, implements are clean and in a working condition, animals have gained weight and there is a healthy crop on the lands.'

Jacques who is now the regional development manager in the Free State, thoroughly enjoys the time he spends with the farmers – and it seems that they are also satisfied with this enthusiastic and passionate mentor, who dreams of leaving a positive footprint wherever he goes. 'I hope that I am making a difference and that it will change lives for the better...'

ABOUT THE WINNER

WHAT HAS IMPRESSED YOU MOST ABOUT RANKO?

Ranko started farming with nothing. He was a mechanic who gave up a secure income to farm when his father passed away – without his wife and children to support him, as they stayed in the city. He made the decision to honour his father by making a success of the farming operation.

WHY DID YOU NOMINATE HIM?

It is actually the second year that I nominated him – and the second time he was chosen as a finalist. This farmer has built up the farm from scratch. He received nothing for free but bought all his equipment from PALS (Partners in Agri Land Solutions). Everything he owns, is through his own hard work and perseverance – and that deserves to be recognised.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THIS FARMER?

The importance of compassion, humility and gratitude. His thankfulness is something that everyone can take note of. When he received his prize (a brand new John Deere tractor), he invited everyone who had played a part in his farming success



FAST FACTS

Name: Jacques Roux

Region: Free State

Position: Regional development manager since 2022.

Mentors: Johan Roux (Jacques's father) and Johan Kriel (previous regional manager in the Free State).

– no matter when it was or how much time they invested – to be part of the celebration. He told his guests that it wasn't his win, it was the area's win. He also shared his prize money amongst his farmworkers. He is loved in the community because of these attributes. Ranko is more than a mentee in my life, he is a friend.

WHAT IS YOUR DREAM FOR THIS WINNER?

That he will continue to improve and grow as a farmer, but at a steady pace. It is so important to make sure that the farming foundation is established before you start expanding. Ranko agrees and says that before he expands in hectares, he first wants to plant his 210 ha successfully. ■

THREE CHARACTERISTICS A MENTOR NEEDS:

- Patience.
- Empathy – mentorship gives insight into people's circumstances, which changes your perception about people.
- Adaptability – you start to appreciate people's uniqueness, no matter who they are or what they own.

Partners who have supported this winning farmer over the years include the REID project, VKB, Schoemans' Boerdery, SACTA in overlap with Grain SA/PGP. During 2023/2024 and for 2024/2025 he is supported with interest bearing production loans from Standard Bank and Kgodiso Development fund in overlap with PGP.