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Ram Breeders Sound Alarm on Lesotho’s Livestock Import Dependence

By Molula Mofosi & Lungile Maseela

A crisis is quietly brewing in Lesotho’s wool and mohair industry—and its roots lie at the country’s borders.

The Ram Breeders Association of Lesotho has issued a stark warning about the unchecked importation of Merino sheep and Angora goats from South Africa, a trend they say does not only bleeds the economy but threatens to cripple the country’s capacity to sustain its own breeding industry.

At the Small Stock Show held by the Southern Mountains Association for Rural Transformation and Development (SMARTD) in Qacha’s Nek, Association Chairperson Ishmael Mohaula raised the alarm, calling the rising dependency on imported livestock a “slow death” for local breeders.

“Basotho farmers are investing large sums of money in foreign animals without building local breeding capacity. The result? Compromised wool and mohair quality, unnecessary expenses, and a sector losing control over its future,” he said.

Mohaula pointed that the costs are staggering. “Between permits, transport, taxes, and animal feed, farmers are burdened with rising operational expenses. The upcoming VAT hikes—from 15% to 15.5% on May 1, 2025, and to 16% in April 2026—will only deepen the crisis especially for an industry already on the financial edge, these increases could push many smallholders out of business,” the chairperson charged.

A Billion-Maloti Problem
According to the Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Growers Association (LNWMGA), between M27 million and M30 million is spent annually importing parent stock.

“That’s money flying out of our economy instead of circulating within it,” said LNWMGA Chairperson Mokoenihi Thinyane.

“While we’ve seen a slight drop in import numbers, demand for quality livestock far exceeds what our local breeders can supply and that is our current challenge.”

In a bid to reverse this, Thinyane revealed that the LNWMGA—with support from WAMCOP—procured over 230 breeding animals at a January 2025 livestock auction in Maseru for distribution to local farmers.

He further indicated that the country has breeding sites in Quthing and Mokhotlong which have also been secured to strengthen domestic capacity, “...But these efforts are racing against time and growing pressure.”

Systemic Failures, Missed Opportunities
Industry experts argue the problem is not just economic but it’s structural.

Teboho Tšese, Chairperson of the Skylight Wool and Hair Association, traces the roots of the crisis to years of failed support and fragmentation.

“We had a vision under Khosana Lerotholi Ram Breeders Association, but lack of independence and proper backing led to its collapse,” he said, revealing that Skylight and its successor, Bahlaisi, now operate without formal government support, navigating the uphill battle of self-reliance.

Meanwhile, the international market demands medium-grade fibres, while Basotho producers primarily yield fine to super-fine grades.

According to the The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) the agricultural sector of Lesotho is a major source of livelihood, engaging approximately 71% of the rural Basotho population.



IFAD notes that Livestock accounts for the largest share of the agricultural GDP with Wool and mohair the largest two agricultural commodities.

The organisation explains that these natural fibres are predominantly used in the apparel industry and especially in high-end fashion, but is quick to indicate that the global market for wool and mohair is changing with a significant shift to responsible production standards.

“This requires visibility and traceability of operations and product transformation along the commodity value chain and across the interactions of various value chain players. It further requires improvements in areas of animal production and husbandry, management of the environment, and labour conditions of workers along the value chain.”

IFAD notes that in 2022, the price premium for certified wool ranged between 8% and 35%, suggesting a significant incentive to move towards certification, however, tt the same time, it is expected that non-certified fibre will become “low-quality” fibre and receive less demand

“The global market for wool and mohair is undergoing a sizeable shift towards responsible production standards. It is to be expected that in five to ten years, non-certified fibre will be traded as second-class produce. The move to responsible production is a move to sustainable intensification and Unfortunately, Lesotho’s wool and mohair sector faces key constraints: limited value chain coordination and mistrust, lack of data for management, policy, and planning, limited access to finance and sub-optimal management of critical public assets such as shearing sheds, sheep, and goat studs for improved breeds.

It added, “Furthermore, heavy dependence on South Africa for input procurement and access to services constrain individual farmers, associa-

tions, and larger private sector actors. The dominance of paper-based reporting constrains the certification of products.”

“That mismatch costs our farmers. On top of those there are penalties imposed on local rams, that discourages their use in breeding—forcing farmers back into the costly cycle of imports,” Tšese said.

Solutions from the Soil
Not all is bleak. SMARTD’s Programme Director, Fako Fako, is pushing a practical response: local fodder production.

“Feed is one of the biggest costs of rearing livestock the correct way, so we at SMARTD are teaching farmers to grow and mix their own high-quality animal feed. It’s one of the fastest ways to improve fibre quality and cut costs in the height of high export costs,” he said.

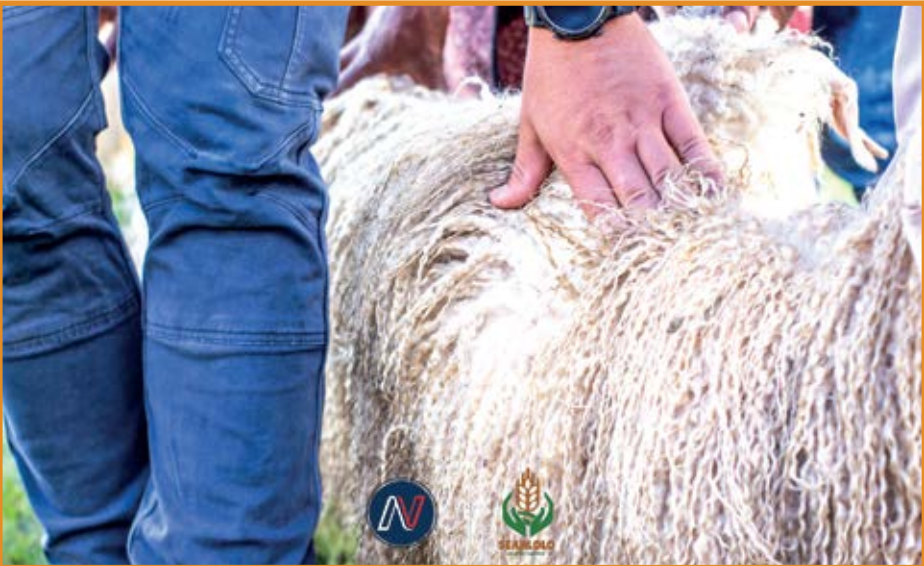
Yet the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) figures show the scale of the challenge: more than 2,800 Merino sheep and Angora goats were imported into Lesotho in 2023 alone—at a cost of over M28 million.

It’s a model that experts and farmers say is unsustainable and dangerous for a country with fragile trade and agricultural systems.

A Turning Point or Tipping Point?
Lesotho’s wool and mohair industry contributes around 8% to the country’s agricultural GDP. But without urgent investment in local breeding, infrastructure, and farmer training, that figure could dwindle fast.

Tšese believes the solution lies in a cultural and strategic shift; “We must breed for our market. We must care for the land, nourish our animals, and compete—not with each other—but with imported systems that drain us.”

“What is clear is that Lesotho cannot afford to keep outsourcing its agricultural future if we want to own and grow the market,” he said.



The Journey of Lepeli Moeketsi from Lost Yields to Resilient Fields

By Lungile Maseela

In the highlands of Lesotho, where the soil crumbles beneath both the feet of farmers and the weight of long-standing agricultural traditions, one man has dared to reimagine what it means to farm—and to fail.

Lepeli Moeketsi, a 45-year-old farmer based in Peka, Leribe, is not just a producer of crops—he is a student of the land, a reformer of old methods, and a community pillar who has come to understand that farming is not about brute strength or luck, but about informed, strategic resilience.

Raised in Qhoali, in the district of Quthing, Moeketsi grew up in a household sustained by the land.

His mother sold crop produce while his father raised livestock. Their modest income fed, clothed, and educated three boys.

But despite the backdrop of agriculture that surrounded his upbringing, Moeketsi did not dream of becoming a farmer. His ambitions led him to Masitise High School and then later to Lerotholi Polytechnic, where he earned a diploma in construction management.

Yet life has a way of circling us back to the soil from which we came.

While tagging along with his older brother and their friend, Nkaku Kabi, he recounts how he was first exposed to the concept of commercial farming.

The stories about Kabi's father—a successful farmer with high yields—sparked something within him. For the first time, he says he realised that farming could go beyond subsistence; it could be scalable, profitable, and transformative.

After finishing his diploma, rather than settling into construction, Moeketsi chose to follow the pull of the land.

In 2012, he bought his first tractor in Bethlehem, South Africa, and began working as a subcontractor for country's Ministry of Agriculture under their block farming initiative.

"This was not the glorious start of a smooth entrepreneurial journey—it was a trial by fire," he describes saying government cheques were delayed. Inputs were expensive. And even though he managed to purchase a second tractor by 2014, thanks to a risky bank loan, his efforts were still constrained by bureaucracy and the realities of smallholder farming.

Still, he pressed on.

Moeketsi did not own land—but he did not let that stop him. He found ways to rent idle fields from other Basotho, agreeing to compensation through produce or cash.

"The idea that young people cannot venture into farming because they don't own land is misleading," he says.

"Land renting and block farming make access possible. We just have to think creatively Block farming or renting land is the cheapest way to access land," he explains.

His early years were marked by the backbreaking, intricate work of planting wheat. But the high labour demand and costly equipment made wheat a poor choice.

Pivoting with agility, he turned to beans—specifically, pinto beans and for seven years, this crop defined his identity as a farmer.

Then came the rainy season.

Between 2020 and 2023, excessive wet seasons wreaked havoc across Lesotho's agriculture sector leaving farmers with spoiled crops.

In 2021, Lepeli lost a staggering 50 hectares of NUA45 and Nodak Pinto beans—his most promising season yet.

Beans worth M1 million rotted in the soil. Worse still, the entire operation had been financed by a bank loan.

"The loss wasn't just financial. It was emotional. It was humbling. But it was also a turning point for me as a farmer."

In defeat, Lepeli did what all great entrepreneurs do—he researched. He networked. He learned.

"I realised that beans are too sensitive to the



ever changing climate and the effects of Climate Change. They don't do well in drought, and they fail in excess rain," he explains.

"I then decided to reinvent myself and I started looking into maize production."

At first, he says he was sceptical especially considering the profit possibilities after harvest.

"Mealie meal is cheap and I wondered if this could be profitable. While I knew I still wanted to be a successful farmer, the decision to change to maize was a tedious one. I engaged with other maize farmers, reviewed climate-smart seed varieties and seeing the sustainable potentials, I started to see maize differently."

In 2022, he narrates that he transitioned fully into maize cultivation.

"That decision was not a step backward—it was a step deeper into strategic, informed farming and transformation," he says.

And it was this shift that would redefine his mission.

Maize, it turns out, had more potential than Moeketsi ever anticipated. It tolerated hailstorms. It grew steadily. It responded well to timing and precision.

Eager to share his knowledge and showcase the power of good research and quality seeds, he partnered with German seed company Bayer to organise a farmer's day demonstration in Peka a fortnight ago. With the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition—and Bayer's local agent, Mpho Sekonyela—he demonstrated four maize seed varieties, each tailored to different climatic and soil conditions.

The demonstration wasn't about marketing; it was about information. It was a show of real time evidence that precision agriculture, research and transformation are key ingredients to successful commercial farming in Lesotho in the height of climate shocks.

He introduced varieties such as;

- DKC 73-72, known for maturing in just

123 days.

- DKC 77-22, which takes up to 135 days and offers closed tips to reduce rot.
- DKC 74-20, a tiller-heavy variety known for strong resilience.
- DKC 72-70, a tall, double-cob variety making its debut in Lesotho, all which he produced and demonstrated for local farmers to physically see.

These varieties gave farmers options. But more importantly, Moeketsi gave farmers hope.

His pivot to maize is not just about seeds. It is about systems. He now advocates for farmers to focus less on land ownership and more on knowledge.

"It's not about how much money you have or how much land you have. It's about how much you know, how much you are willing improve in learning," he insists.

Reading, he says, is his weapon.

"I read every pamphlet, every guide, every label, every book recommended, every article I come across. I read to understand advances, I read to learn new practices, I make sure I am as knowledgeable as I possibly can."

He stresses the importance of understanding pesticides, fertilization, and soil history.

"Some chemicals stay in the soil for 24 months. You need to know that before planting anything."

He says he has also learned to start small.

"Do the right practice on a small scale before you gamble with 50 hectares lest you lose everything all at once," he advises, saying the temptation is always to go big, "...But farming rewards precision, not scale."

He shares that fertilizer subsidies have taught him another key lesson: "don't over-plant what your subsidy cannot cover. Time management, too, has become a critical factor—especially with grains that are sensitive to planting dates."

Moeketsi sees research and collaboration as the future of farming in Lesotho.

His farmers' day events draw hundreds of farmers and agriculture enthusiasts from both Lesotho and South Africa.

He stresses that his passion is to ensure that Basotho farmers become the standard—no longer looking across the border to South Africa's farming sector as the benchmark of success, but should level up the play field and compete.

"I want people to look at our fields and say, 'This is what good farming looks like,'" he says.

He also believes the government and financial institutions must play a stronger role—not just in loans, but in risk protection, seed certification, and post-harvest market access.

"We can't talk about food security when our policies are reactive. We need proactive investment in seeds, training, and infrastructure. At every turn, collaboration has been the backbone of my progress. From working alongside the Ministry and Bayer, to engaging other farmers, to educating youth. I strongly believe my story is less about individual triumph and more about collective movement which I hope will trickle down to others if we want to change Lesotho's agriculture success story," he says.

Moeketsi's fields in Peka now stand not only as a source of food but as a symbol of what's possible when resilience meets knowledge, and when ambition is backed by a support system.

"I don't just dream to grow crops—but to cultivate a generation. A generation of farmers who understand their soil, who respect timing, who invest in research, who know their chemicals, who leverage public-private partnerships, and above all, who learn from every harvest, good or bad."

Lepeli Moeketsi is no longer just a man with a tractor. He is a force. A leader. A farmer who understands that crops grow best when the farmer grows, too.

And perhaps that's the biggest lesson of all: in the fertile soil of knowledge, failure becomes compost for success.

Railway collapse sends food prices soaring

By Staff Reporter

Lesotho's deteriorating railway infrastructure has worsened an already dire food insecurity crisis, driving up costs for staple foods.

Disruptions to rail freight services, which have left Lesotho Flour Mills (LFM)—the country's major milling company—scrambling to cover increased transport costs, come at a time when Lesotho is facing one of its worst food crises in years.

LFM, along with companies such as Afrisam (for shipping grain and cement respectively), are the primary users of rail transport in the country.

However, since late 2023, the operators of the rail transport in Lesotho ceased deliveries to LFM due to the badly deteriorated rail line, fearing possible derailment, which would be costly. The train's daily deliveries to other clients in Lesotho apart from LFM continue to be made.

The 2.5-kilometer railway track, linking Maseru Border Gate to Maseru Station, is the country's only railway link, which was established in 1905. The aging infrastructure has become a significant challenge, especially as the railway failure coincides with Prime Minister Samuel Matekane's announcement that the country is grappling with serious food insecurity issues.

He warned that a growing number of Basotho households were struggling to access basic nutrition. According to the Prime Minister, over 700,000 people would be food insecure for the next eight months, and an estimated M1.2 billion in aid would be needed to address the food crisis.

LFM told Newsday this week that it had since switched from the cost-effective rail transport to more expensive road transport, significantly increasing the cost of importing raw materials.

While he would not divulge the detailed economic impacts of the railway failure on their business operations, LFM's Chief Executive Officer, Fourie Du Plessis, said that the shift to road transport had negatively affected the pricing of their products.

"We are currently working together with the Ministry (of Public Works and Transport) on the rail breakdown maintenance. It is true that this has significantly impacted our commodity prices," Du Plessis said.

"So for us as Lesotho Flour Mills, it is critical for the issue to be resolved as soon as possible for the benefit of our business, which is struggling due to increased operating costs. Road transport is quite expensive compared to rail transport."

The rising cost of maize meal and flour, essential staples in Basotho diets, is especially hitting vulnerable households the hardest.

On their part, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the custodian of railway transport infrastructure, has faced criticism for delays in addressing the issue, thereby contributing to the rise in food prices.

In a statement to Newsday this week, the Ministry said it encountered challenges, such as a lack of expertise and financial contracts, which have hindered efforts to quickly attend to the broken railway line.

The ministry said it has earmarked a M10 million budget for the repair of the railway in their 2025/26 fiscal year plans.

"This matter is at the stage where the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, together with Lesotho Flour Mills, has recently carried out a deep assessment of the railway line through a South African company called Flint in preparation to make a thorough rehabilitation of the railway line," the Ministry said.

"We are currently waiting for this assessment report from Flint. Roads Directorate has started developing an RFP document in preparation for a tender for this project but is waiting for the release of the assessment report."

The Ministry acknowledged that it does not have in-house engineers capable of assessing the full scope of the damage.

"As a Ministry, we do not have engineers who could assess the situation and give a clear cost of repair, hence we are working with LFM. The railway has been assessed and we are currently waiting for the report from LFM, which will also indicate the cost as well as estimated time to do the repair."

In the last financial year, the Ministry did not have funds to carry out the repairs, but this new financial year, funds are available, and the Roads Directorate will lead the repair process.

The Ministry has allocated M10 million for rail infrastructure maintenance, with repairs set to begin in the 2025/26 financial year.

While the government has promised rail repairs, the timeline remains a major concern. With construction only expected to begin in 2025/26, businesses and consumers face at least another year of high costs before rail services resume.

As Lesotho's market leader, LFM sets the pricing trend for other millers and food processors. With each price hike implemented by LFM, other millers and retailers adjust their prices accordingly, leading to a widespread increase in food prices.

This domino effect is particularly concerning given Lesotho's ongoing food insecurity crisis. Households that already struggle to afford food are now facing even higher costs, making it more difficult for vulnerable communities to access essential nutrition.

Lesotho has long suffered from an underdeveloped and unreliable rail system. The 2.5-kilometer railway track, which links Maseru Border Gate to the station, is the country's only railway link, originally established in 1905.

In 1963, passenger rail services were suspended, before resuming five years later. By the 1970s, road transport had overtaken rail as the preferred travel method, and by 1989, all passenger rail services had ceased. Freight trains continued to run, carrying goods such as cement, maize, fuel, and other bulk imports.

The rail infrastructure in Maseru includes a container handling facility and a bulk grain depot, both of which are owned by the government and leased to Transnet, a South African rail company.

Agrivision Lesotho Set to Launch with Inaugural Conference

By Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho's agricultural landscape is poised for a transformative leap with the official launch of Agrivision Lesotho, a youth-led non-governmental organisation that promises to bring fresh energy and inclusive innovation to the sector.

The organisation's inaugural event is scheduled for Saturday, April 26th, 2025, and would mark its formal introduction into the nation's development space.

Founded in 2024 by visionary agricultural advocate Manko Stephen Manko, Agrivision Lesotho was born from a deep understanding of the critical challenges affecting the country's agricultural sector—youth unemployment, food insecurity, climate change, and gender inequality among them.

Driven by a strong desire to redefine agriculture as a dynamic and inclusive field, the organisation is committed to empowering youth and marginalised communities.

"Agrivision Lesotho is open to all young people who are willing to be agents of change within Lesotho's agricultural sector," said Manko.

Agrivision Lesotho has outlined a focused mission anchored on several

key objectives of equipping youth and persons with disabilities with skills and knowledge in sustainable agriculture and value chain innovation, advocating for inclusive agricultural policies to ensure fair access to resources for marginalised groups, facilitating community-based initiatives that promote reforestation, vital soil conservation, and climate-smart farming, establishing partnerships with national and international organisations for resource mobilisation and knowledge sharing as well as promoting gender equity and inclusive participation across all projects and programmes.

The upcoming conference is expected to be a watershed moment for the organisation, placing young people at the heart of the conversation.

According to Manko, the event would host vibrant dialogues on key issues shaping the future of agriculture in Lesotho.

Attendees can expect discussions around enhancing dietary health through sustainable farming practices, confronting the challenges of food security while identifying new opportunities, elevating the role of youth as key players in agricultural development and economic empowerment, fostering multi-stakeholder

partnerships to drive sustainable agriculture and promoting equal participation of women in all stages of the agricultural value chain.

Agrivision Lesotho hopes the launch would not only inspire but also mobilise action.

"We are expecting the participants, when they leave the conference, they must preach gender equality, knowing the opportunities that are there for the agricultural sector," Manko said.



Leribe High Schools Gear Up for 2025 Agric Fair

By Kananelo Mokhele

Local butchers, farmers, and food processors are set to elevate their operations after participating in a comprehensive food safety and business management workshop hosted by the Smallholder Agricultural Development Project II (SADP II).

The three-day training, held in Mohalalotse, Maseru, aimed to improve hygiene practices, enhance food safety standards, and strengthen business management in Lesotho's meat industry.

The workshop brought together key stakeholders from the meat supply chain, focusing on equipping participants with practical skills to meet stringent health regulations while promoting consumer safety and improving business efficiency.

The training covered critical areas such as meat hygiene, proper storage and transportation, temperature control, and quality assurance—all aimed at reducing the risk of contamination and foodborne illnesses.

With increasing concerns over food safety, particularly in rural communities, the workshop sought to ensure that meat products reaching consumers meet the highest safety standards.

Lehlohonolo Morahanye, an environment and safeguard specialist with SADP II, emphasised the importance of food safety in building consumer trust and protecting public health.

"This workshop is the first in a series aimed at strengthening food safety practices while also empowering small-scale farmers and butchers to improve their livelihoods," he said.

Morahanye highlighted that proper hygiene, temperature control, and regular quality

checks are essential not only for safeguarding public health but also for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the meat industry.

Facilitated by experts from the Department of Livestock Services, Veterinary Services Division, Ministry of Health, and the Department of Environmental Health, the workshop combined theory with hands-on training, giving participants real-world skills they could immediately apply.

Attendees were trained on best practices in meat hygiene and sanitation, safe storage and transportation methods, proper packaging techniques to extend shelf life and business management strategies for small-scale processors.

The interactive sessions encouraged collaboration, with participants engaging in group discussions and brainstorming innovative food safety solutions tailored to their businesses.

The workshop concluded with an exercise where attendees pitched their ideas to a panel of industry experts, fostering creativity and practical problem-solving.

For many participants, the workshop was a game-changer; Nthabiseng Makeoane, a butchery owner from Qacha's Nek, shared how the training transformed her approach to food safety and business management.

"I came here wanting to improve my skills and offer better services to my clients, and this training far exceeded my expectations. Learning about proper food handling, packaging, and hygiene has given me the tools to expand my business and build trust with my customers," she said.

Makeoane encouraged other farmers and butchers to participate in future sessions, emphasising that the skills gained are essential for

business growth and sustainability.

Morahanye indicated that SADP II aims to continue offering similar workshops across Lesotho, focusing on equipping more farmers and butchers with food safety knowledge and business management skills.

"By fostering best practices, the project hopes to strengthen the entire meat value chain—from production to processing and retail—ultimately contributing to food security and economic growth.

"Improving food safety isn't just about compliance; it's about creating a healthier, more resilient agricultural sector," Morahanye explained.

He added, "By empowering meat retailers and processors, we're building stronger businesses and ensuring that consumers have access to safe, high-quality products."





Government of Lesotho



Market oriented production

Who are we

Crops Marketing Division (Department of Marketing) - Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security & Nutrition



The **Crops Marketing Division** is one of the three (3) divisions under the Department of Marketing in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition. It consists of two (2) sections namely; **Horticulture** and **Field Crops Marketing** sections. The marketing of grains and fruit & vegetables is being taken care of under this division, guided by the Agricultural Marketing Act. The Horticulture section deals with the marketing of fruits and vegetables while the other section deals with the marketing of grains (Cereals and pulses).



Main activities of the division include:

(i) Development and Implementation of Market Linkage platforms:

Market linkage platforms facilitate direct connections between farmers and buyers with the aim of improving market access for smallholder farmers. These platforms enhance market visibility, and provide access to a broader consumer base (A wider range of buyers). They also offer benefits such as networking, farm management and advisory services, helping farmers reduce crop losses and become competitive.

The platforms can be in the form of **buyer seller meetings** (Round table meetings) whereby buyers are expected to present their market requirements to the producers in order for them to produce accordingly (Re-



spond to market requirements). Alternatively, the market linkages can be in the form of **market days** which typically refer to events where local farmers display and sell their agricultural products inclusive of agricultural services. These events provide a platform for local producers to access markets and connect with buyers. The timing and location of market days are crucial for both buyers and sellers and the coordination of these platforms can have a significant impact on the success of the market.



(ii) Provision of Agribusiness Marketing Skills to farmers

Agribusiness and marketing skills capacity building programs are aimed to empower farmers with the knowledge and skills to improve their farming businesses and market their products effectively. This includes developing skills in areas like farm management, record keeping, market research, principles of marketing, pricing strategies, customer service, value addition, market penetration, contract farming, understanding the overall

value chain of agriculture and many more, ultimately guiding farmers to increase their profits (Commercial farming) and improve their livelihoods. It is in these kind of programs whereby business-orientation and entrepreneurship are instilled to the farming community.

(iii) Establish Marketing Intelligence and Facilitate Information Dissemination:

Market intelligence and information dissemination work together to ensure farm



tribution strategies. Market intelligence and information dissemination empower farmers to become more active market participants, increase their profits, and improve their livelihoods.

(iv) Conduct Market Research, Feasibility and Value Chain Analysis:

This includes analysing and understanding of market trends, identifying key stakeholders, mapping the value chain, and assessing



its efficiency and potential for improvement, while also focusing on the economic feasibility and market access for agricultural products. This systematic process of gathering, analysing and interpreting data about the specific market informs strategic decision making and improves the farm's outcomes. The process involves collecting data through various methods such as interviews, observations and analysing the existing data from the farm. The research can be either Primary and Secondary. Understanding market trends is crucial as it identifies current and future demand for agricultural products, including consumer preferences, pricing dynamics, and emerging market opportunities.

Value chain analysis in crops marketing involves examining all stages of a crop's journey from production to consumption, including identification of key actors, activities, and opportunities for improvement. It scrutinizes the flow of a product, how it is valued by different stakeholders, and where there are bottlenecks or inefficiencies. By analysing the value chain, stakeholders can identify areas for improvement to increase profitability and efficiency for all involved, from farmers to consumers.

.... The End...



CCARDESA Prioritises Women & Youth in Chairperson Election



By Molula Mofosi

In a strong signal of inclusion and transformation, the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) has placed women and youth at the forefront of its governance agenda during its fourth General Assembly.

The gathering, hosted by Lesotho through the Agricultural Productivity Programme for Southern

Africa (APPSA), not only elected a new chairperson from Mozambique but also formally announced a renewed focus on empowering marginalised groups in agricultural development across the SADC region.

Held from April 1st to 4th, 2025 at the Mantabiseng Convention Centre in Maseru, the CCARDESA General Assembly brought together key stakeholders in agricultural research and devel-

opment including government officials, academic institutions, farmer representatives, and private sector players from SADC member states such as Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Lesotho.

The event was officially opened by the Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Thabo Mofosi, who highlighted the significance of inclusive development in the face of ongoing climate change and food insecurity challenges.

“You will agree with me that this vision highlights the aspirations of the region, given the magnitude and gravity of the impacts of climate change that the region is likely to continue to face in the future. I am convinced, this vision will allow the region to put in place adequate measures to increase adaptive capacities and resilience of our people,” he said.

The minister noted; “Agricultural Research for Development is a facilitator of production, productivity, policy formulation, and understanding the social, cultural and technical dynamics of the sector. It provides essential elements for long-term regional planning, I therefore challenge the General Assembly, CCARDESA and National Research Institutions to stir the development and dissemination of technologies that facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change.”

During the Assembly, CCARDESA’s governing bodies committed to creating a gender policy, mainstreaming gender across all initiatives, and fostering youth engagement through partnerships, including a Memorandum of Understanding with the Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network based in Cameroon. This approach is aimed at empowering women and youth to actively participate in agricultural value chains, market access, and sector commercialisation.

Professor Lala A. Razanfinjara, chairperson of the CCARDESA board, emphasised the urgency for SADC countries to become self-reliant in food production and resilience.

“The need for us to look within ourselves and devise innovative ways to feed our region has never been as critical as now,” he stated, urging stronger regional collaboration.

The scientific conference that followed the General Assembly served as a platform for showcasing cutting-edge research, innovations, and technologies aimed at improving agricultural productivity and food systems.

Outgoing CCARDESA chairperson Dr. Grace Kaudzu reflected on the organisation’s progress, noting the completion of a revised strategy and the proposal to host a SADC regional soil health and fertilizer hub as key milestones since the last GA held in Durban in 2023.

The General Assembly also aligned CCARDESA’s goals with the African Union’s new agricultural development strategy adopted in January 2025. This continental strategy aims to increase “agrifood” output by 45% by 2035, reduce post-harvest losses by 50%, and improve nutrition outcomes across Africa.

CCARDESA’s inclusive and strategic direction reinforces the central role of agricultural research in transforming food systems while ensuring that women, youth, and persons with disabilities are not left behind.

As Razanfinjara concluded, “Pursuing agricultural development that delivers impact cannot be achieved through the effort of public Agricultural Research for Development institutions alone. We need strong partnerships, and I am glad to see the voices of farmers and non-state actors represented in this regional forum.”

Access to Finance for Farmers Remains a Challenge in Lesotho

By Molula Mofosi

Despite agriculture being the backbone of the country’s rural economy, access to finance remains one of the most pressing challenges faced by smallholder farmers—particularly those practicing conservation agriculture in districts such as Leribe and Butha-Buthe.

Without meaningful access to credit, insurance, and extension services, many Basotho farmers are unable to invest in the technologies and infrastructure needed to boost productivity and build climate resilience.

This issue was brought to the fore at the recent Agricultural Productivity Programme for Southern Africa (APPSA) Conference, where researchers Brian Muroyiwa and Letlotlo Mathaha presented compelling findings on the persistent financial and institutional barriers facing the sector.

Their study shows that while Southern Africa has seen modest improvements in agricultural financing, Lesotho continues to lag behind.

“Agricultural finance programs across Sub-Saharan Africa have seen modest success, but challenges remain in ensuring inclusivity, transparency, and sustainability,” Muroyiwa noted.

For many Basotho farmers, the lack of credit and insurance limits their ability to purchase quality inputs, adopt modern technology, and prepare for climate shocks.



Muroyiwa and Mathaha’s research echoes earlier studies—such as Abiodun A. Ogundeji’s 2018 analysis—which found that access to credit in rural Lesotho is heavily influenced by factors such as household income, land ownership, farming experience, and participation in farmer associations.

Their findings also revealed that:

- Farmers with greater experience and land ownership are more likely to access formal credit due to lower risk profiles.

- Higher-income farmers often avoid credit altogether, opting to fund their operations independently while benefiting more from extension services.
- Key barriers to credit access include high interest rates, lack of collateral, and poor financial record-keeping.
- “Occupation, household income, farming experience, land ownership, and access to agricultural extension play crucial roles in decisions regarding credit utilisation and since farming experience is a key factor in determining both productivity and output, it also facilitates access to loans,” the researchers said.

Public extension services, which are critical for farmer education and guidance, the researchers not-

ed are often overstretched with farmers citing a lack of motivation among officers, logistical challenges, and high farmer-to-officer ratios.

“The very system meant to support farmers is, in many cases, part of the problem,” the study warns, calling for urgent reforms to strengthen public extension systems and improve knowledge transfer.

One of the study’s strongest recommendations is to promote farmer-based organisations and cooperatives, which have shown great success in enhancing bargaining power, improving access to finance, and facilitating shared resources across Southern Africa.

The researchers also urge private financial institutions to create micro-credit products tailored to the needs of smallholder farmers, taking into account their risk profiles and seasonal income flows.

Digital tools, such as mobile-based advisory platforms, are seen as game-changers in improving access to finance and information.

Lessons from countries like South Africa and Zambia—where blended finance models and mobile subsidy systems have been successfully implemented—could offer useful insights for Lesotho, the study stated.

“In South Africa, the Land Bank offers blended finance options to emerging farmers, while Zambia’s e-voucher system enables smallholders to access subsidised inputs via mobile money,” the researchers explained.

“Lesotho could greatly benefit from adapting similar models that embrace digital integration and inclusive financial design,” Mathaha added, noting agriculture must work for the farmer, not the other way around.

“Without addressing the core financial barriers, we risk leaving our most vulnerable producers behind.”

New Hope for Grain Industry

By Molula Mofosi

Scientists in the country are increasingly focused on improving the yields of the main grains; wheat, sorghum, beans, and maize, this emerged at the recent APPSA Scientific Conference, coordinated by CCARDESA, which provided a critical platform for researchers to share their findings and innovations on these staple crops.

Among the scientists who took the stage was Benezwa Mofoti, a young plant breeder and crop scientist.

Mofoti acknowledged that sorghum production in Lesotho has seen significant fluctuations in recent years due to a range of factors such as climatic conditions, soil fertility, and farming practices.

To address these challenges, she explained that scientists across the SADC region are collaborating to improve yields and build climate resilience in crop production.

For climate-smart agriculture purposes, Mofoti revealed she studied the behaviour of Lesotho's indigenous sorghum genotypes (that is, sorghum seeds native to the country) with the goal of identifying varieties that perform well in both yield and climate resilience.

Opening the conference, Dr. Majola Mabuza, representing CCARDESA, stated; "The aim of the Scientific Conference is to serve as a platform for agricultural researchers, policymakers, farmers, private sector actors, and development partners to share knowledge, collaborate, and discuss innovative strategies aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and resilience in the Southern African region."

In alignment with this goal, Mofoti's research revealed that, of the 33 genotypes collected from across Lesotho, only two varieties were both stable and high-performing. These were: 'Mabele a manala a Ribaneng a Makhubelu' and 'Seqhobane se sesoeu sa sekhutsoane sa Mashai Moreneng'.

Although these indigenous varieties do not have

English equivalents, they represent an opportunity for Lesotho to achieve self-reliance in sorghum production by using crops that are naturally adapted to local conditions.

"We need to ensure that we breed sorghum genotypes that can thrive in all districts of Lesotho and depend less on hybrid genotypes," Mofoti said.

She highlighted the selected genotypes that performed consistently across all breeding zones as; Siloe (Southern Lesotho): Elevation 163m, Arenosols soil Nyakosoba (Central Lesotho): Elevation 203m, Cambisols soil, Mahobong (Northern Lesotho): Elevation 168m, Luvisols soil.

Her study was conducted under varying temperature and rainfall conditions, simulating both dry and wet seasons.

According to the International Production Assessment Division (IPAD), a foreign agricultural service under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, sorghum production in Lesotho during the 2022/2023 season involved 15,000 hectares harvested at an average yield of 0.27 tons per hectare. This reflects a decline compared to the five-year average (2019/20–2023/24) of 16,000 hectares and 0.53 tons per hectare.

Under the APPSA framework, each participating country establishes Regional Centres of Leadership (RCoL) in a commodity area that distinguishes it as a leader and from 2019 to 2025, Lesotho has taken the lead in horticulture and horticulture-based crop systems.

Research such as Mofoti's is supported by World Bank funding under the APPSA program.

"The genotypes are now available at the APPSA seed bank for farmers to begin exploring with the genotypes no matter their location. The goal here is to breed seeds that survive both dry season and rainy season so as to avoid fluctuating yield," She said.

While her research did not initially include pest and disease control, Mofoti emphasised that the



genotypes showed promising performance under environmental stresses, particularly those related to climate.

This marks an important step toward the adoption of climate-smart sorghum seeds by both small-scale and commercial farmers, and toward popularising indigenous varieties across the country.

"Lesotho is visibly adopting the use of hybrid seeds and have neglected the indigenous seeds. It is high time we begin using indigenous sorghum seeds and explore the possibility of ownership on genotypes that survive the extremes of climate change and possibly reduce the importation of hybrids. For instance, in dry seasons, breeders fall into the trap

of importing genotypes from arid climates like Botswana then experience unsustainability in seasons of heavy rainfalls," she observed.

According to the Access to Seeds Index, Lesotho maintains a community-based seed system, involving associations and cooperatives supported by NGOs that help with seed multiplication and establishing community seed banks.

Thus, the APPSA gene bank plays a pivotal role in preserving indigenous seeds.

As Mofoti explained, these local varieties could help sustain and maintain sorghum yields, strengthening Lesotho's ability to withstand climate shocks and ensuring a more food-secure future.

Soybean Introduced As A 'Super Bean' For Economic And Nutritional Value

By Molula Mofosi

From nutritional benefits to economic potential, Dr. Pulane Nkhabutlane is championing the soybean as a "super bean" capable of transforming the welfare of Basotho and the broader Southern African region.

Working in collaboration with Professor Motlatsi Morojele, an agronomist, and Dr. Moleboheng Lekota, a plant pathologist, the team initiated a soybean research project in 2022 with support from the Agricultural Productivity Program for Southern Africa (APPSA).

According to the World Health Organization, malnutrition refers to deficiencies or excesses in nutrient intake, imbalance of essential nutrients, or impaired nutrient utilisation. It includes undernutrition, over-nutrition, and diet-related non-communicable diseases.

In countries like Lesotho, which face numerous developmental challenges, the triple burden of malnutrition—undernutrition, over-nutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies—remains a serious concern.

A World Food Programme report reveals that 36 percent of children under five and 34 percent of adults in Lesotho are affected by malnutrition.

Dr. Nkhabutlane attributes this to the country's dietary staples—wheat bread and maize meal—which she notes offer little nutritional value.

To assess the potential of soybeans in addressing this issue, the researchers focused on their effects on nutrition, physicochemical properties, sensory characteristics, and consumer acceptance.

The study included farmers and consumers, allowing for feedback across the soybean value chain.

"Nutrition begins from the choice of seeds, to the management of nutrients in the soil. Then the nutrition the bean carries will be optimised," explained

Dr. Moleboheng Lekota when presenting their findings at the recent APPSA and CCARDESA conference in Maseru.

She emphasised that soybean surpasses all other beans in nutritional value, particularly in protein content, hence its designation as a "super bean."

The team introduced soybeans into five districts; Leribe, Butha-Butha, Mafeteng, Mhale's Hoek and Quthing, however, they noted that soybeans require significant moisture and do not perform well in arid areas or regions with poor irrigation.

The experiment led to the development of various soybean-based products, including; Soy flour for bread, Soy meal (pap), Soy coffee, Soy cooking oil, Soy milk, Split beans, Roasted beans and Animal feed.

They said the varieties introduced were tailored to appeal to farmers, consumers, and retailers. Feedback from participants revealed a strong preference for soy products.

"The participants of the experiment said soy bread has a milky and creamy taste, and more than half of our subjects said they are not going to use maize meal and wheat bread anymore.

"What I usually suggest is that consumers mill the soy together with what they already use. This way, soy becomes both an economically convenient supplement to wheat flour for bread, maize meal for pap, and sorghum flour for porridge. The adaptability rate of the consumers has been positive," said Dr. Nkhabutlane.

She noted that Basotho's response to soybean has been encouraging. The simplicity of recipes using soybeans is giving hope to small-scale and family farmers who seek both nutrition and profit.

Globally, South Africa is a key soybean exporter, contributing 0.7% of global soybean production and nearly 40% of Africa's total, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Other SADC members—Tanzania, Zambia,



Uganda, and Zimbabwe—have also expanded soybean production.

"The soybean seed has been successful in the areas of experiment meaning that Lesotho can capacitate high yields of soy enough to feed the entire country," Dr. Nkhabutlane said.

Beyond nutrition, soybeans offer health benefits, including reducing the risk of cancer due to their high levels of antioxidants.

"Illnesses like breast cancer and prostate cancer can be prevented—or if present, the soybean-rich diet can reduce the rate at which the cancer spreads to the body," she explained, citing it does not heal cancer but it alleviates the growth rate.

She added that chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, arthritis, stroke, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and constipation can all be prevented or managed through soybean consumption.

While soybeans remain relatively unfamiliar to many in Lesotho, the research team is confident that, through the ongoing support of APPSA Lesotho and the training of farmers and consumers across the five districts, soybeans will gain popularity in both farming and household economies.

She asserted, "Importantly, soybean is resistant to the bruchid beetle, a common pest, due to its hard seed membrane, ensuring high-quality yields both before and after harvest."

IACoV Project Marks a Milestone in Lesotho’s Sustainable Development Journey

By Lungile Maseela

Maseru recently became a beacon of reflection and forward-thinking as the Improving Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Populations in Lesotho (IACoV) project hosted its Phase I Endline Symposium as a wrap up of the project in Lesotho.

Far more than a wrap-up, the event stood as a celebration of resilience, partnership, and shared ambition for a climate-resilient Lesotho.

Preceding the symposium was a vibrant community showcase from the Ha Mohlakoana community members from the Quthing district.

The community is where the project’s tangible impacts were brought to life. From climate-smart agriculture practices to innovative, communi-

ty-led solutions, IACoV’s work has reshaped narratives around sustainable development and climate adaptation in Lesotho.

Since its launch in 2020, the IACoV project has been a testament to the power of partnerships—a joint initiative supported by the Government of Lesotho, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Adaptation Fund, and, crucially, local communities. These multi-level collaborations were celebrated throughout the event as critical to the project’s success.

“Maphakamile Xingwane, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Forestry and Environment, reflected on the project’s transformative journey.

“This day marks not just the end of Phase I, but the beginning of a long-term impact. The dedication poured into this initiative has already changed lives,” she said.

Xingwane emphasised the importance of continued cooperation, adding, “Let’s foster friendships and work together. Teamwork has proven to be the key behind IACoV’s success.”

For the WFP Country Director and Representative, Elliott Vhurumuku, the project’s importance is deeply rooted in Lesotho’s lived realities.

“Lesotho is grappling with the harsh effects of climate change—droughts, floods, and agricultural decline have worsened food insecurity. This project is our proactive response,” he said.

Vhurumuku applauded the four-year partnership between WFP and IACoV, reaffirming WFP’s continued commitment to fighting malnutrition, vulnerability, and poverty in the region.

A standout moment of the symposium came when students from Ts’akholo High School and

Hope English Medium High School took the stage for a compelling debate on climate change and its impact on agriculture and education. Their passion and insight moved the room—a powerful reminder that the future is both affected and shaped by youth.

In a rousing keynote address, Molefi Phaqaane, Chairperson of the National Climate Change Committee, likened the climate crisis to a global battle. “This is World War III. We cannot win this war alone. Only through unity can we protect our planet and our people,” he said.

As the symposium concluded, one message echoed through the hall: IACoV is only just beginning. After four years of profound impact, Vhurumuku said the groundwork has been laid for deeper, broader, and more inclusive climate resilience efforts across Lesotho.



IACoV Celebrates Milestone Year with Vibrant Market Day and Launch into Phase II

By Lungile Maseela

The atmosphere at the Manthabiseng Convention Centre was alive with energy and community spirit as the IACoV project celebrated the close of its fourth year. The event, marked by a lively market day, also served as the official launch of Phase II, signalling a renewed commitment to agricultural resilience and food security in Lesotho. Both the indoor and outdoor spaces of the venue were transformed into a colourful marketplace, bustling with stalls and branded tents that showcased an impressive variety of locally produced goods.

From the early hours, exhibitors and guests strolled between displays, exploring innovations, purchasing handmade products, and engaging in vibrant discussions around nutrition, climate resilience, and sustainable livelihoods. Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Hon. Thabo Mofosi, officiated the celebration and applauded IACoV's accomplishments over the past four years. He highlighted the critical role of Phase II and reaffirmed the government's dedication to supporting local farmers and addressing food insecurity. "We will be doing rounds in all 10 districts, bringing services directly to farmers in the form

of training and support," Mofosi announced. He added, "This is part of our initiative to not only curb food insecurity but also to help farmers with access to sustainable markets." The day unfolded with a spirit of celebration. Performers took to the stage, drawing cheers and dance from the audience. A particularly memorable moment was the unveiling of a new song by local artist Sannere, composed in collaboration with IACoV to reflect the project's mission. As the anthem played, the crowd danced in unison, capturing the sense of unity and shared purpose driving the initiative. Among those showcasing their work was 'Makhants'e Schobai from the Abia Nutrition

Club, whose group's mission is to support their families through nutritious, home-grown produce. "The response from visitors has been extraordinary. Our stall has been swept clean. People have shown overwhelming support, and we are deeply grateful to IACoV for making this possible," she said with a smile. The event closed on a high note, celebrating the impactful achievements of Phase I while casting a hopeful vision for the future. With Phase II now officially launched, IACoV is set to deepen its efforts, continuing to serve as a cornerstone in Lesotho's journey toward a climate-resilient, food-secure future.



Closing the Divide: Why Transformation Must Start with Farmers

By Lerato Matheka

At the heart of South Africa’s agricultural transformation lies a question that continues to stir debate: Can organised agriculture truly bridge the historical and structural gap for black farmers? At the recent Food For Mzansi’s Young Farmers Indaba, held at the Lavender Kontrei Market in Pretoria, agricultural leaders, policymakers, and young farmers came together to chart a course for an inclusive and sustainable farming future.

Organised Agriculture: The Road to Cohesion

Day two of the indaba focused squarely on the future of new-era farmers, where experts called for a shift from rhetoric to action.

Leona Archary, CEO of the Agricultural Development Agency (Agda), argued that the conversation around land reform must evolve.

“Access to land alone is not enough. We need innovation in how land is allocated, particularly state-held trust land. But more than that, we need cohesive collaboration between government, industry, and farmers,” she said.

Archary warned that without title deeds or land security, black farmers remain locked out of financial systems.

She urged industry leadership to innovate and reimagine partnerships with government to un-

lock land potential.

Transformation Begins with Farmers

Johann Kotzé, CEO of AgriSA, offered a stark message; “Transformation won’t happen if we wait on government. It must start with us, the farmers.”

He stressed that land is indeed the first step, but so is agency—farmers taking initiative to drive transformation themselves.

For Dr Tobias Doyer, CEO of Grain SA, land expansion must be coupled with innovation.

“We need to expand grain production strategically—using technology and fertiliser optimisation as our compass.”

In the dairy sector, Fanie Ferreira of the Milk Producers’ Organisation (MPO) noted the steep learning curve.

“If you’re not born into farming, it’s going to be tough. Dairy is capital-intensive, land-dependent, and unforgiving,” he said.

His remarks underscored how access, knowledge, and support remain elusive to many aspiring farmers.

Bridging the Gap with Technology

Karidas Tshintsholo, co-founder and CEO of Khula!, provided a hopeful counterpoint—technology as a great equaliser.

“There are two agricultures in South Africa: one thriving, one surviving. Technology can bridge that divide,” he said.

He shared how Khula!’s digital platform helps farmers bypass traditional gatekeepers and access major buyers like PepsiCo and Food Lovers Market directly.

The future, Tshintsholo added, lies in AI. From early pest detection to precision spraying and on-demand technical advice, Khula! is rolling out tools that could redefine smallholder resilience.

“It’s about levelling the playing field. Data is power—and it’s time new-era farmers have access to it.”

Backing the Next Generation: Investment, Skills & Strategy

The Indaba was also a rallying call for youth empowerment in agriculture. Industry titans like Land Bank’s Themba Rikhotso, AgriSETA’s Dr Innocent Shirovha, and Karan Beef’s Ivor Karan emphasised the importance of long-term investment—in both skills and infrastructure.

“You can’t just start farming big if you don’t have the experience. The biggest value in a business plan is skills,” warned Rikhotso, revealing that Land Bank approved over R2 billion in blended finance in the past year.

Land Bank Insurance Company’s Pascal Si-phugu echoed this, adding that 2,000 farmers—half of them young women—have been trained in climate resilience and sustainable practices.

Yet, training without tools is futile.

“Agricultural academies can’t grow if learners

don’t have equipment,” said Dr Shirovha.

He called for stronger public-private partnerships to close such gaps.

Tech as a Tactical Edge

John Deere’s Ayanda Nhlapo shared how their precision agritech helps smallholders make real-time decisions from field data.

“Our operations centre translates data into action. It’s about smart farming, not just big farming.”

Meanwhile, Rainbow Chicken’s CEO Marthinus Stander encouraged youth to collaborate with stakeholders and unlock South Africa’s global agricultural potential.

Beyond Money: Strategy Before Seeds

In the final session, experts dispelled a common myth: funding alone won’t guarantee success.

“Some young people think farming is just putting seeds in the ground,” said Nontsikelelo Makaula of the National Youth Development Agency.

“We train them in the full value chain—from skills and compliance to financial literacy.”

Tshego Selepe from Kgodiso Development Fund outlined their holistic model: production finance, market access, and technical support.

“Farmers must grow what the market wants—then we support them with pest and disease management.”

Land Bank’s Christopher Chaka urged farmers to secure markets before planting. “Don’t bury your money if you don’t know who’s buying. That’s suicide,” he warned.



Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba: A Homegrown Movement for Inclusive Agriculture

By Lerato Matheka

Now in its fourth year, the Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba has grown into more than just an annual event—it’s a living, breathing movement that speaks to the heart of South Africa’s agricultural future. What began as a modest gathering organised in just one month by Food For Mzansi, has evolved into a powerhouse platform for young farmers, especially black farmers, to connect, learn, and lead.

“This year has been the biggest Indaba we’ve hosted,” shared Ivor Price, co-founder of Food For Mzansi, beaming with pride.

“We’ve had over 2,000 participants in just two days, some travelling from the furthest rural corners of the country—like Bizana in the Eastern Cape—on their own dime, just to be part of this.”

It’s this unwavering hunger for knowledge and opportunity that defines the spirit of the Indaba.

With more than 60 speakers and 50 exhibitors, this year’s event was about more than education—it was about access.

“Many of our farmers struggle to access finance. Here, they get to look decision-makers in the eye, make personal connections, and leave with more than just business cards—they leave with hope,” said Price.

Tackling Uncomfortable Truths

While most agricultural conferences play it safe with well-worn speaker circuits and predictable topics, the Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba deliberately chooses discomfort.

“We don’t want the usual suspects. We’ve tackled thorny issues—like failures in land reform, black farmer fragmentation, and even the rise of white nationalism—because healing can only come when we address the cracks openly,” Price explained.

This year’s programme was refreshingly honest. It featured top legal scholars, commercial farmers, and even controversial voices unafraid to speak truth to power.

“We had Dr. Mbeka speak about expropriation and failures of the ANC government. These aren’t easy conversations, but they are necessary,” Price added.

Building an Inclusive Space

One thing that sets the Indaba apart is its

deliberate centring of young, black farmers—not as tokens, but as authorities.

“We’re not choosing black speakers for optics. We’re choosing the best in the field, and many just happen to be black. Farmers like Sophie, a towering force in commercial farming, were embraced like celebrities here,” said Price, reflecting on the diverse speaker lineup.

Even in a country with a packed agricultural events calendar, the Indaba has carved out its niche.

“I’m a huge fan of Nampo, which is massive and well-respected. But it’s not always inclusive. We wanted a space where young farmers, especially black ones, are not just part of the programme—they are the programme.”

Not Just a Talk Shop

Beyond the buzz of speeches and exhibitions, the Indaba is beginning to shape policy and perception.

“We’ve had our work referenced to in Parliament. We’ve been able to spark conversations about land allocation and youth commercialisation in agriculture. But progress is slow—we know that. Still, these small wins matter,” Price said.

And while the South African government doesn’t directly sponsor the event—thanks to complex procurement laws—they do support farmer participation. “They help get farmers here who couldn’t afford to come otherwise. That’s huge.”

Looking Ahead

With each passing year, the Indaba refines its purpose. The 2025 edition focused on agricultural education and agritech—two of the fastest-growing needs in the sector. “We noticed the gap last year and responded. Now, you see colleges, training institutions, and tech startups all under one roof,” noted Price.

As for the future? “Our work is just beginning. We’re not interested in being another fancy event with pretty flyers. We want impact. We want transformation. We want a truly inclusive agriculture sector where young people don’t just inherit land—they inherit power,” Price concluded.

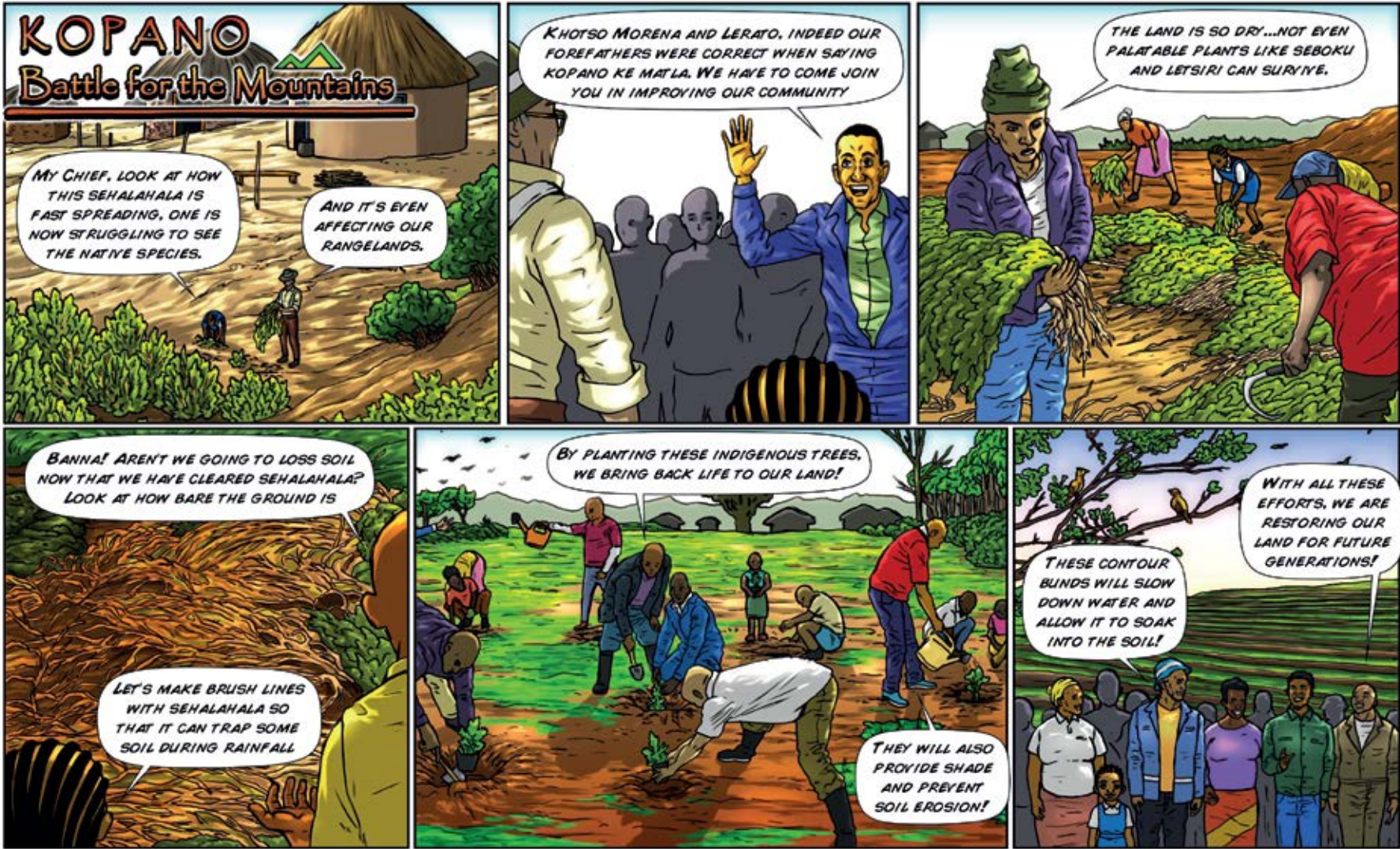
The Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba isn’t just South Africa’s most disruptive agriculture event. It’s a declaration: the future of farming is young, bold, and black—and it’s here to stay.





Illustrated by Sekantši Mokhohlane, a locally based Mosotho artist whose work has reached the international stage.

Disclaimer: The story was developed with the financial support of the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Integrated Catchment Management Coordination Unit (ICU), and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the BMZ.



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The National Dairy Board Prepares for Batch 10, Aims to Expand Dairy Impact

By Relebohile Makhetha

The Lesotho National Dairy Board (LNDB) is gearing up to launch its tenth batch of dairy cow acquisitions in 2025—marking a major milestone in its long-standing mission to transform dairy farming in the country.

Since 2017, the LNDB has supported local farmers in accessing quality dairy breeds, helping to improve milk production and uplift rural livelihoods under the guiding principle: “Ha li hangoe makuka a tlale, Basotho Baphele”—When cows are milked, Basotho will prosper.

According to LNDB Public Relations Officer, Khauhelo Maraisane, Batch 10 represents not just another cycle, but a turning point.

“This next batch is more than a continuation—it’s an opportunity to scale our reach, engage new districts, and take lessons from previous rounds to make the program even stronger,” he said.

LNDB’s approach remains structured and farmer-focused.

Maraisane explained that interested individuals are encouraged to approach the board for guidance on breed selection and cow purchasing.

With support from LNDB veterinarians and livestock specialists, he said farmers are equipped to choose from three breeds—Friesian, Jersey, and Crossbreeds—based on their farming goals and environmental suitability.

“Each batch has revealed insights that inform the next.”

Maraisane noted that costs fluctuate depend-



ing on sourcing and veterinary processes.

“In Batch 9, cow prices ranged from M23,000 for crossbreeds and Jerseys to as high as M35,000 for Friesians. With Batch 10, it is expected to see

prices climb up to M40,000.

“We are committed to ensuring that farmers get healthy, productive cows, even if it means paying a premium for biosecurity and proper

health tests,” he emphasised.

But LNDB’s role doesn’t end at delivery.

The spokesperson noted that annual follow-ups help monitor productivity, calf birth rates, and the health of the herd’s offspring.

“These assessments ensure that farmers are reaping long-term benefits from their investment and that the dairy breeds introduced continue to perform in Lesotho’s climate and conditions,” he said.


He added that Batch 9 faced a major setback with a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak at source farms causing a halt on imports.

“This disruption delayed several deliveries, underlining the ever-present risks in livestock farming. Nonetheless, the board used this period to strengthen its vetting and quarantine procedures, ensuring future batches—like Batch 10—are more resilient,” he noted.

He explained that what makes Batch 10 especially significant is its broader scope.

“Initially, interest in the program was concentrated in Lesotho’s eastern regions. Now, LNDB is intensifying outreach efforts in other districts through awareness campaigns and training workshops. The goal is to democratise access to dairy farming, turning it into a viable, sustainable source of income across all ten districts.

“Batch 10 is about growth—geographic, economic, and technical. We want to see more Basotho enter the dairy space confidently, knowing they have the backing of a national institution that believes in their potential,” Maraisane said.



Kingdom of Lesotho
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition

Invitation for Bids

Supply and Delivery of Agricultural Inputs (Seeds and Pesticides).

1. The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho intends to improve Agricultural service delivery. Therefore, part of the proceeds will be utilized on eligible payments resulting from the procurement of the above.

2. The Principal Secretary now invites sealed bids from interested bidders for the **supply and delivery of Agricultural Inputs (Seeds and Pesticides)**.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the following address:
Procurement Unit
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security & Nutrition
Corner Constitution and Linare Roads
Maseru 100, Lesotho
Tel: (++ 266) 22322741

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon payment of a **non-refundable fee of (M 5,000.00) Five Thousand Maloti only**. The method of payment must be payable at Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition. Bidding document will be available from Tuesday **15th April 2025**.

3. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **May 22, 2025** at 12:00 noon. Late bids will be rejected. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of **M 30, 000.00** in the form of a bank guarantee or irrevocable/assurance letter of credit valid for thirty (30) days beyond the validity of the bid. As appears in the bid data sheet.

4. It is mandatory for bidders to submit the following valid documents: (a) Tax Clearance Certificates; (b) Trader's License, (c) Certificate of Bona Fide Bidding, Bid Security, and a completed bid form. These documents [especially

(a) and (b)] shall either be originals or certified copies from the source. **Non-compliance with this requirement may invalidate a bid.**

5. Qualifications requirements for award include amongst others: **(a) business experience of not less than two years in similar jobs**, Additional details are provided in the Bidding Documents.

6. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 14:30hrs on Thursday, **May 22, 2025** at the address given below:

Board Room
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security & Nutrition
Corner Constitution & Linare Roads,
Maseru 100, Lesotho.

7. Bidders shall ensure that the envelopes containing their bids are properly addressed as indicated under ITB above and are clearly marked **“Supply and delivery of Agricultural Inputs (Seeds and Pesticides)” GOL/ G001/2025/26**. Envelopes should not bear the identification of the bidder.

8. **Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition also reserves the right to cancel the tender before submission or opening of the tenders, postpone the tender submission or opening date and accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.**

Procurement Manager

Stakeholders Trained on Food Balance Sheet to Support Evidence-Based Food and Nutrition Policies

By Molula Mofosi

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recently held a two-weeks training in Maseru aimed at capacitating the Bureau of Statistics (BoS) on compiling and analysing the national Food Balance Sheet (FBS)—a critical statistical framework that captures the total volume of agricultural commodities produced across all sectors.

This inaugural training workshop, funded by the FAO and facilitated by Dominique Habimana, marks a significant step forward in Lesotho’s efforts to collect comprehensive food and agriculture data for policy-making.

Habimana, who specialises in helping African countries design and implement data collection systems that inform agriculture and food security policies, emphasised that the FBS provides a detailed picture of food supply and utilisation trends over a specified period.

Mathabana Kotelo, FAO’s Communication Specialist, highlighted the significance of this initiative saying; “FBS provides a cost-effective, quick, and precise projection of food availability and the agricultural sector situation in the country. It further shows the trends in overall national food security supply and changes in dietary patterns. It reveals the extent to which the food supply of the country is adequate in relation to nutritional requirements.”

The FBS framework is lauded for its ability to integrate data from diverse sources—production, trade (imports and exports), and consumption—into a single comprehensive tool.

“The ability of the FBS to bring data from various statistical sources into one framework makes it a universal tool. For example, frameworks exist to collect data on food production or trade, but FBS combines them, helping detect imbalances and inconsistencies in the food security value chain,” explained Habimana.

He further added that FBS enables the identification of data gaps and provides estimates of food available for human consumption, incorporating difficult-to-measure nutrients like kilocalories, minerals, fats, and proteins.

“A developing country like Lesotho being able to generate such data sets contributes a great amount of data input that influences evidence-based policy formulation around agriculture and food security in the country,” he said.

Traditionally, Lesotho has relied on commodity balance frameworks focused mainly on cereals and field

crops. While these inform trade policies, they fall short in providing a full picture of national food security.

“The commodity framework usually influences trade policies but does not allow countries to have comprehensive data on food security and availability, therefore, FAO is supporting Lesotho and other African countries to optimise the FBS methodology for better data,” Habimana said.

This training comes as FAO celebrates 80 years of existence, with the Food Balance Sheet remaining one of its flagship methodologies for advancing global food security.

According to Habimana, the framework will be an instrumental tool for the Lesotho government to improve data collection and policy-making.

“Our expectation after the first exercise is that as the country gets new production data in the coming years, Lesotho will compile an annual food balance sheet. FAO is always ready to provide technical assistance—either physically or remotely—to ensure regular updates.”

For Tšiliso Mosoaboli, a senior statistician at BoS under the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the training was eye-opening.

“I realised that I had been assuming the commodity balance sheet compensates for the food balance sheet. I was mainly focusing on sorghum, wheat, and maize, and thought that meant there was food in the country. Now I know that the food balance sheet encompasses all food commodities essential to food security, such as potatoes, meat, and vegetables.”

However, Mosoaboli also noted the technical nature of the framework and the need for upskilling.

“Compiling the FBS framework requires knowledge of computer software like Microsoft Excel. Therefore, short courses on computer literacy may be necessary.”

FBS outputs are also critical for tracking Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly indicators 2.1.1 (Prevalence of Undernourishment) and 2.1.2 (Prevalence of Moderate or Severe Food Insecurity).

These statistics, according to Habimana, will allow the government to understand how many people are suffering from hunger and aid in resource allocation. The FBS will also provide projections on post-harvest losses—an ongoing challenge in Lesotho’s agricultural value chain.

“Lesotho, like many developing countries, faces challenges in producing quality data due to financial and skills limitations. This affects the timeliness and accuracy of the FBS report. Additionally, informal cross-border trade



remains difficult to measure, risking over- or underestimation of national food availability,” he said.

Another challenge lies in inconsistent data collection from different institutions.

“For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition has a data collector at the Maseru Border Post, while the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) has another one. Since they are not stationed together, they often report inconsistent numbers,” Mosoaboli explained.

He added, “The workshop helped me realise that data collection standards must be aligned and that effective communication between representatives is crucial.”

Habimana stressed the need for governments to invest more in reliable and timely data collection, noting, “Viable and timely data collection is often overlooked in national development planning. We strongly recommend that the BoS, which coordinates national statistics using international standards, be supported both technically and financially.”

He added that the FBS will promote greater collaboration between ministries and institutions, ensuring clear communication of national production and trade realities.

“Weak data collection compromises the ability to formulate effective evidence-based policies. From a policy

engagement standpoint, lacking quality statistics impedes effective programming. From a statistical viewpoint, inaccurate data leads to policies based on misinformation thus wasting resources,” he warned.

Mabatebang Napo, Assistant Nutrition Manager from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, agreed that timely food data is crucial for nutrition programming.

“Reliable data on agricultural food production provides a clear picture of the current food security and nutrition status in the country,” she said, adding, “The FBS will align with current food supplies, enabling us to accurately address issues like malnutrition.”

She added that dietary diversity, a key feature of the FBS, has a major impact on national strategy planning.

“This calls for our projects to meet statistical methodology standards in line with those of participating ministries and institutions.”

Napo concluded by emphasising the importance of inter-institutional collaboration.

“Data integration is essential in producing reliable results. Strengthened collaboration ensures data integrity as all institutions adopt uniform statistical methodologies. This, in turn, enables planners and decision-makers to utilise key variables such as production quality and trade effectively.”

OPPORTUNITY

General Procurement Notice2

Government of: **Lesotho**
Project/procuring entity: **Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods**
GPN version: **02-04/2025/26**
GPN publication date: **17/04/2025**

The **Government of Lesotho** has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) towards the cost of **Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods** and intends to apply part of the financing to payments for contracts for goods, works and services.

The procurement plan for the 2025/2026 period will include the following:

Procurements for 2025/2026
Estimated value – M58,765,643.70

Procurement of goods to include:

- Personal Protective Equipment**
- Aids for Cottage training**
- T-Shirts**
- Holistic Land and Livestock Management Equipment**
- Hydrometric Station Equipment**
- Waste Collection**
- Soil loss studies demonstration materials**
- Assets Insurance**
- Fire Management Equipment**
- Forest trees and Native Grass seed collection tools**
- Tools for Management of Indigenous Forest tree species**
- Equipment for Wildlife Management**
- Water Irrigation Tanks Material**
- Printing and Branding**
- Gardening Input (Tools and seeds)**
- Stoves**
- Post Harvest Materials for fruit and vegetable processing**
- Editing Software**
- Video Camera and Accessories**

20. **Desktops**

21. **Office Furniture**

22. **Erosion Blankets**

23. **Maintenance of Machine/Earth Moving Equipment**

24. **Office Consumables**

25. **Catering Services**

Procurement of works to include:

- Parkhomes**
- Fish Ponds**
- Construction of Let’sa la Letsie Dam wall**
- Construction of Shade nets and Irrigation Services**
- Construction Vulture Feeding Site**
- Installation of Orchards Irrigation schemes**

Procurement of consulting services to include:

- Training services on carbon trading**
- Development of Carbon market legal framework**
- Midline Survey**
- Service Provider for Coalition Building**
- Internal Auditor**
- Capacity Building of Technical staff on sand dams construction**
- Review Environment Policy 1998**

Contracts for goods, works and services will be implemented according to the principles, rules and procedures set out in the current versions of the IFAD Project Procurement Guidelines and IFAD Procurement Handbook.

Specific procurement notices for contracts to be tendered under the competitive bidding procedures will be announced as they become available on selected portals, in local newspapers, and other media outlets as appropriate.

Interested eligible bidders and consultants who wish to be included on the mailing list to receive a copy of advertisements, or those requiring additional information, should send an email to procurement.roll@gov.ls using the subject line “GPN 02-04/2025/26 for Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihood and indicating which of the procurement items they are interested in.

Accounting by Day, Farming by Dawn: Lesotho’s Dual Vision



By Relebohile Makhetha

Born the only son among daughters in the humble village of Khokhotsaneng, nestled in the St. Michael’s Roma area, Ntaote Ntaote’s journey began in the fields. Life in the village demanded more than just presence—it demanded grit. Herding livestock, ploughing the land, and harvesting crops weren’t occasional chores—they were a rhythm of survival. “I was raised in a traditional way. Being a herd-boy, ploughing and harvesting shaped who I am today,” he reflects. Though the soil held his heart, Ntaote’s path led him to lecture halls and accounting textbooks. He earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree, majoring in accounting, and today, he serves as an accountant for the Government of Lesotho. But, his bond with the land was never broken—it only grew stronger. “I started small,” he recalls.

“With just a garden to feed my family, watching those first crops thrive lit a fire in me. I knew I had to dream bigger.” In October 2023, Ntaote recounts how that dream took root in a much larger way. He says he ventured into large-scale agriculture—growing crops, raising free-range poultry, and nurturing peach orchards. His farm now stretches across 17 acres of both personal and leased land, some of it already upgraded with drip irrigation. “I have three fields—6.5, 5.5, and 5 acres. Two are still traditional, but I’m working on irrigation systems to advance the technological advances on the fields. Right now, I’m growing cabbage, and I’ve budded about 600 peach trees which I plan to transplant this winter.” Ntaote’s approach to poultry farming is equally intentional, “I’ll begin incubating after winter to ensure maximised production,” he shares, underscoring a lesson every farmer learns early: farming rewards patience and planning.

But even dreams grounded in hard work face storms. Climate change has taken its toll with Ntaote losing over 4,000 cabbage heads to a brutal heatwave. “Farming is unpredictable. You can do everything right, but the weather decides your outcome. And it’s not just nature. Access to markets remains a major barrier,” he shares. He adds, “Competing with imports from South Africa and hesitations from big retailers to support local produce are constant challenges.” Still, he refuses to be discouraged. He’s invested in 40 rolls of shade nets to protect his crops and embraces a mind-set of continuous improvement. “You survive by monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting. Farming isn’t static—it’s strategic if one wants to be profitable.” To young Basotho with an eye on agriculture, Ntaote offers more than advice—he offers hope.

“Start with passion most of the time, but the reality is that farming isn’t just about planting, it’s about patience, resilience, and adaptability.” He encourages youth to seek mentorship and financial support and to think beyond the soil. “While production can be seen as the corner stone of farming, marketing matters just as much as production. Without a solid market, your efforts can go to waste.” Ultimately, he sees agriculture not just as a livelihood, but a path to transformation. “Farming can create jobs, build communities, and change lives. When it starts bringing in income, get financial advice and reinvest. That’s how we build something lasting and charter towards growth to commercial.” He describes his journey as more than cultivating crops but rather building a vision, one that proves that tradition and ambition can thrive side by side while mind-set transformation is the cornerstone of progress.

A Young Wool Tycoon Weaves His Future with Ram Breeding

By Molula Mofosi

At just 32, Nkopane Nkopane stands as one of Lesotho’s most promising wool producers—a young man who turned a family tradition into a thriving legacy. Raised in the hills of Hloahloeng, Moleale’s Hoek, Nkopane’s story is a testament to the power of purpose, inheritance, and passion-driven work. When many of his peers were drifting into unemployment, he made an unusual choice—he dropped the pen of academia and picked up the reins of rural wisdom passed down by his father. In 2015, while the country wrestled with a youth unemployment crisis, Nkopane found clarity in the flock of 60 sheep that his father had long tended.

Rather than pursuing further formal education after supplementing his LGCSE in Maseru, he returned home and committed himself to being mentored by his father. “I chose to become his student and learn more about life. I had seen too many young people lost in the city. It took some time but I finally realised the treasures I had been raised around all this time. I needed to go back to the roots and reinvent myself,” he recalls. Armed with the literacy and numeracy skills from high school, Nkopane became an asset to his father’s operation—handling flock management, logistics, and bookkeeping. His efforts were rewarded with one sheep at a time. “That slow but steady reward system became the foundation of my empire. Today, I own 70 purebred Merino sheep, all of high

wool quality, a refined selection from a flock that once reached 200,” he beams. This year, at a small stock show held in Qacha’s Nek, Nkopane’s breeding excellence dazzled judges and attendees alike. His fine wool ewe won “Ewe of the Year,” taking first prize in the Best Ewe category, and his ram also claimed first in the Best Ram for fine wool. But for Nkopane, this competition holds a deeper meaning—it was his first since his father’s passing in January 2025. “I know he would be proud of me and this victory, but I know he is proud, wherever he is. This legacy is not just mine; it’s our family’s heritage,” he says. Becoming a father himself has only deepened his sense of responsibility saying being a ram breeder gave him the confidence to take grown-man steps. “...getting married, becoming a father,

expanding the business—because I know I can provide. Farming gave me that confidence and more.” He says he is determined to challenge cultural norms that restrict women’s involvement in agriculture by involving more women as employees in his business. “I want to combat ideas like ‘ngoana oa ngoanana ha a hate ka sakeng’—(a girl child doesn’t belong in the kraal). Women must claim space in the wool and mohair production. They are as capable as their male counterparts.” While most of his current apprentices are young men, he notes that many of his buyers are women, and he’s hopeful more will join the field hands-on. His journey began with a single sheep as a token of appreciation for his hard work, but he says his vision has always stretched far beyond numbers.

Lesotho's Wool and Mohair Industry Grows on Strong Ethics and Community

By Molula Mofosi & Lungile Maseela

The Lesotho Wool and Mohair Growers Association (LWMGA) recently hosted its national finale show at the Lesotho Agricultural College grounds, drawing in droves of farmers, livestock enthusiasts, buyers, and corporate stakeholders.

Held in Maseru, the event was more than just a showcase of livestock—it was a reflection of the evolution of the wool and mohair industry in Lesotho and a platform that spotlighted both traditional knowledge and modern standards in animal care and product quality.

The atmosphere was electric. Traditional music, cheers, and ululations echoed across the grounds as farmers from the highlands and lowlands displayed their finest merino sheep and angora goats.

The once-empty soccer field had transformed into a vibrant, colourful tapestry of livestock pens, branded tents, and proud farmers draped in their Basotho blankets. Visitors wandered from stall to stall, admiring the animals, engaging with producers, and learning more about the processes behind the prized fibres of wool and mohair.

This grand finale was not merely a competition—it was a moment of pride and progress. It served as a culmination of hard work, innovation, and increasing awareness about animal health and ethical treatment. At its core, the event demonstrated the strengthening bridge between traditional livestock practices and global market expectations.

Mokoenhi Thinyane, Chairman of the LWMGA, described the significance of the event saying, “This show isn’t just for applause. It’s about pushing farmers to do better, to manage their animals ethically, and to ensure our wool and mohair meet global standards.

“It is also a chance for farmers to learn from one another, to network with buyers and insurers, and to see how far we have come—and where we still need to go.”

Indeed, the wool and mohair sector in Lesotho is undergoing a transformation. Long known for its highland goats and sheep, the country is now recognised as the second-largest mohair producer in the world, contributing 14% of global production.

The industry also accounts for nearly 69% of Lesotho’s agricultural exports, positioning it as a key driver of rural economic development.

But as the stakes grow, so too do the expectations. One of the key themes of the day was the emphasis on animal welfare and responsible production. In a sector where international buyers are increasingly scrutinising ethical sourcing, Basotho farmers are learning that animal care is directly linked to market access.

Christopher Thinyane of Lihoi Consultancy underscored this connection.

“You can’t talk about premium fleece without talking about animal welfare. A well-fed, well-handled animal produces stronger, cleaner, more consistent wool. Mishandling, stress, and neglect don’t just hurt the animal—they hurt your bottom line,” he said.

He explained that poor practices like grabbing animals by their fleece or improperly docking tails can significantly affect fibre quality and leave farmers vulnerable to market rejection.



“The global market’s demand for ethical sourcing is real. Standards like the Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS) require full compliance from all members of a cooperative. If even one farmer falls short, everyone loses access to premium buyers,” he added.

This need for accountability was a message echoed throughout the event.

Kleintjie Pienaar, a fleece evaluator and long-time supporter of Basotho farmers, shared insights from the judging process.

“The quality is promising. On average, we scored Lesotho fleece an 8 out of 10 in raw quality. But conformation—the structure, consistency, and resilience of the fleece—was only a 6. That’s where we need improvement.”

Farmers like Vuyo Tjeketsi from Quthing are rising to the challenge.

Tjeketsi, who placed third in one of the categories, was candid about the hurdles he faced.

“I invest in genetics, yes. But the recent rains left some of my animals dirty and underweight. The judges noticed that, and it cost me points. This tells me that even small environmental factors can affect our chances of winning or even improving,” he noted.

To support the industry’s shift toward higher standards, various stakeholders contributed to the success of the finale. Lesotho Post Bank provided food, veterinary supplies, and blankets to support farmers during the event.

“Our mandate is to support Basotho-owned businesses,” said Lebona Leokaoko, the bank’s agricultural officer, adding, “We see wool and mohair not just as tradition, but as a growing business opportunity.”

Similarly, private sector players like ClientCare Insurance Brokers and I Sure Care were present to educate farmers on risk management.

“This is our first collaboration with LWM-

GA,” said Boitumelo Tjekesane of ClientCare.

“We sponsored water for the event and are exploring more ways to get involved. Farmers need to understand that like any enterprise, theirs must be protected against risk—be it theft, drought, or disease.”

I Sure Care went a step further, sponsoring awards for top-performing farmers.

“We know these animals are valuable assets and without insurance, one outbreak or accident can destroy years of hard work. We are here to promote resilience in the sector,” Moliehi Thene, the company’s admin officer explained.

Veterinarian Pieter Kemp also stressed the importance of preventative animal care citing it is not enough to treat animals after they fall sick.

“By the time you see signs of illness, fleece quality has already dropped. Early diagnosis, proper feeding, stress reduction—these are the invisible tools that create market-ready fleece,” Pieter warned.

Throughout the day, cultural celebrations reminded everyone of the heritage embedded in the sector. Traditional Ndlamo dances, songs of praise, and ceremonial ululations filled the air. Winners were awarded trophies and prizes, not only for having the best animals but also for demonstrating knowledge, compassion, and dedication to their craft.

As the sun set over the college grounds, the mood was reflective but hopeful. Farmers returned to their districts with new insights, connections, and a renewed commitment to excellence. The LWMGA promised continued training, improved market access, and tighter adherence to ethical standards.

“The road ahead is challenging, but it is also full of promise. If we work together, take care of our animals, and embrace knowledge, this sector can change lives,” said Mokoenhi Thinyane in his closing remarks.

The wool and mohair finale did more than crown champions—it spotlighted a future rooted in care, collaboration, and ambition. Lesotho’s fleece industry is no longer just about tradition; it is a rising force on the global stage, led by farmers who understand that success starts with kindness, discipline, and vision.



National wool & morehair show

