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Crisis as Climate Change Fuels Lumpy Skin Disease

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Crisis as Climate Change Fuels Lumpy Skin Disease



Cattle affected by lumpy skin disease

By Topollo Tlali

Changing weather patterns are no longer a distant warning for cattle farmers in Lesotho, but have become a lived reality, reshaping farming seasons and accelerating disease outbreaks that threaten livestock, livelihoods and the broader agricultural sector.

Rising temperatures and increased rainfall are turning what was once a manageable livestock disease into a growing national crisis.

Lumpy skin disease, long present but limited in scale, is now spreading rapidly, exposing the deep links between climate change and animal health.

Across the lowland districts of Leribe, Berea, Butha-Buthe, Maseru, Mafeteng and Mhale's Hoek, farmers are faced with a pandemic, a battle between a warming climate and the cattle that sustain rural households.

Farmers who have spent decades rearing livestock now find themselves watching helplessly as their animals weaken, scarred by painful nodules and unable to work, produce milk or reproduce.

In Mafeteng's Ha Ramokhele village, cattle farmer Liau Melapi recalls the shock of discovering his animals infected.

Four of his cattle suddenly became weak, their bodies covered in lumps.

"In all my years of farming, this is the first time I have seen cattle like this in my kraal," he said.

He added, "I was shocked and angry. I did not know what to use."

With little information about the disease, Melapi tried traditional herbs, but the condition did not improve.

Elsewhere, some communities have managed to slow the disease through awareness and coordination.

In Thaba Tsoana, in the Berea district, farmers have united to control grazing and work closely with extension officers.

Chief Mamoutloanyane Masupha said regular village gatherings on animal health have helped keep farmers informed.

When the outbreak began, the chief noted veterinary doctors and extension workers visited kraals to assess risks.

So far, the village has not recorded a confirmed case, a result Masupha attributes to early action and cooperation.

Meteorological data shows that rainfall in the lowlands has increased by up to 30 per cent, flooding

pastures and extending disease transmission beyond the traditional rainy season.

For farmers like Melapi, the shift is bittersweet, "...our cattle suffer a lot during the dry season, so we were happy to see grass again. But now the moisture and heat are bringing disease. We are scared."

Across Lesotho, farmers are reporting similar losses. Dairy cattle are developing bursting nodules, milk production is drying up overnight, and infertility is becoming more common.

'Sesotho cattle', vital for ploughing fields and household labour, are weakening rapidly.

Economically, farmers are losing animals faster than they can recover, as climate stress accelerates disease progression.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has confirmed 446 cases of lumpy skin disease and 19 cattle deaths nationwide. Leribe accounts for 142 cases, Maseru 163, Mafeteng 45, Berea 33, Butha-Buthe 36, Mhale's Hoek 28 and Thaba-Tseka one case. The disease was first reported in Leribe in areas such as Tsifalimali, Lisemeng, Peka, Matlakeng and Mathokoane, before spreading to other districts.

Minister of Agriculture and Food Security Thabo Mofosi warned that the combination of heat and prolonged moisture has created ideal conditions for mosquitoes that transmit the virus.

"Heat and moisture allow mosquitoes to breed at a high rate, increasing the chances of the virus spreading," he said.

While lumpy skin disease has no cure, treatment can help boost an animal's immune system.

The ministry, Mofosi added, is working with stakeholders to contain the outbreak and has deployed 21 vehicles to enable veterinary teams to reach affected areas, revealing that medication is being procured from South Africa to be provided to farmers free of charge.

Mafeteng District Administration Officer Polao Tlali noted that the unusually green winter vegetation was an early warning sign.

"The grass stayed green because there was still moisture in the soil, and heavy rains have continued, creating wetlands that are a breeding ground for mosquitoes," he said, noting even soils that normally lose moisture quickly have remained damp, signalling a clear shift in climate patterns.

Veterinary experts say Lesotho has crossed a critical threshold.

Dr Nticia, a field veterinary officer, explained that while lumpy skin disease is endemic, cases were previously rare and seasonal, "this year it needs serious attention," she said.

"The disease is viral, not curable, and climate change is amplifying its spread."

She indicated that treatment focuses on managing symptoms, reducing stress and allowing infected cattle to rest in cool environments.

"After a few days of treatment, cattle can recover enough to eat," she added.

Dr Pabalo, a senior veterinary officer, urged farmers not to consume meat from infected animals warning, "...Lumpy skin disease does not infect people, but eating sick animals exposes communities to other health risks."

Farmers were also cautioned against administering injections without professional guidance.

Cattle remain central to Basotho livelihoods, providing milk, draught power and a store of wealth. As climate change intensifies, the losses are hitting vulnerable communities the hardest.

Reduced fertility, deaths and weakened animals are undermining food security, while isolation challenges in moisture-soaked pastures allow the disease to spread unchecked.

Global data from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) underscores the changing nature of the disease. Once largely confined to Africa, lumpy skin disease has spread to the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

In July 2025, Italy and France reported their first-ever cases, highlighting how warming climates are enabling disease vectors to expand into new regions. WOAH emphasises that effective control depends on biosecurity, early detection, movement control, rapid vaccination with high-quality vaccines, and cross-border cooperation.

Research by the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture and other institutions shows that climate change affects livestock diseases directly through heat stress and indirectly through extreme weather events that favour pathogens and vectors. When animals exceed their thermal comfort zones, their immune systems weaken, making them more vulnerable to infection and death.

Without climate-smart strategies such as early warning systems, resilient breeds, and strengthened veterinary services, experts warn that farmers in Lesotho would face deepening losses.



TRC Workshop on advocacy for women in farming

TRC Microscopes Women Farmers' Rights

By Topollo Tlali

MASERU –

The rights of women in agriculture took centre stage last week during a meeting convened by the Transformative Resource Centre (TRC) where multi-stakeholder looked in ways to strengthen partnerships for inclusive agricultural development, specifically advancing the rights of women farmers in Lesotho.

Held under the theme “Strengthening Partnerships for Inclusive Agricultural Development,” the meeting brought together key stakeholders, including Renoka, the Basotho Enterprise Development Corporation (BEDCO), the Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project (WAMPCOP), the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II), the Land Administration Authority (LAA), and officials

from the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police.

TRC Executive Director, Tsikoane Peshoane, highlighted the persistent gender inequalities within agriculture-related laws and practices.

He noted that while women continue to advocate for their rights, existing agricultural laws and regulations still hinder their ability to fully own land and farming assets.

“Women remain central to food production at both household and community levels, yet leadership and ownership in agriculture are still dominated by men,” Peshoane stated, adding that, despite legal barriers, women continue to cultivate small plots that sustain families across the country.

TRC Programme Manager Mabela Lehloenyha presented findings from a pilot project implemented in Maseru, Mokhotlong, Leribe, and Quthing, which tested long-held assumptions about women farmers’ experiences.

She explained that the selected sites were chosen to reflect Lesotho’s diverse topography, encompassing urban, peri-urban, and rural areas across

the northern, central, and southern regions.

“In Mokhotlong, for instance, climate conditions pose serious challenges with extended cold periods limiting vegetable production and resulting in low yields,” Lehloenyha said.

She emphasised that the project was grounded in a baseline study to ensure evidence-based advocacy rather than relying on assumptions. The study examined women’s access to land, resources, finance, credit, and agricultural inputs.

“Our findings show that women are the backbone of crop production. Approximately 80 per cent of women farmers are actively producing crops, yet only 20 per cent have decision-making power over agricultural activities.”

Lehloenyha stressed that TRC’s vision is to see women farmers enjoy equitable access to services and opportunities.

“We want women farmers’ rights to be protected not only on paper but also in practice,” she stated. As part of its broader advocacy efforts, TRC has conducted training programmes for women farmers, journalists, and civil society organisations to deepen understanding of gender issues in agriculture and promote informed dialogue.

The meeting aimed to establish a structured platform for engagement between government and non-state actors to enhance collaboration in support of women farmers, cooperatives, and associations.

Mabosiu Selonyane, representing the Department of Cooperatives within the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development, indicated that women are increasingly visible in cooperatives, particularly in financial cooperatives and farming groups; “Women are at the forefront of cooperative activities and are performing exceptionally well.”

Masebele Mponye from the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police outlined the legal frameworks affecting women farmers, including the Land Act of 2010, the Land Husbandry Act of 1967, the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act, and the Administration of Inheritance Act of 2024.

However, she acknowledged that the existence of these laws does not guarantee their effective implementation.

“While the laws exist, many are not fully functional on the ground,” Mponye said, highlighting that limited public understanding and the use of English-only legal texts pose challenges, particularly in rural areas.

She added that the ministry has undertaken na-

tionwide efforts to train councillors on land and inheritance laws, but further monitoring and community education remain necessary.

Itumeleng Lengosa, a representative from SADP, explained that the project supports women farmers through climate-smart agriculture, agribusiness promotion, and partnerships with organisations such as World Vision. She also mentioned that SADP runs nutrition clubs that benefit women farmers.

Libeo Monethi, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for WAMPCOP, stated that the project is gender-sensitive and targets women involved in wool and mohair production, a traditionally male-dominated sector.

He noted that the project aims to reach 45,000 households nationwide, focusing on 50 per cent of women and 35 per cent of youth, with priority districts including Mokhotlong, Maseru, Thaba Tseka, and Quthing.

He noted that WAMPCOP is also reducing women’s workloads by distributing 10,000 multifunctional solar cooking stoves and is establishing a wool and mohair fund to create new income opportunities.

Matseliso Mota from the Land Administration Authority emphasised the importance of land verification before payment to avoid disputes, particularly for women.

Mamarabe Sello, a representative from BEDCO, outlined the corporation’s role in capacity building, mentorship, entrepreneurship promotion, and market readiness to attract investment.

Renoka Natural Resource Expert Ramatsoku Rampai highlighted gender imbalances in natural resource management, noting that men often dominate pasture and water governance structures despite women being the primary water users.

“Women walk long distances to fetch water and are exposed to safety risks, yet they are excluded from decision-making.”

He explained that Renoka has since incorporated gender mainstreaming in water and pasture management, collaborating with the Ministry of Gender.

The meeting concluded with a collective commitment by stakeholders to strengthen collaboration, expand training, and improve market access for women farmers. Participants agreed that empowering women in agriculture is critical to food security, economic inclusion, and sustainable development in Lesotho.



Mushrooms (picture sourced from the internet)

By Thoboloko Ntšonyane

MASERU - Lesotho is set for export growth under the New Chinese Trade Policy, according to the Chinese Ambassador to Lesotho, Yang Xiaokun.

This arrangement, the Ambassador said, opens doors for local farmers to export homegrown goods to the People’s Republic of China, potentially boosting the country’s economy and creating jobs.

He explained that the arrangement offers a zero-tariff benefit, meaning certain goods can be exported to another country without incurring import taxes.

“For local exporters, this makes their products cheaper and more competitive in international markets.”

Ambassador Xiaokun stressed that agriculture is a key sector expected to benefit from this policy, with crops, vegetables, and mushrooms earmarked to reach buyers abroad at lower costs, creating opportunities for farmers to increase their income and expand their businesses.

Mushroom farming has been identified as a promising sector, providing a pathway for local communities to engage in international trade through their products, and the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has aligned its strategic plan with government priorities, emphasising the country’s potential for producing high-value cash crops, such as mushrooms.

The Ambassador pointed out that this arrangement arose from the 9th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit, during which the government of the People’s Republic of China announced zero-tariff treatment for all exports from least developed countries (LDCs) with which it maintains diplomatic relations.

“As a beneficiary of this policy, the government of Lesotho now enjoys 100% tariff line coverage for zero-tariff treatment on its exports to China.

“Under this policy, all goods originating from Lesotho that meet the quota requirements will be eligible for zero-tariff treatment when exported to

Juncao Mushrooms, A Potential Export to China

China, effective from December 1, 2024,” he said.

“To further facilitate Lesotho’s exports to China, the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) has launched the ‘Special Preferential Tariff Treatment Certificate of Origin Issuance System,’” the Ambassador revealed, citing that the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) would utilise this system to issue Certificates of Origin for export goods that comply with the specified criteria.

“Enterprises can take advantage of the zero-tariff policy upon presentation of a valid certificate and other required materials.”

Mushrooms, as food, tonic, and medicine, reportedly offer a valuable dietary addition rich in high-quality proteins (1940%), essential amino acids, 15% fat, minerals (such as calcium, zinc, phosphorus, and iron), high vitamin content (including VB1, VB2, VA, VC), and other essential micronutrients.

Mushrooms are also believed to benefit the body by enhancing the immune system, lowering blood pressure, and reducing blood sugar levels, among other advantages.

Beyond being a nutritious food source, mushrooms represent a valuable source of income and a promising export product for Lesotho’s farmers.

To get into their production, farmers pay M1,600 for 800 spawns for a 10 m² mushroom bed and can expect to harvest 300 kg of fresh mushrooms within 2.5 to 3 months.

At the local wholesale price of 20 Maloti per kg, a farmer can collect M6,000 in sales. This means that a farmer could have annual sales of M24,000 over four production seasons (one year). The mushrooms could potentially be marketed at up to M60 per kg in supermarkets.

Mushroom cultivation is a reliable and effective method for producing nutritious food in a short timeframe while also boosting income generation.

JUNCAO mushrooms, cultivated from Juncao grasses, are part of a Chinese government-aided project in Lesotho launched in September 2007.

Ambassador Xiaokun stated that by 2022, four phases of the project had been successfully implemented.

He noted that the Chinese side has dispatched technical teams to Lesotho to provide training in Juncao mushroom cultivation, conduct on-site technical guidance, and supply essential materials, tools, and equipment.

The Ambassador further mentioned that these efforts have achieved positive results in supporting farmers across various regions to improve their livelihoods and increase their incomes.

Jean Maurice Association's Successful Journey Celebrated

By Topollo Tlali

QACHA'S NEK -
Songs, ululations and vibrant colours filled the Sacred Heart Convent church yard at Ha Se-ke in Romeng, Qacha's Nek. Jean Maurice Association—also known as Barali ba Lerato la Pelo e Tlotlehang ea Jesu—celebrated the completion of their Smallholder Agriculture Development Project Phase II (SADP II) support.

Community members, partners, and officials gathered beneath tall trees and convent buildings to celebrate a milestone in the association's dairy production journey, reflecting on years of perseverance, learning, and growth.

Jean Maurice Association, comprising 48 members, currently rears 10 dairy cattle for milk production.

SADP II Project Field Officer Letsoisa Leqheku celebrated the association's milestone and credited their success to dedication.

"As SADP II, we have watched you work tirelessly. Today, we are celebrating your hard work and officially congratulating you on your graduation. We also witnessed the long hours you put in to ensure you achieved all milestones," Leqheku said.

Association leader, Sister Clementine Thatho, traced the group's journey from its humble beginnings, recalling the hardships they faced before SADP II support.

She recounts that, before support, the association owned one cow that produced only milk. It birthed mostly mule calves, limiting growth.

Through SADP II matching grants introduced in 2021, the association acquired three Holstein cattle. However, the early stages were fraught with challenges.

"The cattle arrived in poor condition. Two calves were born, but one cow died after delivery, and all the calves were lost," Sister Clementine said, describing the experience as a difficult and painful start.



Showcased products, mafi

With veterinary support—particularly from Dr Makhaola—the association managed to save the remaining animals. Later, three Jersey cattle were purchased, marking a turning point for the project.

Today, the herd stands at ten cattle. Harsh climatic conditions in Qacha's Nek caused milk production to fluctuate over the years.

"Winters are extremely cold, and milk production drops. Summers bring higher yields. Climate change has made conditions unpredictable, with extreme temperature swings in a single day," Sister Clementine explained.

She noted that climate variability increased costs, reduced productivity, and affected both milk yield and quality.

During the celebrations, members showcased their dairy products and led guests to their newly constructed milking parlour.

"SADP II made this milking parlour a reality. Hy-

giene is our priority—there are no flies here, and our customers can consume our milk with confidence," she said.

The association also demonstrated its milking and pasteurising machines, which have significantly reduced labour demands.

They have further invested in a vehicle used to deliver milk and dairy products to surrounding communities.

Beyond fresh milk, Jean Maurice Association now produces yoghurt, cheese, mafi, and milk-based drinks, diversifying its income streams and adding value to its produce.

Sister Analetta Lempe, representing the congregation, praised Sister Clementine's leadership and commitment.

"When this project was introduced, its vision was unclear to me, but today it is evident that many peo-

ple are benefiting," she said, thanking SADP II for supporting a project that has helped sustain vulnerable sisters and community members.

She highlighted that religious sisters are often overlooked in development programmes despite facing food insecurity and economic hardship.

"As sisters, we are citizens too. We need support like everyone else. Projects like this help us survive and support others," she said.

Representing the Ministry of Agriculture, the District Agricultural Officer for Qacha's Nek, Mophapi Litsoane, congratulated the association and reaffirmed continued collaboration beyond SADP II.

"We have walked this journey together through both challenges and successes. Even after graduation, we look forward to working with you to strengthen food production," he said.

In an interview with Seahlolo, Sister Clementine said her leadership role was deeply personal, having grown up on a farm.

"Working with animals connects me to nature and reminds me to live in harmony with it," she said.

She noted that milk production used to reach about 50 litres per day in summer and would drop to around 20 litres in winter, but now climate instability further reduces output.

"I thank SADP II for everything they have done for us. My hope is to inspire the youth of Qacha's Nek to fall in love with farming," she concluded.

Dairy farming remains an important contributor to nutrition and rural livelihoods in Lesotho, providing essential nutrients such as calcium, protein and vitamins.

However, feed shortages, rising costs and climate pressures continue to challenge the sector. The experience of Jean Maurice Association highlights how targeted support, strong leadership and perseverance can transform smallholder farming into a sustainable source of food and income, even in the country's most remote regions.



Pots cooking food for all participants of the graduation



Showcase hour



Sister Clementine Thatho explaining how milking process is done in the parlour



Jean maurice association milking parlour



showcased products fresh milk, mafi, drink made up of milk, and cheese



Letsoisa Leqheku DAO for qacha opening the celebration of Jean Maurice Association



showcased products fresh milk, mafi, drink made up of milk, and cheese




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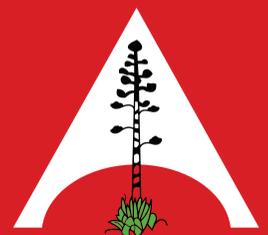
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ALLIANCE

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Feed Prices Stabilise After Mid-2025 Dip

...but Structural Pressures Persist for Lesotho's Livestock Farmers

By Lungile Maseela

Animal feed prices, which account for the largest share of production costs in Lesotho's livestock sector, began to stabilise and modestly decline around June 2025, providing short-term relief to poultry, piggery and dairy farmers who had faced prolonged cost pressures.

Throughout much of 2024 and early 2025, rising feed prices eroded profit margins, compelling many livestock farmers to reduce production or exit the sector entirely.

Although the mid-2025 adjustment offered temporary respite, farmers and analysts caution that underlying structural challenges continue to jeopardise the sector's long-term sustainability.

Lesotho's livestock industry remains heavily reliant on South Africa for essential feed ingredients such as maize and soya.

Value chain assessments by the Lesotho National Farmers Union (LENAFU) indicate that limited domestic grain production and processing capacity necessitate the importation of most feed raw materials, rendering local prices highly sensitive to fluctuations in regional markets.

Consequently, feed prices in Lesotho closely mirror trends in South African grain markets.

When prices rise across the border, local farmers feel the effects almost immediately.

Price declines are often delayed by transport costs, logistics, and exchange rate fluctuations.

Regional agricultural market analyses reveal that grain prices in Southern Africa began to ease in mid-2025, driven by improved harvest expectations, particularly for yellow maize. This shift coincided with the period during

which local feed suppliers reported price reductions.

Rose Mary Raphoko of EW Farm Feeds confirmed that feed prices fell around mid-2025, primarily due to lower prices from South African suppliers such as Itau, from whom the company sources the majority of its feed.

"We still depend on South Africa because we do not yet have Itau operations locally, and our prices are strongly influenced by the South African operations," she stated.

Raphoko noted that the reduction increased demand, with some farmers returning as customers and others purchasing feed for resale.

Industry analysts attribute the price moderation to improved grain availability, reduced supply constraints and relative stabilisation in regional commodity markets following years of climate-related shocks and supply chain disruptions.

Government intervention also contributed, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security extending a livestock feed subsidy programme in 2024 to alleviate rising costs for farmers.

Rethabile Makhalema, founder of Makhalema Poultry Farm, remarked that the price reduction made it easier to maintain proper feeding levels, enhancing bird health and customer satisfaction. While the change did not significantly alter flock sizes, she said it helped stabilise cash flow.

Across the sector, poultry farmers welcomed the relief, noting that feed constitutes over 60 per cent of production costs. However, they emphasised that other inputs, such as day-old chicks, electricity, labour and veterinary services, continue to rise.

Dairy and pig farmers echoed similar concerns, stating that although easing feed prices prevented further losses,



profitability has not fully recovered.

Despite the decline, feed prices remain significantly above pre-pandemic levels. Transport costs, fuel price volatility, and exchange rate fluctuations continue to offset the benefits of lower grain input costs.

LENAFU Programme Manager Khotso Lepheana has confirmed a price decline in 2025, noting that even modest reductions can significantly benefit farmers. He emphasised the importance of bolstering domestic grain production to decrease reliance on imports and enhance price predictability.

"When prices change unexpectedly, farmers struggle to plan," Lepheana stated, adding that the lack of structured communication between feed suppliers and farmers exacerbates uncertainty.

Livestock farming is crucial to rural livelihoods and employment, and sharp increases in feed prices often result

in job losses. Women and youth farmers are particularly at risk, as they usually manage smaller enterprises with limited financial buffers. Although the price decline in mid-2025 may slow farm closures, it has not reversed the broader trend of sector consolidation.

Feed prices directly impact the cost of animal-source foods, including eggs, poultry, milk, and pork. Rising production costs are passed on to consumers, leading to higher food prices and reduced access to affordable protein, particularly for low-income households.

While Lesotho has local feed mills, LENAFU noted that the reliance on imported raw materials leaves farmers vulnerable to regional price fluctuations. Sector stakeholders argue that achieving long-term stability will require coordinated investment in domestic grain production, improved logistics, targeted support for farmers, and stronger cooperatives.

Northern Agri Hub Meets Berea Farmers to Enhance Product Quality for Market

By Topollo Tlali

Berea farmers gathered at the Teya-Teyaneng Resource Centre for a consultative meeting with the Northern Agricultural Hub to improve production quality and increase market access. The discussion centred on guiding farmers through the entire agricultural value chain, from production to post-harvest handling and marketing.

The Northern Agricultural Hub is a government-established facility designed to aggregate, package, and market agricultural produce from northern districts, including Berea, Leribe, Butha-Buthe, and Mokhotlong. This meeting was part of the hub's renewed outreach strategy following challenges encountered in its first year of operation.

Mahasela Nkoko, representing the Northern Agricultural Hub, acknowledged that the facility had faced significant setbacks, including considerable post-harvest losses. "One of the major challenges we experienced last year was that large volumes of Basotho produce rotted at the hub due to a lack of buyers," Nkoko stated. He attributed this largely to poor product quality that did not meet market standards.

Nkoko explained that, in response to these losses, the hub decided to engage directly with farmers in their communities to better understand production challenges and clarify buyer expectations. "Customers demand high-quality produce, and retailers operate under strict terms and conditions," he said. He noted that some buyers lacked confidence in locally produced crops, raising concerns about pesticide use and food safety practices. "They question whether the produce is safe for their customers," he added.

The hub also highlighted production challenges related to seed quality and farming practices. Nkoko pointed out that the use of low-quality seeds for crops such as tomatoes and peppers, combined with



Berea farmers in meeting with Northern Agri-Hub

open-field production, often resulted in discoloured or inconsistent produce. "Cabbages turning yellow or purple immediately repel buyers," he remarked.

During the discussion, farmers raised questions and expressed concerns, prompting Nkoko to emphasise the importance of coordinated action. He stressed that the challenges in farming could only be addressed through collaboration between farmers, markets, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, particularly in managing production standards, strengthening value chains, regulating imports, and improving communication.

"As the hub, we plan to visit all resource centres and support farmers in selecting representatives," Nkoko said. "These representatives will come together to form a strong leadership team focused on improving both the quantity and quality of agricultural produce."

Farmers voiced their frustrations regarding systemic constraints. Steven Makhetha noted that while farmers worked hard, delayed government subsidies often compromised production quality. "Sometimes we lack

information because regulatory bodies fail to communicate with us in a timely manner," he said. Another farmer added that even when quality and quantity were achieved, access to large retailers remained difficult due to entrenched supplier relationships, resulting in produce losses.

Northern Agricultural Hub marketing manager Karabo Leshoelle outlined three models through which the hub works with farmers. He explained that under one arrangement, produce is sold on agreed terms, and farmers are paid after sales. In another model, the hub purchases produce outright and pays farmers immediately. He also described wholesaling as an additional option.

One farmer, Marorisang, urged the hub to simplify engagement processes. "Farming is stressful and requires short, clear pathways," she said, calling for practical and efficient systems that reduce administrative burdens.

Nkoko announced that the hub intends to take over packaging responsibilities to reduce farmers' costs and

logistical challenges. He stated that farmers who deliver produce to the hub would be paid within five working days. The hub is also exploring the establishment of collection centres in farming communities to ease transportation constraints.

Despite previous losses, including a cabbage surplus crisis, Nkoko encouraged farmers to continue producing vegetables in sufficient quantity and quality. He disclosed that between June and July 2025, the hub only sold 210 heads of cabbage out of a consignment of 5,693 heads of cabbage; the rest was lost to spoilage. The meeting concluded with discussions on the losses incurred by farmers and possible compensation mechanisms.

Lesotho established agricultural hubs to address structural challenges in the sector, promote sustainable growth, improve food security and stimulate economic development. The hubs support smallholder farmers through training, aggregation services and market linkages, while encouraging diversification into vegetables and fruits. They also promote the adoption of improved technologies and infrastructure under policy frameworks such as the Comprehensive National Agriculture Policy and the National Agricultural Investment Plan.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Lesotho imports significant volumes of food from South Africa daily. The El Niño-induced drought in early 2024 reduced maize production by an estimated 60 per cent below average, driving above-average maize imports during the 2024/25 marketing year. Monthly imports by December 2024 were approximately 30 per cent higher than the previous year.

The National Bureau of Statistics reported that annual inflation stood at 3.7 per cent in December 2024, down from 7.2 per cent a year earlier, while food inflation was estimated at 5.6 per cent. However, maize meal prices increased by 9.3 per cent year-on-year, reflecting record-high white maize prices in South Africa.

Poor harvests, elevated food prices and limited income opportunities continue to strain food access, particularly among vulnerable households. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis released in February 2025, approximately 335,000 people—about 22 per cent of Lesotho's population—were experiencing acute food insecurity at crisis levels and above, a situation expected to persist until the main harvest period.



Reclaiming Lesotho's Status as the Region's Food Basket

By Seabata Mahao

MASERU -

As Lesotho prepares for upcoming Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) sessions in 2026, a renewed ambition is taking shape, "Restoring the Mountain Kingdom's historic position as a leading agricultural exporter in Southern Africa".

The vision was forcefully articulated by Chaba Mokuku, Managing Director of the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project, who challenged stakeholders to go beyond incremental reforms and embrace a transformative agenda for agriculture. Mokuku's call comes at a time when government and private-sector leaders are seeking to reverse decades of declining agricultural output, which turned Lesotho from a food exporter into a net food importer.

In the 19th century, Lesotho was a significant supplier of grain and mohair to South African mining camps. However, structural constraints, declining productivity, and weak policy coordination gradually eroded that position. Today, the country depends heavily on food imports, particularly cereals, dairy, and horticultural products from South Africa.

A turning point emerged in October 2024 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of Lesotho and the private sector, reinforced by a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) meeting in December 2025. The MoU establishes a predictable, institutionalised platform for dialogue, aimed at strengthening policy coherence, transparency, and consistency in implementing investment-climate reforms.

"This is about reclaiming what Lesotho was once capable of," Mokuku said, stressing that sustained collaboration is essential.

Restoring Lesotho's status as an exporter of high-quality agricultural commodities, he noted, can only be achieved through coordinated action linking policy reform with practical, on-the-ground support for farmers and agribusinesses.

The MoU operates within the framework of the World Bank-funded CAFI Project, which runs from July 2022 to June 2028 with financing of M838,551,000 (US\$52.5 million).

CAFI has established two strategic Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), Textile and Apparel, and Agriculture and Food Security, tasked not only with dialogue but with delivering measurable reforms across key value chains.

Speaking on behalf of the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition at a recent Agriculture and Food Security TWG meeting, Deputy Principal Secretary Johanne Masiea emphasised that the platform is more than a discussion forum: "This TWG is not a talk space; it is an accountability mechanism. We expect concrete identification of bottlenecks, prioritisation of high-impact reforms, and measurable progress that strengthens our farmers, agribusinesses and national food security."

Farmer organisations and sector institutions have welcomed the platform.

Khotso Lepheane of the Lesotho National Farmers Union (LENAFU) described the TWG as long overdue, citing, "Our producers face persistent constraints, from high input costs to limited market access. Only a coordi-



Participants and stakeholders

nated reform process will unlock the sector's full potential. We stand ready to contribute evidence, priorities and solutions that strengthen commercial agriculture while protecting smallholder livelihoods."

Similarly, Abiel Mashale of the Lesotho National Dairy Board (LNDB) noted that the collaboration could stabilise and modernise the dairy value chain.

"The sector needs clear regulatory alignment, upgraded production systems, and predictable standards that enable local farmers and processors to compete regionally. This TWG provides the structure required to drive those reforms."

From an economic perspective, the MoU is significant. Agricultural economist Mamoeketsie Loke of the Ministry of Agriculture explained that the agreement marks a potentially decisive shift in how agricultural policy is designed, implemented, and monitored. "Agriculture remains economically and socially important in Lesotho, employing a large share of rural households and acting as a safety net for food security. Yet its contribution to GDP is modest and declining. Productivity is low, and the country remains structurally dependent on food imports," she said. Loke highlighted key constraints, including high production costs, limited mechanisation, climate variability, degraded soils, fragmented value chains, regulatory bottlenecks, and weak private investment in agro-processing, irrigation, cold chains, and storage.

Despite these challenges, she emphasised that Lesotho

has strong latent comparative advantages, high-quality livestock and dairy potential, niche horticultural crops, seed potatoes, wool and mohair, and proximity to South Africa's large consumer market. "The problem has not been potential, but coordination and execution," Loke said.

According to Loke, the Agriculture and Food Security TWG can transform the sector in three critical ways: shifting reforms from policy intent to delivery, lowering transaction costs for farmers and agribusinesses, and attracting private investment. Instruments such as CAFI and the Lesotho Enterprise Assistance Programme (LEAP) are crucial, providing matching grants for machinery and modern technologies that reduce entry barriers and encourage private capital.

"If implementation remains credible, we can expect improved productivity, stronger domestic value chains, reduced imports of products we can competitively produce, and greater regional integration within SACU and SADC markets," Loke said. She cautioned, however, against reform fatigue and stressed the need to deliberately include smallholders in the process.

CAFI-supported initiatives are already bearing fruit. The project has incubated 150 enterprises—92 women-led and 111 youth-led—creating over 1,200 jobs.

It has also established the Lesotho Horticultural Incubation and Training Centre at Mahobong in Leribe district, aimed at scaling commercial fruit farming for domestic and export markets.



EBA KAROLO EA PHETOHO!

Eba karolo ea phethoho ka ho fetola moruo oa Naha! Letsatsi la 'Maraka la Naha ke Lena, sebelisa Matla a ho reka ho fetola maphelo.

For more information regarding registration please contact:

Mr Raliengoane; +26658015256, Ms Thabana; +26658752620 or Mr T'sabo; +26662300414



Pitso Ground (Maseru)

06:00-1700



PROJECT RESERVOIR CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS



PROJECT CONSTRUCTION WORKS PROGRESS



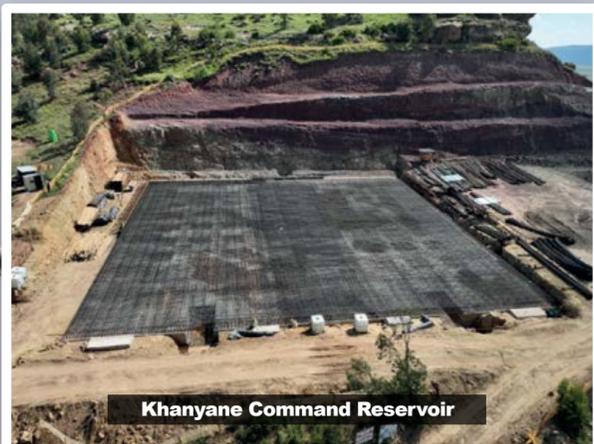
Ha Lesiamo Reservoir - Z2R21
The 1 megalitre reservoir will be servicing the communities of Ha Lesiamo, Ha Setene, Ha Lobiane, Ha Moseli, and surrounding villages.



Tsifa-li-Mali Reservoir - Z2R3
5ML Reservoir will supply water to Hlotse town, Tsifa-li-Mali, Lisemeng I & II, Ha Tlaitai and surrounding villages.



Water Treatment Plant - Ha Setene
The Water Treatment Plant at Ha Setene is designed with a treatment capacity of 25 million litres per day. Once treated, potable water will be pumped to five (5) newly constructed reservoirs for storage and distribution. Construction works are currently 58% complete.



Khanyane Command Reservoir - Z2R1
This 12ML Reservoir located at Khanayne is the Command reservoir which will supply treated water to ALL newly constructed Reservoirs in the Project Area.



Matukeng Reservoir - Z2R4
Z2R4 is a 1 Megalitre concrete reservoir. This reservoir is serving communities at Matukeng, Ha Malimatle, Tsikoane, and surrounding villages.



Maputsoe Reservoir - Z2R5
Z2R5 is a 8 Megalitres concrete reservoir. This is terminal reservoir serving communities in Maputsoe, Industrial area and surrounding areas including Mpharane, Ha Nyenye.



Khanyane Reservoir - Z2R2
Press Steel 200 kilo litre serving Khanyane area



Pressure Break Tank at Khanyane

Overall progress on the reservoir works currently stands at 86% completion. Based on the contractor's approved programme tracking, overall project progress is 86%, compared to the planned 79%, indicating that the contractor is 7% ahead of schedule.



Pipe laying at Maputsoe

WORKS BY CONTRACT:

W/03A – Water Treatment Works

- Construction under Contract W03A (Water Treatment Works) is currently 58% complete.

W/04 – Transmission Systems and Reservoirs

- A total of 28.7 km of transmission pipelines has been completed, with overall project progress currently at 92%.

W/05 – Distribution Network & House Connections

- Under Contract W05, pipeline laying has been fully completed, and overall construction progress currently stands at **99.5%**, exceeding the estimated time projection.
- In terms of house connections, **161** household connections have been completed with an additional **213** connections for potential customers.

W/06 – Distribution Network & House Connections

- Under Contract W06, a total pipeline length of **221 km** has been laid, with overall construction progress currently standing at **99.6%**.



Raw Water Pumping Station at Hlotse River, Ha Setene

- In terms of house connections, **296** household connections have been completed, with an additional **105**
- connections for potential customers installed up to the point of the water meter.

Rising Main & WASCO Pump Station Refurbishment

- The rising main pipeline has reached a total installed length of **4.52 km**, with overall construction progress currently at 58.1%.
- Refurbishment works at the pump station is 10% complete, while temporary pump installation is underway to support ongoing operations.



LEROTHOLI POLYTECHNIC

INVITATION TO TENDER

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF LAPTOP COMPUTERS

Lerotholi Polytechnic hereby invites locally registered, eligible companies to submit bids for supply and delivery of laptop computers. Bidding documents can be obtained from the Procurement Office for a non-refundable fee of **Three Thousand Maloti Only (M 3000.00)**. Sealed bids, **Original and four copies of bid documents bearing no identification of a tender and clearly marked "Tender No. LP/ADM/01/2026 For Supply and delivery of laptop and Desktops computers"** must be deposited in the Tender Box situated in Administration II Foyer, on or before 12 Feb 2026 at 12:30p.m.

Tenders will be opened the same date at 1400hrs at the Administration I Block Conference room, in the presence of the tenderers who choose to attend or their representatives. Bidding documents must be accompanied by a bid security amounting to 2% of the Bid Price. Additional requirements and instructions are as specified in the tender document.

All bidders must attach copies of:

- Valid Trader's license.
- Valid Tax Clearance Certificate.
- Certificate of incorporation where applicable.
- VAT Registration Certificate where applicable.

Interested bidders should make payments at the following:

- MPesa: **14096; Pay Merchant & Fees, Pay School Fees, Ref: Company Name**
- Ecocash: **52629; Pay Merchant; Pay Fees; Ref: Company Name**
- **Banking Details:**

Account Number: **9080003510146**
 Account Type: **Business Current Account**
 Account Name: **Lerotholi Polytechnic**
 Branch Name and Code: **City; 060667**
 Swift Code: **SBICLSMX**
 Bank Name: **Standard Lesotho Bank**
 Reference: **Company Name**

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours; 0800hrs-1700hrs:

Procurement Office
 Lerotholi Polytechnic
 P.O. Box 16
 Maseru
 Email: procurement@lp.ac.ls
 Tel: 22324402



GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO

District Procurement Unit - Mohale's Hoek

TENDER NOTICE

Tender #: FC-26-MOA/01

District Procurement Unit Mohale's Hoek hereby invites tenders from suitably qualified and registered security companies, for provision of 24hrs **security services** in the **Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Mohale's Hoek**, for the fiscal year **2026/2027**.

Tender documents will be obtainable at Ministry of Agriculture and food Security Mohale's Hoek, at a non-refundable fee of **M2000.00**

Work Description: Supply of security services: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition- Mohale's Hoek

Bidders' qualification:

To tender for the proposed contract, bidders must be companies **WHO** have registered with **Ministry of Home Affairs and Public Safety and Parliamentary Affairs**.

The closing time and date for the receipt of tenders is **10:00hrs**, on the **17th February 2026**. Tenders will be opened on the same day at **12:05 noon** in the presence of Tenderers or their representatives.

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PAYMENTS METHODS

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PUBLIC NOTICE

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ESIA)

Green Mould Consultancy, in association with Greenleaf Investments, hereby informs the public and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) being undertaken for the proposed construction of a Cancer Treatment and Radiotherapy Centre at Botshabelo, Maseru, commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Kingdom of Lesotho.

The ESIA is conducted in accordance with the Environment Act, 2008, to assess potential environmental and social impacts during the construction and operational phases of the project and to recommend appropriate mitigation measures.

Members of the public and all I&APs are invited to submit written comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding the proposed project.

Comment submission deadline:

On or before 3 February 2026

Comments may be submitted via Area Chiefs or directly to the consultants:

Email: gmc.lss10@gmail.com

Mobile/WhatsApp: +266 620 11651

Telephone: +266 223 31411



TSEBISO EA SECHABA

BOITHUTO BA LITLAMORAO TIKOLOHONG LE BOPHELONG BA SECHABA (ESIA)

Green Mould Consultancy, ka kopanelo le Greenleaf Investments, e tsebisa sechaba le bohle ba amehang ka boithuto ba litlamorao tikolohong le bophelong ba sechaba (ESIA) bo etsoang bakeng sa kaho ea Setsi sa Phekolo ea Kankere le Radiotherapy Botshabelo, Maseru, se laetsoeng ke Lekala la Bophelo la 'Musu oa Lesotho.

Boithuto bona bo etsoa ho latela Molao oa Tikoloho (Environment Act, 2008) ho lekola litlamorao tse ka bang teng nakong ea kaho le ts'ebetso ea morero, le ho fana ka mehato ea thibelo.

Sechaba le bohle ba amehang ba memeloa ho fana ka maikutlo, lithahiso kapa lipotso mabapi le morero ona.

Letsatsi la ho qetela la ho fana ka maikutlo:

Pele kapa ka la 3 Tlhakola 2026

Maikutlo a ka fetisetsoa ho Marena a Libaka kapa ho baeletsi ka lintlha tse latelang:

Imeile: gmc.lss10@gmail.com

Mohala/WhatsApp: +266 620 11651

Mohala oa Ofisi: +266 223 31411



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

(Individual Consultants: PROJECT ACCOUNTANT)

LESOTHO

GAFSP

Assignment title: Recruitment of Project Accountant

Reference no.: LSO-200002563-0069-NP

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition under the SADP II Project has received the grant from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) that is financed by contribution from Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP). It intends to apply part of the proceeds for the recruitment of consulting services provided by an individual consultant who will serve as a Project Accountant.

The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies, and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses, and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with GAFSP.

The consulting services ("the services") include the engagement of a Project Accountant for 12 months

This request for expressions of interest (REOI) follows the general procurement notice that appeared on the IFAD website on 26th March 2024, on UNDB on 26th March 2024 and on Lesotho local newspapers on 26th March 2024.

The attention of interested consultants is drawn to IFAD's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy and the Revised IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption its Activities and Operations. The latter sets forth IFAD's provisions on prohibited practices. IFAD further strives to ensure a safe working environment free of harassment, including sexual harassment, and free of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in its activities and operations as detailed in its IFAD Policy to Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Interested consultants shall not have any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest. Consultants with an actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest shall be disqualified unless otherwise explicitly approved by the Fund. Consultants are considered to have a conflict of interest if they a) have a relationship that provides them with undue or undisclosed information about or influence over the selection process and the execution of the contract, or b) have a business or family relationship with a member of the client's board of directors or its personnel, the Fund or its personnel, or any other individual that was, has been or might reasonably be directly or indirectly involved in any part of (i) the preparation of the REOI, (ii) the selection process for this procurement, or (iii) execution of the contract. Consultants have an ongoing obligation to disclose any situation of actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest during preparation of the EOI, the selection process or the contract execution. Failure to properly disclose any of said situations may lead to appropriate actions, including the disqualification of the consultant, the termination of the contract and any other as appropriate under the IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Projects and Operations.

The Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition Lesotho under SADP II Project now invites eligible individual consultants ("consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services in the form of a curriculum vitae (CV). A consultant will be selected in accordance with the individual consultant selection (ICS) method set out in IFAD's Project Procurement Handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. Interviews will be conducted as part of the selection process.

The shortlisting criteria are: Qualifications, Specific and General experience as stipulated in the TORs.

TERMS OF REFERENCES

POSITION/ASSIGNMENT: Project Accountant

REPORTING TO: Financial Management Specialist

DUTY STATION: Maseru

1. BACKGROUND OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The Government of Lesotho is implementing the Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP) 2 with financial support from the World Bank, Government of Japan and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project covers ten districts – Maseru, Leribe, Botha-Bothe, Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Berea Mafeteng, Mohale'sHoek, Quthing and Qacha'sNek. SADP is coordinated by the Project Management unit (PMU) based in Maseru. The project has four components:

Component 1. Promoting Climate Smart Agricultural Practices and Advisory Services. This component aims at strengthening the adaptive capacity of smallholder farmers to adjust and modify their production systems to minimize the potential future impacts from climate variability.

Component 2. Improving Agricultural Commercialization and Nutrition. This component will build on Component 1 by addressing financial constraints in the agricultural sector so that the training and advisory services provided under Component 1 is complemented with much-needed financing to help the farming community undertake productive and profitable investments.

Component 3. Project Management, Coordination, and Monitoring and Evaluation It is responsible for: implementation and coordination, financial

management and procurement, communication, visibility and awareness programs, environmental management and safeguards, and monitoring and evaluation.

Component 4. Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC). This is a zero allocation to partially cover emergency response via the implementation of key activities by the appropriate agencies to respond to the emergency.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

- Reporting to the Financial Management Specialist, the Project Accountant will work within the SADP 2 financial management team, aiding and supporting in financial planning, budgeting, implementation, and financial monitoring of the projects in accordance with the project documents.
- Under the supervision of the Financial Management Specialist, the Accountant Officer will be required to work closely with the financial management team and the entire PMU team.
- Ensure that all the financial management requirements of projects are carried out smoothly and on timely manner.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The work of the Project Accountant (AO) will include the following tasks, among others:

- Shall be responsible for the overall financial management of GAFSP component of SADP 2.
- Under the supervision of the Financial Management Specialist, liaise with the finance department of MAFSN and the accounting team of the IFAD/World Bank for coordination of GAFSP funds disbursement.
- Provide inputs to the Project director, through the Financial Management Specialist, and Component Leads on all financial aspects of SADP 2.
- Provide inputs in preparation and approval of budgets and financial cash-flow projections/ forecasts for the project.
- Assist in implementation of satisfactory financial and accounting policies and procedures for the projects, and ensure adherence to these policies and procedures in accordance with the finance regulations.
- Provide inputs in ensuring development and operation of a satisfactory financial management system for the project.
- Provide inputs in ensuring that an effective system of internal controls is operational and the internal audit system for the project is working satisfactorily.
- Support the Financial Management Specialist in ensuring the timely follow-up on issues arising out of internal and external audit.
- Ensure smooth flow of funds to all levels of the projects' organization, payments to various parties, and ensure adherence to service standards.
- Ensure effective cash management including short-term forecasting.
- Make necessary and timely preparation of reports and other documentation needed and submission of appropriate requests to Government of Lesotho/ Ministry of Finance and Development Planning / Central Bank of Lesotho to ensure timely flow of funds to the projects.
- Support the Financial Management Specialist in ensuring the timely preparation of financial management reports and financial statements, liaise effectively with auditors to ensure timely audit and publication of financial statements.
- Preparation of project financial closing statements and reconciled with STEP as well as IFAD financial management tools.
- Support the preparation of documents for external audit of the project accounts and submitting audit management notes and following management recommendations.
- AS instructed by the Financial Management Specialist, maintain and update Financial standard procedures for Donor funded Project in Lesotho.
- Maintain proper documentation of the projects, contracts as required by the laws and regulations of the Government of Lesotho.
- Processing of vouchers for payment.
- Through the office of the Financial Management Specialist, prepare the submission of regular project financial reports to government institutions as required.
- Conduct quarterly analysis of Expenditure.
- Maintain and manage complete filing system for financial records of SADP 2/GAFSP.
- Establish a complete and accurate fixed asset register, arising out of SADP 2/GAFSP.
- Under the direction of the Financial Management Specialist, work with the Project teams to ensure the financial data management is synchronized with the physical progress of the project components.
- Any other work-related tasks assigned by the Project Director and/or the Financial Management Specialist.

4. CONTRACT DURATION AND CONDITION

- Contract duration is 12 Months from the date of signature, subject to a satisfactory performance during the probationary period of One (1) month of the incumbent and subject to business continuity and availability of funds.
- The assignment is planned to end by May 2027.

5. FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT

The Client shall render the Officer with all such facilities as may be reasonably required to enable the Officer to discharge his/her duties that is:

- office space,
- laptop/computer,
- landline telephone, and
- transport related to the assignment delivery.

6. DELIVERABLES AND FINAL OUTPUTS

- Accounting system Chart of Accounts.
- Internal and external audit response and action.
- Annual budget Cash Flow projections.
- Filed accounting records financial reports.

e. Timely Payment of invoices.

f. Financial recommendations /advice report.

7. QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

- Minimum undergraduate degree in Finance, Accounting, Finance Management or related field or General Accounting
- Must have professional work experience of at least seven (7) years in the field of Finance including 5 years' experience in Donor funded projects.
- Experience in providing expert advisory and/or consultancy services in Finance, Accounting, Business Administration, or in a relevant field of the assignment.
- Sound understanding of principles underlying good procurement practices and national and international procurement guidelines will be an added advantage.
- Sufficiently experienced to manage project finances, prepare essential financial management reports including annual financial statements and monitor project financial progress.
- Experience in preparing budgets and cash flow statements is desirable.
- Possess strong analytical, administrative and computer skills in spreadsheets and any other application.
- Familiarity in dealing with annual audits will be an added advantage.
- Previous experience in public finance related projects will be an added advantage.
- Strong communication and coordination skills and ability to establish good working relationships with colleagues and stakeholders in a sensitive environment.
- Experience in report writing in a concise, lucid, and comprehensible manner.
- S/he must demonstrate strong interpersonal and motivational skills and sensitivity to the local environment as well as the ability to work with minimal supervision.
- Willingness and ability to work effectively under pressure and ability to multi-task.
- Strong conceptual and analytical skills and excellent interpersonal skills, strong verbal and written communication skills in Sesotho and English. Skills/Abilities.
- Knowledge of/experience with Bank/other international development organizations' Financial Management system would be an added advantage.
- Good knowledge of the institutional, technical, and commercial aspects of financial management.
- Worked as a finance specialist in a donor financed project.
- Experience in delivering projects at international level.
- Demonstrated high experience in contract management at managerial level.
- Fluency in spoken English and ability to write lucid reports and documents in English is required.
- Strong organization skills and ability to work in a team-oriented, dynamic, and diverse environment.
- Proven track record in working effectively within multidisciplinary teams, recognize the value of sharing ideas, knowledge and information with others and takes personal responsibility for doing so.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, sound judgment, communication skills, training experience, ability to identify and resolve policy and operational constraints. • Demonstrated computer skills, knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite especially, Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously, set priorities, and work independently, or under minimum supervision.

8. CLIENT ASSIGNMENT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

- The consultant is subject to an annual performance review. The performance evaluation shall be based on the work program/ plan prepared at the beginning of each rated period.
- The Project Director – SADP II is responsible for the coordination of activities acceptance and approval of the reports.
- A consultant will be selected in accordance with the selection of Individual Consultants Method set out in the Procurement Regulations.
- The short-listed candidate will be requested to participate in personal interviews and submit the names and contact details of personal referees who can attest to their abilities.
- A pre-employment screening and background check will be done on all short-listed candidates.
- The successful candidate must understand the objectives and delivery mechanisms of the projects' portfolio.
- He/she must be willing to work in a team, be flexible to emerging or changing conditions, and undertake initiative in his/her broad field of actions.

Any request for clarification on this REOI should be sent via e-mail to the address below procurement@sadp2.org.ls no later than **30th January 2026, 16:00hrs** and Harare Pretoria time zone. The client will provide responses to all clarification requests by **5th February 2026, 16:00hrs** and Harare Pretoria time zone. Expressions of interest in the form of curriculum vitae (CV) must be delivered in a written form to the address below by 12th February 2026, 12:00hrs. Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition SADP II Project Attn: Project Director P.O. Box 24 Livestock Offices Moshoeshoe II, Maseru 100, Lesotho Tel: +266 22312578

The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41942012>.

The policy is accessible at www.ifad.org/anticorruption_policy.

The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506>

By Topollo Tlali

MASERU -

In a decisive effort to combat youth unemployment and enhance farming productivity, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has provided agricultural inputs to 40 more young Basotho farmers through the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) at the Agricultural District Office in Maseru.

With the first group receiving inputs in November, this initiative is part of a national programme aiming to support 1,000 youth across the country.

Under the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II), this effort seeks to tackle Lesotho's rising youth unemployment while enhancing agricultural productivity.

This initiative further aligns with the ministry's commitment to support youth by 2025 through its Youth Mentorship Programme, which aims to nurture the next generation of farmers and entrepreneurs.

During the distribution event, extension officer Lechesa Nthulenyane urged the youth to make the most of the support.

"Go home and transform your surroundings. Care for the land, the soil, vegetables and livestock remembering that farming is the backbone of Lesotho's economy. Make it your source of livelihood," he encouraged.

Among the recipients, 25 young vegetable farmers each received 2,000 seedlings, two bags of fertiliser and two bottles of pesticide.

Puleng Ntsela, from Ha Ntsi, expressed her gratitude to the ministry for its ongoing support.

"After graduating from Lesotho Agricultural College in 2023, I returned home to face high unemployment. I started planting seedlings to sustain myself and today, with this support, I can expand my farming activities, though water scarcity remains a challenge," she shared.

Another recipient, a trained nurse, described how he turned to farming after struggling to find work in his field.

"I started with a small plot to supply vegetables to my classmates and over time I expanded to serve

40 More Young Farmers Receives Inputs to Boost Food Production

my community and local shops. Farming has truly become my livelihood," he noted, encouraging his peers to seize the opportunities around them.

All participants underwent training that focused on best practices for quality produce, sustainable farming methods, business skills and marketing strategies prior to receiving inputs.

Poultry farmers also benefited; 15 youth received 200 broiler chickens each, along with 14 bags of chicken feed sufficient to sustain their flocks until sale.

Tiisetso Lepitkoe, who has been rearing chickens since 2023, shared the challenges she has faced with disease outbreaks and market access.

"After pausing my business for seven months, I lost many customers," she said.

She indicated that access to a licensed abattoir remains a major hurdle, pleading to the government to establish a central abattoir to support Basotho farmers.

The ministry plans to replicate this initiative in other districts, with participants in Maseru also benefiting from site visits for progress monitoring.

According to Nthulenyane, the programme addresses high youth unemployment and rural poverty, while promoting agricultural entrepreneurship, climate resilience, and domestic food production.

"This Youth Mentorship Programme not only provides immediate support but also aims to create a network of youth-led agribusinesses, linking them to national and regional markets and opening long-term employment and export opportunities," he explained.

He added, "As Lesotho grapples with the dual challenges of climate change and global food insecurity, this initiative represents a forward-look-

ing policy approach that empowers youth and strengthens the country's agricultural sector."

The Youth-to-1,000 pledge, announced in 2025, has become one of the Ministry's most ambitious initiatives. It is focused not only on input distribution but also on the SADP II Mentorship Programme, which pairs young farmers with experienced producers who guide them in climate-smart agriculture, business planning, and commercialisation. The Ministry believes that equipping youth with both resources and knowledge is essential for transforming subsistence farming into profitable agribusiness.

Globally, youth farming programmes have demonstrated a significant impact. Developed jointly by FAO and UNIDO, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the Opportunities for Youth in Africa (OYA) programme accelerates youth employment in agribusiness across the continent. Similarly, FAO's Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) equip vulnerable rural youth with agricultural, business, and life skills, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to their communities. To date, over 25,000 young women and men across 20 countries have benefited from this approach.



Lechesa Nthulenyane extension worker at Masianokeng resource centre handing over inputs to youth

Government Tests Efficiency of New Equipment While Monitoring Wheat Yields in Leribe

By Topollo Tlali

LERIBE-

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security is actively working to enhance wheat production in Lesotho, with Minister Thabo Mofosi leading inspections at wheat blocks in Peka Ha Leburu and Maputsoe Ha Matsoete in the Leribe district. These inspections brought together farmers from surrounding communities, representatives from Lesotho Flour Mills, and ministry staff, featuring demonstrations of combine harvesters recently acquired from the People's Republic of China.

The event commenced with the Principal Secretary, Khothatso Tsooana, explaining that the purpose of the inspection was to assess wheat quality, share best practices and discuss marketing strategies for wheat in Lesotho.

"This is a platform to discuss the current state of wheat production and explore ways to improve its quality for the market," he stated.

Mamoorosi Makibi, a block farmer from Maputsoe Ha Matsoete, shared her journey from small-scale farming to large-scale wheat production.

Motivated by the Prime Minister's call for Basotho to reinvest in agriculture, she mobilised her community to engage in block farming, cultivating 30 fields, over 100 acres.

"Wheat requires minimal preparation, so I decided to plant in large quantities. Quality varies across different fields, and proper use of herbicides is essential for healthy crops," she explained.

Makibi highlighted that farmers contributing land to the block system receive 20% of the yield, an arrangement designed to promote equitable benefits and sustainable farming.

She expressed gratitude to her fellow field



Ha Matsoete community watching wheat inspection

owners, extension workers and Minister Mofosi for their support, noting, "...reaching this harvest was challenging, but producing wheat on such a scale is rewarding."

Representatives from Lesotho Flour Mills used the inspection to communicate market expectations to farmers.

Linkane Mane noted the company's large production capacity, explaining that while Basotho produce high-quality maize, the wheat supply remains less than 1% of what the company requires, and much of it does not meet quality



Ha Matsoete wheat block

standards. He emphasised the importance of soil preparation, proper fertiliser use and herbicide application, urging farmers to increase both the quantity and quality of wheat to meet national

demand.

Minister Thabo Mofosi reiterated that these inspections provide an opportunity to address the challenges farmers face while promoting commercial farming.

"Farming must be approached as a business. The government provides services to support farmers, but profitability depends on your com-

mitment and ability to produce high-quality crops," he stated.

The inspection included a practical demonstration of combine harvesters operated by youth trained by the ministry.

Kamohelo Kobeli, a youth from Hlotse Leribe, expressed pride in operating the machinery, noting that the training had provided employment opportunities and encouraged him to remain in agriculture.

Wheat is the third most important cereal crop in Lesotho after maize and sorghum, but production has declined by an average of 82% over the past 53 years, according to the International Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Studies. Despite fluctuations, climate factors such as rainfall and temperature continue to affect yields.

Nutritionally, wheat provides essential proteins, vitamins, minerals, and carbohydrates, contributing to a balanced diet. Consumption patterns are changing, with bread and wheat products increasingly becoming part of daily diets in both urban and rural areas.

This trend, Mane revealed, has raised demand even as national production struggles to keep pace, making initiatives such as block-farming inspections critical for food security and sustainable agriculture.

By engaging farmers, the private sector, and youth, Minister Mofosi noted his ministry is fostering modern, profitable, and sustainable farming practices.

"With continued government support, training, and access to modern machinery, Lesotho's wheat sector is well-positioned to contribute more significantly to the nation's food security, nutrition and economic growth," he said.

Roundtable Unites Mafeteng Poultry Farmers and Market

By Topollo Tlali

The Mafeteng Poultry Association and Farm Fresh Market have collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to discuss ways to strengthen the meat supply chain in the Mafeteng District. The roundtable discussion focused on bridging gaps among farmers, abattoirs, and local meat markets, aiming to enhance access, quality, and the competitiveness of locally produced poultry.

The meeting was facilitated by Mabafokeng Maope, Project Director of the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADP II). In her opening remarks, Maope reflected on the establishment of the Mafeteng Poultry Association, which received an SADP I grant in 2012 to set up a poultry abattoir.

Originally founded in 2012 with 15 members, the association currently has 11 active members. Initially formed to collectively produce broiler chickens, the group soon recognised that limited access to reliable markets was a significant constraint.

This realisation led them to pursue their own abattoir, a proposal supported by SADP I funding. Manyathela Thebe, one of the founding members, noted that the journey from 2012 to 2026 has been challenging but has been sustained by commitment and perseverance.

“With the support of SADP I, we acquired abattoir equipment and began slaughtering chickens for farmers,” Thebe said. She explained that members rear chickens individually on a small scale while also allowing other farmers in Mafeteng to bring their birds for slaughter.

Despite these achievements, the association continues to face significant challenges. Thebe noted that the group secured land for the abattoir with government support and later purchased additional machinery. However, accessing larger markets has remained difficult.

“Large companies often tell us that our abattoir does not meet their standards,” she said, adding that local customers also express concerns about pricing.

The association charges fees for slaughtering and cold storage, which have discouraged some farmers and customers.

“We often seek guidance from extension officers, but pressure from farmers

and rising operational costs have forced us to increase prices,” Thebe admitted.

Packaging has also been a major hurdle, as the association has struggled to source suitable plastic materials.

Thebe further acknowledged that the ageing membership sometimes affects consistency and patience in managing daily operations.

Participants were invited to tour the abattoir and inspect the available equipment.

Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Thabo Mofosi, commended the association for sustaining its operations for over a decade, saying, “It is my plea to every Mosotho to produce in large quantities whatever they are able to produce, so that we can feed the nation.”

Mofosi emphasised that with proper production methods and increased volumes, local farmers could begin to compete with imported poultry.

The minister also addressed concerns about pricing and standards, noting that

local producers must align themselves with international pricing structures to compete effectively.

He acknowledged the abattoir’s limitations and agreed that upgrades are necessary.

“If your abattoir is not meeting standards, then it must be improved,” he said.

Mofosi encouraged the association to consider hiring qualified professionals to manage the abattoir while farmers focus on scaling up production. He requested permission to take the issues raised back to the ministry for further discussion and support, a proposal welcomed by the association. He further suggested that experts be invited to assess the facility and provide guidance on required upgrades.

Farm Fresh Market representatives shared their experiences, noting that the business had received support under SADP I and had taken the risk of selling only locally produced chicken.

“It has been a painful journey, but also

a profitable one because Basotho-produced chicken does not stay long on our shelves,” Retšelisitsoe Khomari stated.

He urged the ministry to assist in improving abattoir standards and procedures, adding that while the facility was functional, it lacked key safety and hygiene measures.

Khomari emphasised the importance of proper cold storage and the continuous operation of cold rooms to prevent meat spoilage, stressing that decay often results from a lack of knowledge and inadequate equipment.

Farm Fresh Market called for closer collaboration, urging farmers to produce quality chickens, the abattoir to handle slaughtering professionally, and retailers to focus on distribution and sales.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to cooperation, skills development, and learning. Participants agreed to strengthen coordination across the poultry value chain while allowing the Ministry of Agriculture to explore funding options and professional support to upgrade the abattoir.

The session ended with a tour of Farm Fresh Market, where participants observed how locally produced poultry performs in the retail environment.

According to the Lesotho National Farmers Union (LENAFU) reports, broiler slaughtering in Lesotho occurs in two forms: formal and informal. Formal slaughter takes place in abattoirs, while informal slaughter occurs on farms, where dressed chickens are sold directly to customers or to traditional markets. Large-scale abattoirs, with an average capacity of 3,800 broilers per day, process birds from both commercial and small-scale farmers and supply supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, and hospitals.

Currently, Lesotho has six slaughterhouses, none of which are certified to sell to retail outlets, and the two largest facilities remain idle. LENAFU reports that local poultry producers struggle to compete with South African producers due to the lack of certified slaughter facilities. Only 20 per cent of the market accepts custom-slaughtered poultry, while 80 per cent requires veterinary certification. Consequently, South African imports dominate the retail and wholesale poultry market in Lesotho.



Farm Fresh



Farm Fresh meat



Mafeteng Abattoir



Lekhoe Makhakhe, Director Of Marketing and Minister of Agriculture and food security, honorable Thabo Mofosi

Calls for Fair Pricing and Market Access at Leribe Agricultural Expo



Exhibiting farmers at the Agric Expo



Some of the goods on display at the expo



Some of the goods on display at the expo



One of the exhibiting farmers at the Agric Expo

By Thoboloko Ntšonyane

LERIBE –

Fruits and vegetables producers and business owners have called for fair pricing and improved market access for their products during an agricultural products exhibition held last week in Leribe.

The event, organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition in partnership with the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II), took place a week before the sector's nationally earmarked Market Day pencilled for Friday, January 30 at Pitso Ground, Maseru, providing a timely platform for dialogue among farmers, buyers, and government officials.

The exhibition attracted a diverse group of stakeholders, including ministry representatives, farmers, entrepreneurs and buyers.

Discussions centred on boosting local production, ensuring regulated prices and creating guaranteed markets to help emerging farmers grow their businesses.

Neheneng Tau of Khatala Fruits and Vegetables advocated for a price regulation policy, saying that fair pricing would encourage farmers to in-

crease production.

"If local produce is valued properly, there will be no need for businesses to cross borders to source fruits and vegetables," she said, adding that farmers must also focus on improving the quality of their produce to meet market standards.

Representing the SADP II, Malefetsane Raliengoane reiterated the project's mandate to upscale emerging farmers, enabling them to increase production and transition into reliable, market-ready suppliers.

Meanwhile, Thabo Bohla from the Ministry of Agriculture Marketing emphasised the principle of "market before production." He explained that the exhibition was designed to expose farmers to buyers and strengthen long-term relationships between producers and markets.

Tšiu Mphanya, the District Agriculture Officer (DAO) for Leribe, challenged the district to consider hosting monthly exhibitions similar to those in Maseru. He said consistent market access could boost the local economy and help farmers plan production with confidence.

Local businesses showcased a wide

range of products, including fresh vegetables, fruits, meroho, meat, eggs, honey, soybean products, and pomegranates.

Mamasoabi Khoroto, from a family-run business in St Monica, Maputsoe, highlighted the challenges of selling surplus produce and the impact of fluctuating prices. Operating on a 60 by 100 plot, her business grows tomatoes, onions, eggs, cucumbers, okra, chillies and apples, supplying retailers such as Shoprite and Spar.

While SADP support helped them drill a borehole, install structures and provide inputs, she said storage limitations and low prices, such as a recent M20-per-tomato price imposed by buyers, still caused losses. Her business employs three permanent workers and up to 10 temporary staff during peak periods, and she hopes to establish a dedicated fruit and vegetable market and venture into processing.

Other exhibitors highlighted similar challenges.

Thakane Mpheu showcased lotions, lip balm, petroleum jelly, coffee, biscuits, and traditional foods made from her own soybeans.

Bonang Radebe of Lintle Household Products displayed carrot oil, honey, cleaning detergents, soybean coffee, honeycomb, and petroleum jelly, citing limited market access as a major hurdle.

'Matšolo Mokose of Khabele Products produces soaps and medicinal drops from turmeric, aloe, and prickly pear, also noting that market constraints limit business growth.

Nkhube Thakisi of Metsing Fresh displayed fresh produce, while another exhibitor showcased ornamental plants, including ferns, wallflowers, rosemary, lilies, waltzpride, jade (money plant), and pine bush. Some plants are imported from Eswatini and Botswana, while others thrive locally. She noted that her main clients include villagers and government institutions, with potential for roadside and street beautification projects.

The Leribe exhibition highlighted the urgent need for regulated pricing, accessible markets, and consistent support for producers, reinforcing the government's goal of empowering farmers, improving production, and ensuring sustainable growth in the agricultural sector.

Mojaki is Engineering Lesotho's Soil Revolt Moving From Geospatial Data to Earthworms

By **Ntsoaki Motaung**

MASERU-
Seth Mojaki, a former lecturer at the Lesotho Agricultural College, has traded his geospatial maps for a microscope and a shovel, pivoting from a career in high-tech environmental monitoring to the ancient biological science of vermiculture.

He is navigating solutions to Lesotho's pressing challenge of soil degradation, which threatens agricultural productivity.

Mojaki's journey began not in a garden, but during regenerative agriculture research conducted under the Agricultural Productivity Programme for Southern Africa (APPSA) project.

As an ecologist and geospatial analyst, he was trained to understand the broader picture of environmental health. However, his research revealed that the key to restoring Lesotho's degraded land lies in the microscopic details of the soil ecosystem.

"I became increasingly aware of the critical role soil organisms play in land restoration, and this inspired me to explore earthworm-based systems as a practical, scalable solution," he explained.

Initially, Mojaki's shift was met with scepticism.

To the uninitiated, worms are often viewed as pests or mere bait; however, Mojaki sees them as biological processors.

These organisms consume organic waste, ranging from kitchen scraps to kraal manure and transform it into two of the most potent agricultural inputs known



Mojaki mixing the magic brew in the tub, prepping the soil to keep his earthworms thriving

to science: vermicompost and vermi-tea.

Unlike synthetic fertilisers, these products are living amendments. They are rich in plant-available nutrients and beneficial microorganisms that enhance soil structure and water retention.

"Maintaining a thriving worm population is a delicate balancing act." Mojaki applies scientific rigour to ensure the worms remain in a stable environment, carefully regulating moisture, temperature and pH.

Worms are sensitive to their surroundings, so Mojaki avoids acidic, salty, or oily waste and instead prefers pre-composted organic materials.

He notes that proper airflow is vital;



Earthworms snuggled in rich soil mixed with eggshell bits.

a healthy worm farm should smell like fresh, rich soil after rainfall, never sour or rotten.

"Even small deviations can reduce worm activity or cause mortality," says Mojaki. His daily routine involves systematic observation of decomposition rates and moisture levels, treating the worm bin as a microcosm of a larger farm.

In a move that highlights his background in ecology, Mojaki is currently working on the taxonomic identification of his worms. By collecting specimens from various environmental hotspots, he aims to identify the most climate-resilient strains specifically suited for Lesotho's di-



Mojaki watering the worms to keep them alive

verse abiotic conditions.

This research is crucial for scaling the circular economy model. By converting waste into wealth, Mojaki is helping home gardeners and commercial farmers reduce their dependence on expensive, carbon-heavy synthetic chemicals.

For Mojaki, this career pivot is more than just a business; it is a mission to change how the public perceives the ground beneath their feet.

"I want people to understand that soil is alive," he emphasises. "When we protect and restore our soils through simple biological systems, we are investing in food security for future generations."

How Plants Contribute to Healthy Ecosystem Services

By **Thoboloko Ntšonyane**

PRETORIA –

Plants play a crucial role in sustaining life on Earth for both humans and animals.

They supply ecosystems with oxygen while absorbing carbon dioxide and supporting food chains.

According to scientific research, through photosynthesis, plants help regulate the climate and maintain the balance of gases in the atmosphere.

Life would be significantly more challenging, if not nearly impossible, without plants. In addition to producing food and oxygen, they provide essential ecosystem services that protect the environment.

Dr Miranda Deuschländer, a senior lecturer at the University of South Africa's (UNISA) College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, emphasises the vital role plants play in sustaining the environment and providing ecosystem services.

She noted that various plants are used for numerous purposes by local communities. However, concerns arise as the demand for these medicinal plants increases, leading to unsustainable harvesting from the wild.

The UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WC-MC) asserts that plants make life possible and have enabled humanity to develop and thrive. They feed humans and livestock, provide vital medicines, fuel and materials for clothing and infrastructure. Plant diversity can offer solutions to current and future global challenges,



Spiral Aloe

such as hunger, disease, and climate change.

Dr Deuschländer highlights the ziziphus mucronata, a small to medium-sized tree with a wide-spreading crown and rough greyish-brown bark, which is prized for its medicinal properties.

She explains, "Ziziphus species contain various active ingredients, such as Mucronine D. Warm bark infusions are used for coughs and chest problems, while root infusions are a popular remedy for diarrhoea and dysentery.

"Other pharmacological activities include antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-malaria, and anti-cancer properties. The leaves, combined with the parasitic plant *Viscum capensis*, are used to treat diabetes."

Its seeds are also used as a substitute for coffee, and this species is non-toxic to hu-

mans and animals. In the Limpopo province of South Africa, some tribes believe that these trees "represent their ancestors" and therefore do not chop them down.

Euclea undulata is another tree species that Dr Deuschländer states is beneficial for both humans and animals. Its leaves are used as fodder for livestock, antelope, and small mammals, while the fruits are consumed by birds, antelope, and humans. "Infusions of the roots have been traditionally used for heart diseases and as remedies for headaches and toothaches."

The *tarchonanthus camphoratus*, belonging to the Asteraceae family, has infusions and tinctures made from its leaves and twigs that are used for stomach issues, abdominal pain, toothaches, bronchitis, and inflammation. The

smoke from fresh or dried plants is inhaled for asthma, headaches, and rheumatism.

Extracts from *hemerocallidea* are effective in treating urinary system issues. The hypoxis *hemerocallidea* rootstock is reportedly used to strengthen the immune systems of patients suffering from cancer and HIV.

Dr Deuschländer also mentions that *Am-mocharis coranica* is used in the treatment of mental illnesses such as dementia, memory loss, and depression.

Lesotho, home to indigenous plant species like the endemic spiral aloe (*Aloe polyphylla*), Drakensberg carnation (*Dianthus basuticus*), and fire heath (*Erica cerinthoides*), faces encroachment by invasive plant species due to factors such as overgrazing, unregulated fires, and climate change.

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) has announced community engagement initiatives for short-term work during farming and harvesting seasons, where community members are paid to remove invasive species that hinder the growth of other plants, including *pasalina montana* (rapeisi) and *chrysocoma celiata* (schalahala).

Aloe polyphylla Schonl. ex Pillans, known as the spiral aloe, is legally protected in Lesotho and is the country's indigenous plant. There are concerns that its population continues to decline.

Beyond its ecological significance, the spiral aloe also has economic value. It is highly sought after for horticulture and eco-tourism, attracting visitors eager to see and learn more about it.

Additionally, it is used in cosmetics to produce petroleum jelly and lotion, supporting local communities through job creation.



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