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Lesotho Poultry Sector Take Shape

By Seahlolo Reporters

A year after concerns about industry collapse, Lesotho's poultry sector is showing renewal following the launch of the Poultry Development Policy and the Lesotho Poultry Industry Association (LePIA), signalling a new direction for the sector.

For years, poultry farmers struggled with high feed costs, poor infrastructure, limited financing, weak government coordination, and heavy import volumes, all of which stifled local production. Industry players had warned that, without urgent intervention, Lesotho's ambition of self-sufficiency would remain out of reach.

Stakeholders believe the new policy and the industry body are crucial steps toward revitalising the sector.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition launched the Poultry Development Policy and the Lesotho Poultry Industry Association (LePIA) during an event with stakeholders. Attendees included UNDP, Standard Lesotho Bank, FinMark Trust, LNDC, and poultry farmers from across Lesotho.

Launching the policy and association, Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Hon. Selibe Mochoboroane, said the occasion represented far more than the unveiling of policy documents.

"This event is not only about a policy document or association. It lays the foundation for a transformed poultry sector. The sector feeds Basotho, creates jobs, empowers farmers, strengthens food security, and keeps wealth within communities," said Mochoboroane.

He added that the launch marked "decisive steps towards building a self-sufficient, commercially viable, and resilient poultry sector that contributes to inclusive economic growth and national development."

The minister noted that poultry remains one of the most accessible and affordable sources of protein in Lesotho and also offers one of the fastest opportunities for income generation, enterprise development, and employment creation.

The launch is especially timely given longstanding concerns about Lesotho's heavy reliance on imported poultry products—a challenge that repeatedly exposes the country's food systems' vulnerability and weakens local producers.

According to the Poultry Development Policy, Lesotho imports approximately 24,000 metric tonnes of poultry meat each year, worth more than US\$20 million. Notably, in 2025, poultry imports reached an estimated value of around M653 million, highlighting the country's continued dependence on external markets.

The policy further notes that, by 2030, national demand for chicken is projected to exceed 30,000 metric tonnes. Currently, local production supplies only about 5 per cent of this demand, leaving nearly 95 per cent of poultry meat consumed in Lesotho imported, mainly from South Africa. Consumption is increasing, with consumption currently exceeding 53 million eggs, or approximately 1.7 million trays each year. The government reports that investment and targeted support are gradually improving the local egg supply.

Mochoboroane warned that the country continues to lose significant economic opportunities through imports.

"Every truckload of imported chicken arriving in Lesotho represents money leaving the country, and opportunities lost for Basotho farmers, feed producers, transporters, processors, traders, and young people seeking employment," he said.

The minister acknowledged that the poultry industry continues to face structural barriers that have for years constrained growth and competitiveness. These include the lack of certified abattoirs and processing facilities, high production and input costs, limited access to finance, poor



Lepia launch by the Ministry of Agriculture

infrastructure, and low levels of private sector investment.

These challenges have not gone unnoticed, as poultry farmers and stakeholders previously highlighted that fragmented representation and a lack of coordinated policy implementation had severely undermined the sector's growth potential.

Nonetheless, Mochoboroane expressed optimism, saying that despite these obstacles, the new policy provides a realistic roadmap for turning the poultry sector into a major pillar of Lesotho's agricultural economy.

"The poultry sector must become a pillar of our agricultural economy, driving employment and income. Our policy sets ambitious, achievable targets for 2030, including raising local poultry meat production from five to 60 per cent of national consumption," he said.

He further stated that the policy aims to boost national table egg production to meet 100 per cent of domestic demand by 2030. It also targets a reduction in poultry import dependence, from a current 95 per cent of consumption to 55 per cent by 2030.

The strategy aims to create about 18,500 decent jobs, particularly for youth and women. By 2030, poultry production is expected to support over 18,700 full-time jobs, with more than 10,000 of those jobs directly benefiting rural and low-income households.

"The poultry industry is about much more than meat and eggs. It drives jobs, nutrition, industrialisation, youth and rural development, and strengthens national food security and sovereignty," Mochoboroane said.

Representing development partners, Dr Jacqueline Olweya of UNDP congratulated Mochoboroane on his appointment as Minister of Agriculture, noting that his background in health could strengthen the sector's response to livestock and food-related challenges.

"Moving from Health to Agriculture means you bring a health perspective. This is valuable for a sector challenged by crop and animal diseases. We believe the poultry and agriculture industry will prosper," Olweya said.

"Your health ministry skills will benefit farming, which now faces issues such as foot-and-mouth disease."

Olweya said the statistics surrounding Lesotho's poultry sector reminded her of past periods when the country experienced shortages of poultry products.

She emphasised that with the policy and association in place, all stakeholders must now take ownership and act decisively to achieve the sector's 2030 goals. She urged commitment and prompt action to turn plans into measurable progress.

She called on every stakeholder to step up, actively engage, and pursue new opportunities within the poultry value chain, stating that the time for action is now.

Meanwhile, the formation of the association was described by LePIA interim committee representative Kelebohile Lesisanyane as a historic breakthrough after years of fragmentation within the poultry industry.

LePiasanyane said LePIA emerged from a two-day dialogue in Maseru in 2025, themed "One Country, One Representative Body." The event gathered 50 participants from across the poultry value chain, including farmers, processors, traders, distributors, financiers, and development partners.

"LePIA is a key turning point. The sector has been divided for too long. Through LePIA, Lesotho now builds a coordinated, self-reliant industry to empower Basotho and strengthen food security," Lesisanyane said.

He said the association's mission is to unite and represent all poultry value chain actors, from smallholders to large processors, through a single, inclusive national platform.

Closing the event, Mochoboroane reflected on his experience in the health sector and linked food production directly to national wellbeing.

"Non-communicable diseases like cancer affect lives. Healthy living starts with healthy food. We can produce for ourselves and prevent diseases. Good food is traceable, whether crops or livestock," he said.

He further called on financial institutions and development agencies, including LNDC and Standard Lesotho Bank, to increase investment in local food production.

Opportunities in the poultry industry are vast, but they need financial support. Institutions must work with producers to boost food production and cut imports," he said.

Mochoboroane concluded by urging poultry farmers to remain committed to rebuilding the industry.

"Reducing imports requires time and effort. Producers must work persistently to raise local production from five to 60 per cent. Commitment and investment are key," he said.





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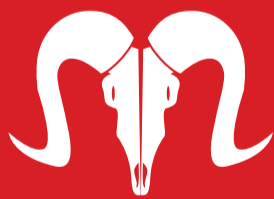
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ALLIANCE

Always there for Basotho

Quality Clips Drive Wool Price Surge As China Reopens Market Channels

By Ntsoaki Motaung

The South African wool market recorded stronger prices during the 29th auction of the 2025/26 season held on 22 April 2026, supported by increased demand for high-quality clips and improved buying activity following developments in key export markets.

According to the BKB isiXhosa and Lesotho Wool Market Report for CAT29, the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) market indicator closed at R269.68, reflecting a 6.4 per cent increase compared to the previous session.

Price gains were recorded across major micron categories. The 18-micron RWS wool increased by 8.6 per cent to R324.00, while 19-micron RWS wool rose by 7.0 per cent to R302.00. The 21-micron non-RWS category increased by 7.2 per cent to R253.00.

The report attributes the price movement to demand for well-prepared individual clips and improved competition among buyers in the auction system.

A total of 10,737 bales were offered at the auction. BKB handled more than 6,200 lots as the main broker.

Standard Wool purchased 21.68 per cent of the offering, followed by BKB Pinnacle Fibres at 20.71 per cent and Tianyu SA at 20.12 per cent.

Individual producers in Adelaide and Bedford recorded some of the highest prices. Emslie Farming (Pty) Ltd sold a 17.6-micron clip at R257.00 per kilogram, while Robvue Farming CC achieved R255.10 per kilogram for an 18.7-micron clip.

Market reports indicate that prices have increased in some categories by more than 40 per cent over the season, linked to supply constraints in major producing countries, including Australia.

Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Growers Association (LNW-MGA) Chairperson Mokoinihi Thinyane said wool prices have been on an upward trend, and the latest auction reflected continued momentum rather than a new in-

crease.

Thinyane said a number of shearing shed schemes in Lesotho continue to produce high-quality wool, contributing to the country's position in the global market. He said only about 10 shearing sheds in Lesotho are currently certified under the Responsible Wool Standard, but training programmes are underway to increase the number of producers certified under the standard.

Thinyane said certification compliance is being expanded through ongoing training targeting more shearing sheds and farmers.

He also confirmed that wool export logistics had been affected by delays in shipments, linked to market restrictions in China.

He said a recent announcement indicating the lifting of a ban on wool imports into China is expected to restore normal export flows.

"What we have been crying out about is that the wool already transported to Port Elizabeth was stuck there, unable to reach the buyers because China had closed its borders to wool imports. However, the great news is that today (Wednesday), an announcement was made that China has lifted the ban," Thinyane said.

He said the restriction had delayed payments to farmers, affecting household incomes and farming operations.

"While we still exported wool to other markets like India and Europe, it was a complicated situation. Since China buys the vast majority, about 75 per cent of our wool, with the remaining 25 per cent shared among other countries, farmers could not just be paid in fractions. We had to wait for all the money from all the buyers to come through," he said.

Meanwhile, the Government of Lesotho has welcomed China's decision to lift the temporary ban on wool imports from the country.

In a statement issued by the Office of the Government Spokesperson on 28 May 2026, the government

said the restriction, imposed following an outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth Disease, had disrupted wool trade and negatively affected Basotho farmers, with consignments estimated at over M100 million held up at South African ports.

According to the statement, sustained diplomatic engagements and technical consultations between Lesotho and Chinese authorities have resolved all outstanding issues.

Wool consignments that had been held have since been released, and payments to Basotho farmers have already commenced.

The development follows a joint announcement by China's General Administration of Customs and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs on 26 May 2026, confirming the lifting of import restrictions.

The government extended appreciation to the Chinese Embassy in Lesotho, wool and mohair producers' associations, and officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition for their role in securing the breakthrough, adding that it remains committed to safeguarding farmers' interests and strengthening agricultural trade relations.




FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD)

PROTECT YOUR LIVESTOCK

Healthy animals. Strong farmers. Food security for all.

1 WHAT IS FMD?

Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed animals such as:






Cattle Goats Sheep Pigs

It spreads quickly and can cause serious economic losses for farmers.

2 COMMON SYMPTOMS

Look out for these signs in animals:



Fever (high body temperature)



Blisters (sores) in the mouth, tongue, lips and hooves



Excessive drooling (saliva)



Limping or difficulty walking



Loss of appetite



Reduced milk production

3 HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

FMD spreads very easily through:

-  Direct contact with infected animals
-  Contaminated equipment, clothing or vehicles
-  Air (wind can carry the virus over distances)
-  Movement of animals between areas

4 PREVENTION TIPS

Protect your animals by:

-  Avoiding movement of animals from infected areas
-  Limiting visitors to your farm
-  Disinfecting shoes, equipment and vehicles
-  Isolating sick animals immediately
-  Reporting suspected cases to veterinary authorities
-  Following vaccination programs where available



FMD SPREADS FAST — EARLY ACTION PROTECTS YOUR ANIMALS AND YOUR LIVELIHOOD.



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Protect livestock. Protect livelihoods. Protect our region.



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WHO ARE WE

LePIA: A New Voice Driving the Future of Lesotho's Poultry Industry

Building a Stronger, More Resilient and Inclusive Poultry Sector for National Growth

Lesotho's poultry sector is entering a new phase with the official establishment of the Lesotho Poultry Industry Association (LePIA), a national body formed to strengthen local production, enhance sector coordination, and advance food security and economic development.

The association was launched at a national event at Avani Maseru, where the Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Hon. Selibe Mochoboroane, also signed the Poultry Development Policy.

This launch marks a key step in reducing reliance on imported poultry products and empowering local producers to contribute more to national food security and job creation.

A Sector with Untapped Potential

Poultry farming is one of the most accessible agricultural activities for Basotho households, especially for women, youth, and smallholder farmers seeking income and improved food security.

The poultry value chain, from production to retail, offers diverse economic opportunities that can drive rural development and entrepreneurship.

Despite its potential, the poultry sector has faced significant challenges for years, including:

- High feed and production costs
- Limited access to finance and investment
- Disease outbreaks and biosecurity risks
- Inconsistent production systems
- Weak market coordination
- Heavy dependence on imported poultry products and inputs

These challenges have limited local production capacity and reduced the competitiveness of Basotho poultry farmers.

Why LePIA Matters

LePIA's establishment is a strategic move to address these persistent challenges through improved industry coordination and collective representation.

Poultry farmers have long operated in fragmented structures with limited support and bargaining power. LePIA seeks to unify producers, government, development partners, financial institutions, processors, suppliers, and private sector stakeholders on a single platform.

The association is expected to:

- Advocate for the interests of poultry farmers.
- Strengthen communication within the industry.
- Promote knowledge-sharing and technical training.
- Improve access to markets and investment opportunities.
- Support policy implementation and sector development
- Encourage collaboration across the poultry value chain.

Through coordination, LePIA aims to build a more organized, competitive, and sustainable poultry industry that contributes to Lesotho's economic growth and food system resilience.



Postharvest losses are quietly eroding Lesotho's food supply cutting farmer incomes and deepening reliance on imports

Reducing Import Dependence

Lesotho currently imports most of its poultry products and inputs, such as day-old chicks, fertilised eggs, feed, and processed chicken, primarily from South Africa.

This dependence exposes local farmers to external shocks, price fluctuations, and supply disruptions.

Recent avian influenza outbreaks in the region have highlighted the risks of heavy import reliance, as shortages and rising prices have affected producers and consumers in Lesotho.

Strengthening domestic poultry production is now seen as both an economic and food security priority.

LePIA will support national efforts to increase local production, stabilize supply chains, and retain more economic value within Lesotho.

Creating Jobs and Supporting Rural Livelihoods

The poultry sector offers strong potential for job creation, particularly for youth and women in rural areas.

By strengthening farmer support and industry partnerships, LePIA aims to promote entrepreneurship and enterprise development throughout

the poultry value chain.

Emerging poultry farmers often face barriers to growth due to limited technical knowledge and business support. LePIA plans to address this through training, networking, mentorship, and collaboration with development partners.

Enhancing local poultry production is also expected to improve household nutrition by increasing access to affordable protein.

Promoting Biosecurity and Industry Standards

With global agriculture facing threats from climate change, disease, and rising costs, stronger industry coordination is increasingly important.

LePIA is expected to play an active role in promoting:

- Responsible poultry farming practices
- Biosecurity awareness and disease prevention
- Compliance with production and quality standards
- Consumer confidence in locally produced poultry products

The association also aims to encourage innovation and improved production systems to strengthen long-term resilience in the poultry

industry.

Partnership for Agricultural Transformation

LePIA's establishment has received support from institutions dedicated to advancing agricultural development and food security in Lesotho.

Partners supporting the initiative include:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
- UNDP Lesotho
- Standard Lesotho Bank
- FinMark Trust
- Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC)

Stakeholders at the launch emphasized the need for collaboration among government, financial institutions, development agencies, and producers to create an enabling environment for industry growth.

Looking Ahead

While challenges persist, LePIA's establishment signals renewed momentum for Lesotho's poultry sector.

The association is expected to drive efforts to strengthen farmer representation, improve production systems, attract investment, and build a more resilient and sustainable poultry value chain.

For Basotho poultry farmers, a dedicated industry association offers renewed hope for stronger support, better market opportunities, and a more coordinated future.

As Lesotho addresses unemployment, food insecurity, and economic vulnerability, the poultry sector is increasingly recognized as a strategic industry for inclusive growth and national development.

LePIA now carries the responsibility of turning this vision into measurable progress for farmers, communities, and the nation.





The Missing Link Between Agricultural Policy and Food Security

By Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Agriculture is often called Lesotho's economic backbone and key to food security, with successive governments having declared it a priority, recognising its potential to create jobs, reduce poverty, empower rural communities, and lower food import dependence.

Yet despite years of policy promises, strategic plans, donor-funded programmes, and public commitments, food security remains one of Lesotho's most unresolved national challenges, with more than 258,000 people in rural areas (17 per cent of the population analysed) experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity.

The country continues to rely heavily on imported food while local farmers struggle with poor infrastructure, limited financing, unreliable access to inputs, climate shocks, weak market systems and underdeveloped value chains.

This contradiction was at the centre of the recent fourth Public-Private Dialogue (PPD), where leaders assembled to confront the persistent gap between agricultural policy and real food security.

The PPD is a national platform that aligns stakeholders on practical strategies across sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing, and the dialogue focused on the practical, sector-based commitments, a programme of action and an implementation mechanism anchored in thematic working groups, including: Textile and Apparel, Agriculture and Food Security, and Tourism and Hospitality.

Amid optimism about agriculture's promise, frustrations grew about the persistent gap between ambitious policies and practical results.

Participants repeatedly questioned why food security remains out of reach despite years of planning and research.

Discussions focused heavily on the urgent need to strengthen support for smallholder farmers, invest in climate-resilient farming systems, improve irrigation infrastructure, strengthen value chains, and create stronger market opportunities for local producers.

Stakeholders argued that agriculture has the potential not only to improve food availability, but also to become a major source of employment, industrialisation and long-term economic stability.

However, many warned that without coordinated implementation and sustained investment, the sector will continue failing to meet its potential.

Within this context, the Agriculture and Food Security Thematic Working Group focused on how Lesotho can move from subsistence farming toward commercial agricultural production capable of competing within regional markets.

Participants stressed that Basotho farmers must become active players in the country's food economy rather than remaining side-lined by imports and weak production systems.

From the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Mokitinyane Nthimo said one of the major problems is not a lack of research or planning, but the failure to translate studies into practical action.

He explained that multiple analytical studies, value-chain assessments, and investment cases have already been developed for the sector.

However, investors continue to hesitate because they want to see visible implementation before committing resources.

The Secretary-General of the Horticulture Association of Lesotho, Nthunya Rasekoai, identified the country's reliance on imported agricultural inputs as one of its biggest structural weaknesses.

He said local farmers remain heavily reliant on South Africa for seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, and

other essential inputs, leaving Lesotho vulnerable to external market priorities and disruptions.

"We do not have control over our inputs. Every time we need them, we cross into South Africa, which in reality always prioritises its own people," he said.

Rasekoai warned that the dependence creates a ripple effect across the entire agricultural value chain, charging, "We cannot expect them to prioritise what does not work for them," he added.

He further stressed that improving agricultural productivity starts with securing reliable access to production inputs and water.

"A crucial thing in horticulture is water. For a good quality product, there needs to be water always, both in quality and quantity," he said.

Rasekoai also called for support toward local manufacturers producing agricultural equipment and machinery, arguing that timing and access to the right tools are critical within farming systems.

"Let us take control of our inputs," he said.

Director of Planning and Policy in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Mabolaoana Phakisi, highlighted access to finance as another major obstacle limiting agricultural growth.

She said many farmers remain unable to invest in infrastructure such as storage facilities, irrigation systems, and modern production technologies because financing systems often fail to accommodate the realities of farming.

"If our farmers have access to finance, they can pool resources and build storage facilities," she said.

Phakisi referred to the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADP II), acknowledging that while some farmers failed to access support, financing mechanisms must become more responsive to farmers' needs.

She also revealed that the government is in the process of introducing agricultural insurance to reduce sector-specific risks and improve producers' resilience.

"It is not that commercial farming has declined," she said, citing recent interventions such as the moratorium on egg imports as evidence of government support toward local producers.

She added that the government would continue supporting the private sector where necessary.

Panelists throughout the discussions argued that Lesotho's agricultural advantage lies not in mass production, but in premium-quality products capable of securing niche markets.

Director of Marketing at the Ministry of Agriculture, Lekhohe Makhate, called for "complete" agricultural policies supported by meaningful implementation and adequate financing.

He warned that many agricultural policies fail because they are launched without the financial resources needed to implement them effectively.

Makhate argued that agriculture remains one of the country's most sustainable economic sectors and employs more people than the textile industry.

"Let us not forget agriculture is still the backbone of the country's economy. But it will depend on what we do with this," he said.

He further argued that Lesotho has already conducted enough research on agriculture and that the country now needs action rather than additional studies.

"The country has been researched enough. What is left is implementation," he said.

Makhate proposed that the same level of investment directed toward the textile industry should also be channelled into agriculture through the development of abattoirs, factory shells, processing infrastructure, and agricultural production clusters.

He expressed concern over the absence of poultry abattoirs in Lesotho, particularly following the closure of the government facility.

He also supported the introduction of tax incentives and the zoning of agricultural production areas equipped with infrastructure capable of supporting industrial-scale farming.

Chairperson of the United Manufacturers Association of Lesotho and founder of Nat'Effect, Arabang Mokokoane, echoed calls for stronger financing systems and policy reforms.

He argued that agriculture cannot grow without investment in infrastructure, technology, and working capital across the value chain.

According to Mokokoane, farmers should also reduce overreliance on government assistance and strengthen their ability to meet funding requirements set by financial institutions.

He further noted that Lesotho has already built a strong reputation for producing high-quality agricultural products.

Before strengthening the Ministry of Agriculture alone, Mokokoane argued that equal attention should also be directed toward environmental protection and pollinator systems, particularly bees, which play a crucial role in agricultural productivity.

The Secretary-General of the Potato Lesotho Association, Sekila Molapo, identified market connectivity, governance systems, and financial sustainability as key factors for attracting investment into agriculture.

"These are the things that impress investors," he said.

Molapo further called for stronger farmer associations and cooperative systems capable of operating at a commercial scale.

He also praised savings and credit schemes within farming communities, saying they have proven effective in strengthening agricultural resilience.

"The government's role is to create an enabling environment," he said.

Recognising these ongoing challenges, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II) continues to position agriculture as a key pillar for economic transformation, food security, youth employment and climate resilience.

Nevertheless, the country's food insecurity indicators remain deeply concerning, underscoring the disconnect between vision and reality.

Maize, Lesotho's staple crop, reportedly accounts for approximately 50-60% of the average household's caloric intake. However, the country's maize production has reportedly decreased by 19%, according to the 2025 Annual Vulnerability Assessment Report. Exact baseline figures for national production output are not specified here.

Meanwhile, South Africa, which accounts for most of Lesotho's food imports, recently reported maize production of over 17 million metric tonnes. This figure illustrates the large and growing production gap between Lesotho and its main import supplier.

Additional comparative data on Lesotho's maize production output is not provided here.

The stakeholder thus increasingly argued that achieving food security will require more than policies and political speeches.

It will require long-term implementation, sustained investment, climate-smart innovation, functioning markets, infrastructure development, and above all, consistent political commitment toward local producers.

Until practical, coordinated implementation takes hold, food security will remain Lesotho's most talked-about, yet least realised, national goal.

India Urges Lesotho to Reposition Agriculture for Investment and Climate Resilience

By Thoboloko Ntšonyane

India has urged the country to reposition its agricultural sector to attract investment, strengthen climate resilience and unlock value-chain development opportunities.

The call came ahead of the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS), which brought together African leaders, ministers, investors and policymakers in New Delhi from May 28 to 31.

Speaking ahead of the summit, the Indian High Commissioner to Lesotho and South Africa, Prabhat Kumar, said Lesotho stands to benefit significantly from stronger agricultural partnerships, technology transfer and climate-smart infrastructure investment through deeper cooperation with India.

"India is part of the developing world and the Global South. It is in this context that it is joining forces with Africa to share best practices," Kumar said, stressing that India is looking forward to partnering with Africa."

His remarks come at a time when Lesotho's agricultural sector continues to face mounting pressure from climate change, declining productivity, rising food imports and limited agro-industrial development.

Hosted by the Government of India in partnership with the African Union Commission, the India-Africa Forum Summit focused on strengthening political, economic, trade and development cooperation between India and African nations.

According to the High Commission of India, the summit seeks to deepen long-standing relations between India and African countries through collaboration in key sectors including agriculture, healthcare, education, trade and technology.

"India is expecting a strong African participation, in view of the fact that India-Africa relations are anchored in a long-standing historical bond characterised by solidarity, shared aspirations and converging interests," he said.

The summit programme will unfold in three phases: Senior Officials Meetings on May 28, Foreign Ministers' consultations on May 29, and the Heads of State and Government Summit on May 31.

Kumar says his country's broader partnership with Africa is aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063 development vision and India's own long-term development roadmap, *Viksit Bharat 2047*. The cooperation framework is guided by ten principles announced by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kampala in 2018, focusing on local value creation, technology transfer, capacity building and people-centred development.

Agriculture is expected to feature prominently in discussions, particularly on climate resilience, food systems, and agricultural industrialisation.

Kumar further encouraged Lesotho to explore membership in the Cotton Development and Research Association (CDRA), arguing that the country could benefit from India's extensive research and practical experience in cotton production and value chain development.

The CDRA, which operates under the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI), works closely with India's ministries of Agriculture and Textiles to strengthen cotton production systems through research, farmer training and technology promotion.

Founded in 1970, the organisation supports farmers through initiatives such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Integrated Plant Protection (IPP), Integrated Nutrient Management and farmer training programmes aimed at improving yields and reducing production costs.

The organisation has also played a major role in scaling technologies such as High-Density Planting Systems and Extra-Long Staple cotton production in India.

Kumar suggested that Lesotho could leverage such partnerships to strengthen its own agricultural systems and improve productivity.

The High Commissioner also revealed that India is currently engaging Lesotho in discussions around the possible acquisition of agricultural equipment, although no formal agreements have yet been announced.

While declining to comment on possible bilateral agreements expected during the summit, Kumar expressed optimism about the meeting's outcomes and said Basotho businesses would also have an opportunity to showcase their products at the summit exhibition.

With a population of approximately 1.4 billion people, India has emerged as one of the world's leading agricultural producers despite facing many development challenges similar to those confronting African nations.

India is among the world's largest producers of rice, wheat and spices, and Kumar noted that the country recently became the world's biggest rice producer.

He argued that India's agricultural research, technologies and experience in supporting smallholder farmers could provide valuable lessons for Lesotho as it seeks to modernise its own agricultural sector.

Kumar also pointed to India's growing economic footprint across Africa, noting that Indian businesses have invested approximately US\$80 billion on the continent, including operations in Lesotho.

Crop Insurance Emerging as Risk Tool for Smallholder Farmers in Lesotho

By Lungile Maseela

Rising climate-related crop losses are pushing smallholder farmers in Lesotho to seek crop insurance to manage growing agricultural risks.

Government and development partner initiatives, through the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II), are supporting efforts to improve resilience in the agricultural sector, and crop insurance is among the mechanisms under discussion to help farmers recover from losses caused by drought, floods, pests, frost and other climate-related events.

The insurance model is designed to compensate farmers after insured crop losses, with the aim of stabilising farm incomes and reducing financial shocks linked to climate variability.

Farmers in several rural communities report repeated losses linked to changing weather patterns.

"The weather changes all the time now. Sometimes you plant expecting rain, but get drought, or heavy rain that destroys crops," said small-scale farmer Ntone Mohale from Maseru.

"We also struggle with pests and diseases because conditions are changing. When you are a small farmer, every loss affects your family because farming is not just a business — it is survival. If your crops fail, it means you lose income and food at the same time."

Mohale said he had limited knowledge of agricultural insurance before recent discussions in his area.

"I honestly did not know farmers could even have insurance. I have only heard about it for cars and businesses, not for crops. If it exists and really helps after losses, I want to understand it better because many of us are struggling. The problem is that most farmers are not informed—we do not know where to get it, how it works, or whether we can even afford it," he said.

"But if it exists and really helps farmers after losses, I would want to understand it better because many of us are struggling. The problem is that most farmers are not



Crop insurance

informed. We do not know where to get it, how it works, or whether we can even afford it."

The Lesotho National Farmers Union says repeated climate shocks are affecting productivity and farmer stability.

"Smallholder farmers are suffering repeated losses from changing weather patterns—seasonal drought, excessive rainfall, frost, or pests all affect production," said Executive Director Khotso Leaphene.

"When farmers lose crops, many fail to recover financially before the next planting season begins. Some are forced into debt, while others reduce production out of fear of losing investments again. Insurance has the potential to reduce that pressure and help farmers recover faster."

Leaphene said climate variability is now a continuous challenge for farmers and not an occasional event.

"We cannot continue treating climate shocks as tem-

porary problems because they are now happening almost every season. Farmers need systems that protect them consistently," he said.

He also pointed to access and affordability as key barriers.

"Most smallholder farmers have low and unstable incomes. If insurance products are too expensive or too complicated, farmers will simply remain excluded," he said.

"There needs to be discussion around subsidies, farmer education, and policies that make these services practical for rural communities."

He added that awareness remains limited.

"Many farmers still do not fully understand what insurance means and assume it's only for wealthy people or large commercial farmers. Before implementation, there must be grassroots education so farmers understand coverage, claims, and policyholder responsibilities," he said.

"So before implementation, there has to be education at the grassroots level. Farmers need to understand how claims work, what risks are covered, and what responsibilities they would have as policyholders."

Dr Daniel Lederman of the World Bank said agricultural insurance systems must reflect the complex risks and diverse farming systems.

He explained that risks differ by region, climate, and farm type, making coverage selection important.

"Farmers must decide what exactly they want protection against — whether it is drought, hail, excessive rainfall, frost, or multiple risks combined. Naturally, broader protection means higher premiums, and that becomes difficult for low-income farmers."

He said insurance scheme sustainability requires balancing affordability and viability.

He noted that insurance cannot pay out more than it collects and requires financial stability to avoid collapse.

"That is why agricultural insurance often requires careful balancing between affordability for farmers and sustainability for insurers. In many countries, governments support agricultural insurance through subsidies because, without public support, premiums can become too expensive for smallholder farmers."

He emphasised the need for clear coverage and claim communication with farmers.

While crop insurance is still developing in Lesotho's agricultural sector, it is recognised as a crucial part of strengthening resilience against climate risks and is increasingly discussed alongside other measures, such as SADP II.

Farmers like Mohale say financial protection could reduce the impact of recurring losses.

"If there was something that could help farmers recover after losing crops, it would make a big difference," he said.

"Right now, when crops fail, farmers carry all the losses alone."



LESOTHO'S
SEAHLOLE
we grow together
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PREMIUM

50
YEARS
GOLDEN
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Happy Birthday
Your Majesty
Queen 'Masenate

Plant Clinic, A Grassroots Innovation for Farming Resilience



plant clinic consultation sessions

By Topollo Tlali

A new approach in Lesotho's agriculture is tackling a long-standing problem: the gap between finding plant diseases and treating them effectively and leading this change is Tšepo Masa, who holds a Bachelor of Science in Crop Science.

Masa started a plant clinic to improve plant health checks, make pest control more available, and support farmers in rural areas where these services have often been lacking.

The scientist describes the Plant Clinic as both a place for diagnosing plant problems and a source of real solutions. It helps farmers identify diseases and gives them direct access to the right treatments and advice.

"This journey started as an informal mobile consultancy in 2018 and has since grown into a fully registered and accredited enterprise. In 2020, after registrations, I realised that what I was doing was quickly transitioning from individual field support to a structured agricultural service provision," he recalled.

"After completing my studies at the National University of Lesotho, I interacted with farmers, heard their problems, and also exchanged my knowledge in crop science. It started as a norm and then ended up as a job," Masa said.

From field frustration to innovation

The concept behind the Plant Clinic, Masa said, was born out of repeated field experiences in which farmers received diagnoses but remained unable to act on them due to a lack of access to inputs.

"When I arrive at the farm lands, and I find the disease and try to tell the farmer the name of the disease without telling him or her what chemicals to use, it feels like not solving a problem. So I had to think out of the box and find ways I can give farmers a full package."

He explained that the idea grew over six years of hands-on work after university, as he tried to connect what he learned in school with what farmers actually need in the field.

"I spent six years trying to find a way out in crop production assessment outside the university campus. I then approached major chemical suppliers to advocate for local stock availability," he said, but the system was slow to change.

"Big companies failed to deliver on promises to supply rural shops, so I planned how the plant clinic can operate. I had nothing. I had some job opportunities and once took one that I did not even spend a week in after realising that my vision might end up trying to secure capital," Masa reflected.

Building a structured agronomy service

Today, the plant clinic focuses on two main areas: supplying pesticides and offering advice, training, and pest management support to farmers.

Masa has also made connections with suppliers in other countries to make sure farmers always have access to the chemicals and resources they need.

"I made connections outside the country in order to get chemicals and everything concerning crop production and health, and today, as I am an accredited pest control operator with a background from the Agriculture and Forestry Pest Management Academy," he said.

His approach tackles a common problem in farming where farmers often get advice, but do not have what they need to put it into practice.

"As a plant clinic, combining expert academic training in pest management with the direct retail of essen-

tial pesticides, the clinic addresses the historical disconnect where farmers would receive a diagnosis but lack the physical means to treat their crops," Masa explained.

Climate change reshaping farming realities

Masa also points out a bigger problem: climate change is making it harder for farmers to rely on the old ways of doing things.

"For many years, our elders in farming used to plant during the seasons they always knew and often linked with a cultural calendar, treated outbreaks with whatever was available, and accepted unpredictable losses as part of farming life. But now climate change has turned calendars. Rains come at the wrong time, pests arrive earlier or in new areas, and familiar coping strategies are no longer acceptable."

He believes farming should move away from reacting to problems and instead focus on prevention and using science-based methods.

"Farmers must move from treating symptoms to preventing crises by using timely, science-based diagnostics, choosing the right inputs, and adapting planting dates and practices to changing weather patterns."

The plant clinic helps make this change possible by connecting disease checks with quick solutions and training for farmers.

Training as a critical intervention

Besides supplying chemicals and diagnosing problems, the clinic also trains farmers in managing crops, controlling pests, and planning their production.

"In the space of farmers, knowledge is the key to overcoming challenges in food production. As Plant Clinic, we invite every Mosotho farmer to come and get the opportunity to learn with us through research and hands-on training," Masa noted.

He also notes that many farmers still lack important knowledge, which hurts their productivity.

"Many farmers lack information on the right planting season, the quality of seeds, and the correct use of pesticides. So, our aim is to be agripreneurs that help farmers overcome their production challenges," he said.

Masa admits the project is still developing, but he is confident about where it is headed.

"We cannot say we are already where we aim to be, but with patience and commitment, our work will change crop production in Lesotho."

A shift toward preventive agriculture

Masa's vision goes beyond helping single farms. He wants to strengthen the whole country's farming system and believes plant health should be a key part of food security.

"Plant clinic believes a resilient farming community forms the backbone of a stable nation," he said.

His approach shows a move from reacting to problems to preventing them, which is especially important now that weather and pests are less predictable.

"Plant protection is no longer optional for Lesotho. Because we are experiencing unpredictable rains, shifting pest ranges and more frequent extreme weather, our crops face new threats every season," Masa concluded.

He also encouraged farmers to talk to experts early and report crop diseases before they get worse.

He stressed that regular training for farmers can help cut losses, protect family incomes, and make the country's food system stronger.

"By investing in prevention, local access to inputs and ongoing education, we can build resilient farming systems that withstand climate shocks and secure livelihoods for generations."

Fighting Climate Stress with Science

...Likalaneng Youth Turning Waste into "Black Gold"



Biochar produced by youth in Likalaneng

By Topollo Tlali

Farmers from the Likalaneng Community at Ha Mohale have long relied on livestock and subsistence crop production, but a new youth-led innovation is beginning to reshape how degraded soils are understood and restored.

Faced with worsening soil erosion, freezing temperatures, declining fertility, and the growing impact of climate change, young innovators in the area have turned to biochar production as a practical, locally grounded solution.

The initiative is led by Hloaki Mabane, founder and Managing Director of Prime Organics Farm, who says the intervention is rooted in both environmental urgency and community survival.

"For many years, our elders took pride in their livestock rearing success and their high-yielding crop production, but now that heritage is threatened by environmental challenges caused by climate change. We are experiencing high freezing temperatures that come earlier than before, we have high soil erosion, and a severe shortage of fertile land," Mabane explained, noting that at the centre of their project is a simple but powerful idea: convert agricultural waste and invasive shrubs into biochar, a carbon-rich soil enhancer that improves fertility and water retention.

"I believe the solution to food security in the Likalaneng crisis lies not in expensive imported fertilisers, but in the waste that farmers currently throw away," Mabane indicated.

She explained that Prime Organics' mission is to transform what he describes as the community's "liabilities" into a regenerative agricultural system.

The goal is ambitious: to convert cold, acidic soils and discarded maize stalks into what the initiative calls the country's first "carbon-negative farming district."

Mabane notes that farming conditions in Likalaneng differ significantly from Lesotho's lowland agricultural zones, with productivity heavily constrained by altitude and environmental stress.

"Farmers here face yields 30% lower than those at lower altitudes, a consequence of both geography and desperate necessity. Cattle in the region graze on maize stalks left in the fields after harvest, and other livestock consume only about 30% of this material," she said, noting that the remaining biomass is often wasted.

The innovator continued to show that the remaining 70% yield in Likalaneng often rots or is blown away by the wind, resulting in a significant loss of organic matter.

"As Prime Organics Farm, we saw a lot of socio-economic issues, including families forced to strip shrubs and indigenous vegetation from the rangelands as their source of fuel to use for cooking, and such a common project across the country is a project of removing lihalahala (shrubs), which is also used to give communities financial buffers. Seeing that nothing really happens post-removing the shrubs, we saw a gap in finding a lasting solution for our community."

"Prime Organics collects maize stalks and shrubs from surrounding fields using donkeys, paying local farmers for their agricultural residue before processing it into biochar.

"Prime Organics pays local farmers for their left-

over maize stalks, and after the removal of lihalahala (shrubs), we also collect those shrubs and then start the process. The whole process is home-grown; we use local donkeys, local workers and local produce," Mabane noted.

She continued, "A mobile paralysis unit then processes these stalks, converting every 4kg of waste into 1kg of biochar, which is returned to the fields, acting as a 'super-sponge' for the soil."

The biochar improves soil structure by neutralising acidity, increasing water retention, and enhancing overall crop performance.

While the project is community-centred, Mabane said community education was initially a major challenge, particularly in shifting perceptions about soil inputs and productivity.

"It took us time to express and educate community members about the importance of biochar and the fact that most of Likalaneng members receive fertilisers late, and some fail to afford the selling price and end up having poor yields, and on the backdrop of those challenges, their uptake of our product became almost easy."

The first trials were conducted on small vegetable and potato plots, where farmers were more willing to test new methods and invest directly.

"In testing whether biochar works, we began with small vegetable and potato plots, where farmers readily embraced new methods and paid cash. Trials in those plots have yielded remarkable success. Cabbage plots treated with biochar produced heads 30% larger and were ready for harvest two weeks earlier than usual," Mabane noted.

She added that potato yields also showed significant improvement.

"Potato plots saw a 25% increase in tuber yield and significantly larger sizes. That success has made a big impact. To date, Prime Organics has already sold biochar to 35 vegetable and potato farmers who observed positive results in as little as 60 days."

An additional 50 farmers are now preparing to apply biochar to maize fields, marking the beginning of a larger scaling phase.

"There are several methods of applying biochar to the soil; the first one is band placement, uniform top-soil mixing, top dressing and the use of planting holes," Mabane explained, adding that the application depends on farm conditions and available labour.

"The choices of application depend on the availability of labour and farming system; in some fields where crops are recognised, top dressing can be applied."

Prime Organics has set short-term and long-term targets that extend beyond Likalaneng.

The immediate 12-month plan includes testing 125 tons of biochar, reaching 300 farmers, and publishing initial results from the maize trial.

Over time, the project aims to expand into Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong, and eventually Quthing by the fifth year.

"In our fifth year of operation, we wish to process 15,000 tons of waste annually, and that would be 9,300 tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere, pay M9 million to local farmers for their waste and create 200 permanent jobs," she said.

The enterprise currently operates with a small team of six workers.

Mabane believes Likalaneng offers a critical testing ground for a solution that could scale nationally.

"If biochar can successfully restore the cold, eroded soils of the highlands, its potential across the entire country is undeniable," she said.

She added that the project is as much about proof of concept as it is about immediate community impact.

"For the farmers of the highlands, the 'black gold' in their soil is more than just carbon; it is the first sign of a resilient future. The use of biochar in agriculture has been widely studied for its ability to improve soil health, increase productivity, restore degraded land, and mitigate climate change."

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, research has shown mixed results depending on soil type, crop system, biochar quality, and environmental conditions, ranging from significant improvements in soil fertility to minimal impact in some cases. However, large-scale field trials remain limited, largely due to the high cost of biochar production.



From a Backyard Chicken Shack to the Global Farmers Table

By **Topollo Tlali**

Alida Matsa, a poultry farmer from Ha Mptipa, Kolonyama in the Leribe district, has emerged as one of Lesotho's rising agricultural voices at the prestigious Global Farmer Network (GFN) Roundtable.

Her journey, from raising chickens in a small backyard shack in Leribe to participating in the prestigious Global Farmer Network (GFN) Roundtable and Training Programme in São Paulo, Brazil, reflects not only personal resilience but also the growing visibility of African women farmers in international agricultural leadership spaces.

In a year officially recognised by the United Nations as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, Matsa was selected to join the highly competitive 2026 Global Farmer Network cohort after being nominated by a fellow African farmer she had previously met through a farming programme.

"Receiving an invitation from the Global Farmer Network, I was shocked but at the same time very proud of myself. I was nominated by a Zambian farmer I met some years back in a farming programme, and we built a good relationship. She nominated me, believing that I am a good farmer who can be invited," Matsa stated.

For her, the nomination reinforced the importance of networking and collaboration within agriculture. Matsa praised the power of professional relationships among farmers, saying agricultural businesses cannot grow in isolation.

Following her nomination, Matsa underwent an intensive interview process with the Global Farmer Network, an experience she describes as both intimidating and transformative.

"After being nominated, I was invited for an interview by the Global Farmer Network. It was a very hard and scary interview," she reflected.

"After the interview, I waited for some time, and eventually I got the final invitation to the roundtable, proving that I passed the interview."

The scale of the competition only became clear later.

"Out of 360 nominees from across the globe, I was among 20 farmers who were selected for the 2026 cohort," she said.

Even after being selected, self-doubt initially followed her achievement.

"After being selected, I was still in disbelief. I searched and viewed all the other selected farmers' profiles and found that they are really successful and their farming journeys are well presented, and I began to panic, but I put myself down and accepted that maybe it is God's call and decision for me to interact with such successful farmers."

Travelling to Brazil exposed Matsa to a world of highly advanced agricultural systems, multinational agribusinesses, and large-scale commercial farming operations.

"Upon my arrival in Brazil, I found myself in a room with farmers from Uruguay, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Rwanda, Nepal, Canada, Chile, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Morocco, the Netherlands, Japan and Mexico, and that exposed me to one key lesson that stood out strongly; many of their agricultural businesses are intentionally built with succession planning in mind from the beginning"

She described interactions with farmers managing thousands of hectares while integrating advanced agricultural technology and biotechnology into production systems.

Yet despite initially feeling overwhelmed, Matsa says she quickly found common ground with farmers from across the world; "...despite the feeling of being small and not belonging in a roundtable discussion, I quickly remembered a universal lan-

guage spoken by farmers worldwide, resilience and innovation."

The Global Farmer Network programme focused heavily on communication, leadership, and agricultural policymaking, areas Matsa now believes are often overlooked within Lesotho's farming sector.

"One of the top visions for the Global Farmer Network is farmers having one voice worldwide, and through the roundtable discussions, I was able to understand how powerful communication is in agricultural businesses," she said.

The experience challenged her to rethink her poultry enterprise.

"The roundtable challenged me to look at my poultry business not just as a means of survival, but as a link in a global food security chain."

One of the most transformative lessons she brought back from Brazil was the importance of succession planning and long-term business structuring.

"In many Western and Latin American agricultural models, farms are built as multi-generational legacies. But in Lesotho, the trend is often for agricultural businesses to die with their founders, forcing the next generation to start from scratch," she explained.

For Matsa, this realisation highlighted one of the major structural weaknesses within Basotho agriculture.

"Being able to interact with farmers from different countries challenged me deeply and made me reflect on agriculture in Lesotho. As Basotho farmers, we need to start asking ourselves serious questions about how we can strengthen the businesses we are building today so that they can be transferred to



Chickens from Alida farm

future generations in a progressive and sustainable way."

Now back in Lesotho, Matsa is using her experience to advocate for a shift from informal subsistence farming to more structured and sustainable agribusiness models.

"Some key questions we need to ask ourselves as Basotho is: can we, as Basotho farmers, move away from informal, subsistence management and move toward structured corporate governance in order to build bankability and transferable enterprises so that we can break the cycle of rural poverty. The honest answer to that can simply shift our industry," Matsa noted.

She argues that while agriculture has the potential to significantly transform Lesotho's economy, the sector remains heavily informal and poorly structured.

"I identified that there are gaps in Lesotho farming, even though it is one sector that economically can bring big changes, but it is very informal. Farmers are now able to start farming businesses, but those businesses are hard to grow because they lack professional structures," she charged.

As she settles back into her poultry operations, Matsa says her focus has shifted toward expanding

her own capacity while also investing in mentorship and farmer development.

"As I settle back into my farm, I am focusing more on two things: expanding my own capacity and mentoring the next generation of agripreneurs. Successions is multidimensional."

She remains a strong advocate for technology, innovation and knowledge-sharing in agriculture, believing that the conversations she encountered in Brazil must now take place in Lesotho's villages and farming communities.

"There is so much value in learning from Basotho farmers who are already doing well, as well as from farmers across the world and through networking, knowledge sharing and collaboration, we as Basotho farmers can grow stronger and build lasting agricultural enterprises," she concluded.

Matsa's story reflects the changing face of modern African agriculture.

From starting with just 50 chickens in a backyard shack to building a commercial poultry operation housing more than 3,000 birds, her rise represents more than individual success. It signals what is possible when resilience, vision and opportunity intersect.



Alida Matsa



Alida Matsa in global farmer network round table



Kingdom of Lesotho
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION
 PROCUREMENT UNIT
 P.O BOX 24
 MASERU 100

Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

22th May 2026

LAPTOPS - MAFSN/G006/2026/27

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition has been allocated/received from the Government of Lesotho to be used for the acquisition of **Laptops**.
- The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above Goods.
- Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 8(a) from **08:00 to 16:30 hrs**.
- The Bidding document in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below at 8(b) and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of M500.00. The method of payment will be cash at the Ministry.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before **14:00hrs, 25th June 2026**. All bids must be accompanied by a bid securing declaration. Bid Securing Declaration must be valid until **30th October 2026**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at **14:30hrs, 25th June 2026**
- There shall not be a pre – bid meeting.
- Documents may be inspected at: Procurement Unit Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Corner Constitutional and Linare Roads **22322741**
 - Documents will be issued from: Procurement Unit Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Corner Constitutional and Linare Roads **22322741**
 - Bids must be delivered to: Tender Box situated at Agric Headquarters, Corner Constitutional and Linare Roads **22322741**
 - Address of bid opening: Boardroom of Agric Headquarters, Corner Constitutional and Linare Roads **22322741**

9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	22nd May 2026
b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable	N/A
c. Bid closing date	25th June 2026
d. Evaluation process	09th July 2026
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	16th July 2026
f. Contract signature	After expiry of at least 10 working days from display of the Notice of Tender Results – 31st July 2026

Signature:
 Name: **Khothatso Tsooana**
 Position of Authorised Official: **Permanent Secretary**



Kingdom of Lesotho
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION
PROCUREMENT UNIT
P.O BOX 24
MASERU 100

Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

22th May 2026

ANIMAL FEEDS FOR LAC - MAFSN/G005/2026/27

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition has been allocated/received from the Government of Lesotho to be used for the acquisition of Animal Feeds for LAC.
- The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above Goods.
- Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 8(a) from **08:00 to 16:30 hrs**.
- The Bidding document in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below at 8(b) and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **M500.00**. The method of payment will be cash at the Ministry.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before **14:00hrs, 25th June 2026**. All bids must be accompanied by a bid securing declaration. Bid Securing Declaration must be valid until **30th, October 2026**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at **14:30hrs, 25th June 2026**.
- There shall not be a pre – bid meeting.
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Signature:

Name: **Khothatso Tsooana**

Position of Authorised Official: **Permanent Secretary**



Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids Small Works (Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

EXTENDED SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACTOR FOR SEAKA (LOT 1) AND TSIKOANE (LOT 2) IRRIGATION SCHEME

Employer: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN)
Project: Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II)
Contract title: Design and Build for Seaka (Lot 1) and Tsiikoane (Lot 2) Irrigation Scheme
Country: Kingdom of Lesotho
Loan No. /Credit No. / Grant No.: P165228
RFB No: LS-MAFS-524103-CW-RFB
Issued on: 21st April 2026

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN) under Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the (SADP II) and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Design and Build for Seaka (Lot 1) and Tsiikoane (Lot 2) Irrigation Scheme. "For this contract, the Borrower shall process the payments using the Direct Payment disbursement method, as defined in the World Bank's Disbursement Guidelines for Investment Project Financing."

- The Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Design and Build for Seaka Irrigation Scheme (Lot 1) construction period-6months, location: Outhing and Tsiikoane Irrigation Scheme construction (Lot 2) period-6months, location: Leribe.
- Bidding will be conducted through national competitive procurement using Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers 6th Edition February 2025 ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- Bids will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation process set out in the bidding documents. The following weightings shall apply for Rated Criteria (including technical and non-price factors): 60% and for Bid cost: 40%. The weightings are applicable for each lot.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from SADP II, e-mail: procurement@sadpii.org.ls and inspect the bidding document during office hours 0900 to 1600 hours at the address given

at the end of this RFB .

- Bidders are eligible to bid for both lots but only one (1) bidder can be allocated/ awarded one (1) irrigation scheme (lot) at a time.

DEADLINE EXTENSION

- Bids must be delivered to the address at the end of this RFB on or before 1400 hours on **5th June 2026**. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL BID", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below at SADP II boardroom, **1430 hours on 5th June 2026**. All envelopes marked "FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Employer until the second public Bid opening.

Additionally, the outer envelope should be marked "do not open" and should clearly indicate the Lot being submitted as follows:

- Design and Build for Seaka Irrigation Scheme - Lot 1
- Design and Build for Tsiikoane Irrigation Scheme- Lot 2
- All Bids must be accompanied by the following:
 - Bid Security of LSL 300,000.00 for Seaka (Lot 1) and / Bid Security of LSL 260,000.00 for Tsiikoane (Lot 2) and**
 - Local Labor Method Statement for both lots.
- Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.

- The address(es) referred to above is (are):

Procurement Office
Moshoeshe II Livestock
P.O Box 24
Maseru 100
Lesotho

telephone number: +266 22312578

email address: procurement@sadpii.org.ls

web site address: Procurement - SADP II or https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/

- Substitute "contracts" where Bids are called concurrently for multiple contracts. Add a new para. 3 and number para 3- 8 as follows:
"Bidders may bid for one or several contracts, as further defined in the Bidding Document. Bidders wishing to offer discounts in case they are awarded more than one contract will be allowed to do so, provided those discounts are included in the Letter of Bid."
Insert if applicable: "This contract will be partly financed by [insert name

- of cofinancing agency). Bidding process will be governed by the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations".
A brief description of the type(s) of works should be provided, including, location, quantities, construction period, application of margin of preference and other information necessary to enable potential Bidders to decide whether or not to respond to the Request for Bids. Bidding Document may require Bidders to have

- specific experience or capabilities, such qualification requirements should also be included in this paragraph.
If electronic procurement will be used, insert link or web site address and any additional relevant information, as appropriate.
The office for inquiry and issuance of Bidding document and that for Bid submission may or may not be the same.
Substitute the address for Bid submission if it is different from address for inquiry and issuance of Bidding document.



Invitation for Bids ROLL Project -Supply and Delivery of Water Irrigation Tanks Material

Maseru, Lesotho
20 MAY 2026

Re: Supply and Delivery of Water Irrigation Tanks Material - Ref No: LSO-200002340-0153-G-NCB

The Government of Lesotho has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) and intends to apply a part of the proceeds of the financing to this purchase. 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 *Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods*.

- The *Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods* includes rehabilitation of sixteen identified landscapes in Lesotho and improvement of the livelihoods of the people in the rural areas, within a period of eight years.
- This invitation for bids (IFB) follows the general procurement notice that appeared on **IFAD** website on the **21st April 2026**, Lesotho Times newspaper on the **23rd April 2026** and Public eye newspaper on **24th April 2026**.
- The purchaser now invites sealed bids from eligible entities (bidders) for the **Supply and Delivery of Water Irrigation Tanks Material** more details on these goods and related services are provided in the schedule of requirements in this bidding document.
- This IFB is open to all eligible bidders who wish to respond. Subject to restrictions noted in the bidding document, eligible entities may associate with other bidders to enhance their capacity to successfully carry out the procurement.
- Bidding will be conducted using the **National Competitive Bidding (NCB)** method, the evaluation procedure for which is described in this bidding document, in accordance with the IFAD Procurement Handbook which is provided at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. The NCB process, as described, will include a review and verification of qualifications and past performance, including a reference check, prior to the contract award.
- Please note that a pre-bid conference **will not be** held as described in the bid data sheet (BDS), Section III of the bidding document.

Bidders interested in submitting a bid shall download the bidding document from the following website: www.rollproject.gov.ls and complete the registration form available on the website.

Attn: Procurement Manager
ROLL Project
Near Ministry of Environment & Forestry
Industrial Area, Plot No. 12281-609
Maseru 100
Lesotho

Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 5875 7203

E-mail: procurement.roll@gov.ls and copy to morakanyane.mafatle@gov.ls

- Bids must be delivered to the address and in the manner specified in the bid data sheet – instructions to bidders 23.2, no later than **10:00** local time on the **24 June 2026**
- Bidders shall be aware that late bids will not be accepted under any circumstance and will be returned unopened at the written request and cost of the bidder. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security or bid-securing declaration (as required) in the manner and amount specified in the bid data sheet.
- Please note that electronic bids **shall not** be accepted.

Yours sincerely,

Procurement Manager
Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods Project
Near Ministry of Environment and Forestry
Industrial Area, Plot no. 12281-609
Maseru 100
Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 5875 7203
E-mail: procurement.roll@gov.ls





Kingdom of Lesotho

Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids
Small Works
(Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

Employer: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN)
Project: Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II)
Contract title: Design and Build for Seaka (Lot 1) and Tsikoane (Lot 2) Irrigation Scheme
Country: Kingdom of Lesotho
Loan No. /Credit No. / Grant No.: P165228
RFB No: LS-MAFS-547907-CW-RFB
Issued on: 21st April 2026

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN) under Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the (SADP II) and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Design and Build for Seaka (Lot 1) and Tsikoane (Lot 2) Irrigation Scheme. "For this contract, the Borrower shall process the payments using the Direct Payment disbursement method, as defined in the World Bank's Disbursement Guidelines for Investment Project Financing,"

- The Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Design and Build for Seaka Irrigation Scheme (Lot 1) construction period- 6months, location: Quthing and Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme construction (Lot 2) period- 6months, location: Leribe.
- Bidding will be conducted through national competitive procurement using Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers 6th Edition February 2025 ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- Bids will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation process set out in the bidding documents. The following weightings shall apply for Rated Criteria (including technical and non-price factors): 60% and for Bid cost: 40%. The weightings are applicable for each lot.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from SADP II, e-mail: procurement@sadpii.org.ls and inspect the bidding document during office hours 0900 to 1600 hours at the address given at the end of this RFB.
- Bidders are eligible to bid for both lots but only one (1) bidder can be allocated/ awarded one (1)

irrigation scheme (lot) at a time.

- Bids must be delivered to the address at the end of this RFB on or before **1400 hours on 26th May 2026**. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL BID", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below at SADP II boardroom, **1430 hours on 26th May 2026**. All envelopes marked "FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Employer until the second public Bid opening. Additionally, the outer envelope should be marked "do not open" and should clearly indicate the Lot being submitted as follows:
 - Design and Build for Seaka Irrigation Scheme - Lot 1
 - Design and Build for Tsikoane Irrigation Scheme- Lot 2
- All Bids must be accompanied by the following:
 - Bid Security of LSL 300,000.00 for Seaka (Lot 1) and / Bid Security of LSL 260,000.00 for Tsikoane (Lot 2)** and
 - Local Labor Method Statement for both lots.
- Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
- The address(es) referred to above is (are):

Procurement Office
 Moshoeshoe II Livestock
 PO Box 24
 Maseru 100
 Lesotho

telephone number: +266 22312578

email address: procurement@sadpii.org.ls

web site address: [Procurement – SADP II](https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/) or <https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/>

1. Substitute "contracts" where Bids are called concurrently for multiple contracts. Add a new para. 3 and renumber paras 3 - 8 as follows: "Bidders may Bid for one or several contracts, as further defined in the Bidding Document. Bidders wishing to offer discounts in case they are awarded more than one contract will be allowed to do so, provided those discounts are included in the Letter of Bid." Insert if applicable: "This contract will be jointly financed by [insert name of cofinancing agency]."

3. Bidding process will be governed by the World Bank's Procurement Regulations" A brief description of the type(s) of works should be provided, including, location, quantities, construction period, application of margin of preference and other information necessary to enable potential Bidders to decide whether or not to respond to the Request for Bids. Bidding Document may require Bidders to have specific experience or capabilities; such qualification requirements should also be included in this paragraph.

4. If electronic procurement will be used, insert link or web site address and any additional relevant information, as appropriate
 5. The office for inquiry and issuance of Bidding document and that for Bid submission may or may not be the same.
 6. Substitute the address for Bid submission if it is different from address for inquiry and issuance of Bidding document.



Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
 WaMCoP
 P.O. Box 24
 Maseru 100



General Procurement Notice

Government of: Lesotho
Project/procuring entity: Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project
GPN version: 2026.2
GPN publication date: May 11, 2026

The Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) towards the cost of Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project and intends to apply part of the financing to payments for contracts for goods, works and services. The procurement program for the 04/2026 - 03/2027-year period will include the following:

Procurements for 04/2026 - 03/2027	
Estimated value - 3,883,082.63 EUR / 75,981,500.00 LSL / 4,479,161.46 USD	
Procurement of Goods, to include:	
1)	Promotional Material
2)	Communication material
3)	Generator and Extension Cord
4)	Mobile Kraals
5)	Feeders and Drinkers
6)	Aprons and Overalls
7)	Additional AI Equipment
8)	Liquid Nitrogen Plan
9)	Semen for AI Program
10)	Fodder seeds
11)	Silage Making Equipment
12)	Concentrates
13)	IEC Material
14)	Animal ear tags
15)	Promotional Attire
16)	Protective clothing for Auctioneering team and CAHWS
17)	Vet Kits and drugs
18)	Video Editing softwares
19)	Corporate Identity Materials
20)	Meeting Amplifier

21)	Tender Box and Trolley
22)	Zippel
23)	Protective Clothing for PCU
24)	Laptops
25)	ICT Equipment
Procurement of Consulting Services, to include:	
1)	Certification of Wool and Mohair Consultancy
2)	SECAP Risk Management Consultancy
3)	EIA Consultancy
4)	Asset Valuation Consultancy
5)	AI Service Provider
6)	Fodder Demo and Silage Making Consultant
7)	Productive Alliance Consultancy
8)	Gender Mainstreaming Strategy Consultancy
9)	MIS and Website Development
10)	Corporate Identity
11)	Valuation of Physical Assets
Procurement of Works, to include:	
1)	Rehabilitation of Bucks and Does Structures
2)	Construction of the NDJ
3)	Parkhome

Contracts for goods, works and services will be implemented according to the principles, rules and procedures set out in the current versions of the IFAD Project Procurement Guidelines and IFAD Procurement Handbook. Specific procurement notices for contracts to be tendered under the competitive bidding procedures will be announced as they become available on selected portals, in local newspapers, and other media outlets as appropriate.

Interested eligible bidders and consultants who wish to be included on the mailing list to receive a copy of advertisements, or those requiring additional information, should send an email to the Moroosi Lejota Thakong (procurement@wamcop.org.ls) using the subject line "GPN 2026.2 for Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project" and indicating which of the procurement items they are interested in. **Valid trading licenses must be attached.**



FARMERS PITSO AGRICULTURE & EXCELLENCE AWARDS

'MANTHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE

FRIDAY

SCHOOLS

EXHIBITIONS & COMPETITIONS

SATURDAY

FARMERS

AWARD CEREMONY

SATURDAY

GALA

DINNER (BLACK TIE)

PRIZES TO BE WON | FOOD | MUSIC | AWARDS

11 & 12 SEPTEMBER 2026



MPILO BOUTIQUE HOTEL
A Flame Lily Hospitality Hotel





FARMERS PITSO AWARDS GALA DINNER

MPILO BOUTIQUE HOTEL

12th SEPTEMBER 2026 | 6:00PM

THEME | BLACK TIE

TICKETS

GENERAL

Single = **M700** | Couple = **M1 300** |

VIP

Single = **M900** | Couple = **M1 700** |

Table | **Normal**
M6 800

Table | **VIP**
M8 800

Tickets available at <https://etickets.co.ls> or via Ecocash/ Mpesa | send "HALO" on whatsapp: (+266) 5746 5752

Youth Bet on Innovation to Solve Agriculture and Climate Challenges

By Lungile Maseela

Innovation is increasingly becoming one of Lesotho's most urgent survival tools as young entrepreneurs race to develop homegrown solutions to food insecurity, climate change, unemployment and digital exclusion.

At the Lesotho Innovation Challenge 2026, that reality came sharply into focus as 22 young innovators pitched practical ideas to reshape the country's future through technology, agriculture, and sustainable enterprise.

Held at the Alliance Française de Maseru Hall earlier this month, the public pitching session brought together entrepreneurs, development partners, students and policymakers for a showcase of youth-driven innovation.

Organised through a collaboration between the French Embassy to Lesotho, Alliance Française de Maseru, F'SAGRI and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the event reflected a growing recognition that Lesotho's development challenges may increasingly depend on local innovation rather than imported solutions.

More than 150 applications were submitted from across the country, but only 22 finalists advanced to the final pitching stage, competing in categories ranging from climate-smart agriculture and food technology to digital transformation and agricultural productivity.

Inside the hall, the atmosphere carried a mix of ambition, anxiety and determination. Some finalists spoke confidently before the judges, while others fought through visible nervousness, gripping microphones tightly as they introduced ideas they believed could change communities and livelihoods. Throughout the day, applause broke out regularly as presenters unveiled innovations designed to address the country's growing economic and environmental pressures.

The competition comes at a time when Lesotho continues to grapple with high youth unemployment, climate shocks, food insecurity and limited economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas. Increasingly, innovation and entrepreneurship are being viewed as critical pathways toward building resilience and creating jobs.

Alliance Française de Maseru Director and Honorary Consul of France, Elisabeth Douillet, said the overwhelming response to the challenge revealed the depth of untapped creativity among Basotho youth.

"There was a similar challenge held in Pretoria, South Africa, where only around 40 young people participated, but here, we received over 150 applications. That already showed us the level of dedication, creativity and interest among Basotho youth," she said.

Douillet explained that the finalists were divided into five categories, with winners in each category receiving M62 000 in funding while runners-up re-



Youth innovation challenge winners

ceived M32 000.

"The challenge was a real success, with the 22 finalists doing very well and coming fully prepared for their pitches. Of the 22, they were divided into five categories, and from each category, one winner received M62 000 in funding. There was also a second-place finalist in each category who received M32 000," she said.

Beyond financial support, Douillet said the challenge was designed to create long-term opportunities for innovators.

"Apart from the funding, the finalists will also have opportunities to pitch in South Africa and be included in databases for future mentorships and other support programmes. We want to continue helping these innovators grow beyond this competition," Douillet said.

She further described the initiative as the beginning of what organisers hope will become a permanent innovation platform in Lesotho.

"This was the first event of its kind, and there is definitely more to come. We are also planning to follow up on how the winners have been progressing since receiving the funding," she said.

Among the innovations that attracted major attention during the challenge was Thuso, a WhatsApp-based AI agricultural platform developed by Tim Jandrell. The platform emerged as one of the competition's biggest success stories after winning M62 000 under the "Enhancing Agricultural Productivity" category.

Unlike many digital innovations that struggle to connect with ordinary users, Thuso was designed around a simple but powerful idea: using technology that farmers already understand and use daily.

"Thuso is a platform created to support farmers by giving them easier access to agricultural information, market opportunities and assistance they may struggle to find. Many farmers, especially in rural areas, face challenges accessing reliable information, buyers and networks that can help improve their productivity and businesses. We wanted to create something simple and accessible that farmers can use through technology they already have access to,

such as WhatsApp," Jandrell said.

The victory highlighted a growing shift toward accessible digital innovation tailored to local realities rather than expensive or overly complex systems. Judges appeared particularly drawn to the platform's ability to bridge information gaps affecting rural farmers while working within existing communication habits.

"Agriculture is one of the most important sectors in Lesotho, but there are still many farmers who feel disconnected from opportunities and support systems that could help them improve their work. Through Thuso, we are trying to bridge that gap by creating a platform that provides useful information quickly and helps farmers feel more connected and supported. We believe technology can play a huge role in improving agriculture if it is designed around the real needs of the people using it," he said.

Following his win, Jandrell said the funding would help expand the platform's reach.

"Winning this funding means a lot because it shows that people believe in the idea and its potential impact. The money will help us improve the platform, expand its services and reach more farming communities across Lesotho. Opportunities like this are important because they give young innovators a chance to turn ideas into projects that can create real change," he said.

Another standout finalist was Katleho Mpopo, founder of Genesis Seed, an initiative focused on preserving indigenous seed varieties and improving food diversity in Lesotho.

Her innovation addressed a growing yet often overlooked concern: the gradual disappearance of indigenous seeds and their impact on nutrition and food sovereignty.

"What inspired me into this comes from my natural curiosity and love for food and sustainable agriculture. At our farm, we focus on food diversity and on advocating the consumption of a variety of foods because we believe a colourful plate means balanced nutritional intake, which Lesotho lacks. The stunt rate in kids has risen to 37 per cent due to a lack of balanced nutrition intake,"

she said.

Mpopo explained that the project emerged after recognising how limited seed diversity contributes to poor dietary diversity.

"I realised that we consume almost the same food every day, and the root cause of this was a lack of diversity in food, which comes from a lack of seed diversity. In response to this, we began collecting various varieties of vegetables. For example, we have about 25 varieties of beans, meaning people will not rely solely on sugar beans but can also grow and eat 24 more varieties. The thought of making this possible for an ordinary Mosotho is what drives me every day," she said.

Despite the project's growing visibility, she acknowledged the challenges involved in preserving indigenous seeds.

"The challenge I face is locating Lesotho's indigenous seeds and documenting them. It costs money to travel to those remote areas. Secondly, the procedure of actually propagating the seed — we need more land, and that has been a challenge we are sorting out," she explained.

Still, she described the competition as a major breakthrough for the project.

"Being selected as one of the finalists is honestly an answer to my prayers. This opportunity came at an exact time we needed it. I cannot be any more grateful for the aid it is bringing towards building Lesotho's seed sovereignty," she said.

She added that the funding would help strengthen the initiative's long-term vision.

"Our future plan is to help in establishing policies that protect our indigenous seeds where possible. We also plan to build the first commercial seed bank that enables ordinary Basotho to access these seeds with ease. With the M62 000 from Alliance Française, France, South African Agricultural Institute and UNDP Lesotho, we plan to grow our operations," she said.

For many attendees, the challenge represented more than a competition. It became a glimpse into a different future for Lesotho, one where young people are not merely waiting for jobs, but actively building solutions.

Thabo Makhetha, who attended the event, said the pitches demonstrated the potential of youth-led innovation to address national challenges.

"What stood out to me the most was seeing young Basotho coming up with practical solutions that directly respond to challenges affecting communities every day. It was encouraging to see how passionate the innovators were about solving problems and creating opportunities through their projects," he said.

"Many young people have good ideas but often lack platforms to showcase them. Events like this help expose those ideas and show that innovation can contribute towards addressing challenges such as unemployment and food security in Lesotho," he added.

From Poultry Setback to African Agribusiness Inspiration: The Rise of Tawonga Nyirenda

By **Lerato Matheka**

For many people and even farmers, failure often marks the end of a dream, but for Malawian agripreneur Tawonga Nyirenda, failure became the beginning of a purpose that is now transforming how farmers think about waste, livestock feed and sustainable agriculture across Africa. Today, Nyirenda is the founder of SeedBiz, an agricultural enterprise using Black Soldier Fly farming to convert organic waste into livestock feed and organic fertiliser. But, behind the innovation lies a deeply personal story of family sacrifice, resilience and the life-changing power of agriculture. “I grew up in a poultry farming family. For us, farming was not just a business; it was a part of our lives. It was what we relied on, what sustained us, our source of provision,



and that taught me early on that agriculture has the power to change lives,” she said during a recent *Sowing Success: Agripreneur Insights Hour* discussion.

Her journey into agribusiness was shaped during one of the most difficult periods of her life.

“At some point in my life, I was withdrawn from a public university. That was one of the lowest moments of my life. I genuinely felt like everything I had worked for, my hopes, my dreams, everything had come to an end.”

While many would have accepted defeat, her parents refused to allow the setback to define her future.

“But my parents refused to let that be the end of my story. They turned to poultry farming, not because it was easy, but because they needed a way to support me. They worked tirelessly, using that farm to generate enough income to send me to a private university.”

That sacrifice eventually carried her to graduation and later led to another to a Master’s Degree, an achievement she says was built on agriculture itself.

“Today, I stand as a Master’s Degree holder, and I say this with deep gratitude: poultry farming made that possible.”

The experience permanently changed her understanding of farming.

“It showed me, in a very real and personal way, that livestock farming is more than just production. It is dignity. It is an opportunity, and it is transformational.”

Inspired by her family’s journey, Nyirenda eventually ventured into poultry farming herself. But like thousands of smallholder farmers across Africa, she quickly encountered the crushing reality of high feed costs. “So naturally, I also got into poultry farm-

ing. But along the way, I faced a challenge that many smallholder farmers know all too well: the high cost of feed. It made production difficult, and in many cases, unsustainable.”

“That frustration pushed me to start looking for alternatives.”

Her search introduced her to Black Soldier Fly (BSF) farming, a growing agricultural innovation where organic waste is fed to insect larvae, which are later processed into protein-rich livestock feed.

“And that’s how I discovered Black Soldier Fly farming.”

What started as a small experiment for her own poultry operation soon revealed a much bigger opportunity.

“At first, it was simply a solution for my own farm, something practical to reduce costs. But very quickly, I realised something bigger. The challenge I was facing was not mine alone. So many farmers were struggling with the same issue.”

“My solution then became something much larger, a lifeline, not just for me, but for many other farmers facing the same reality.” That realisation gave birth to SeedBiz.

The company now works at the intersection of food security, waste management, climate action, and community development by turning market waste, food leftovers, and agro-processing residues into useful agricultural products.

Nyirenda says the breakthrough came when she began to understand farming through the lens of a circular economy — a system in which waste is continuously reused rather than discarded.

“A circular economy is about designing sys-

tems where resources are not wasted, but are kept in use and turned into new value. In agriculture, this is very important because so much of what we call ‘waste’ can actually become part of the solution.”

Through SeedBiz, organic waste is converted into high-protein feed for poultry and livestock, while the residue left behind — known as frass — becomes organic fertiliser that can improve soil health and crop production.

“Through Black Soldier Fly farming, organic waste can be converted into high-protein livestock feed. The byproduct can be used as organic fertiliser, which farmers can use to reduce input costs. Waste can be managed more sustainably, and communities can benefit from a system that supports food security, climate action, and livelihoods at the same time.”

“That is the power of circularity,” she shared. In a continent where rising feed prices continue threatening poultry production and food affordability, Nyirenda believes Africa must begin looking inward for solutions.

“For me, Black Soldier Fly farming is not only about producing affordable feed. It is about rethinking how agriculture works and about turning waste into opportunity, reducing pressure on farmers, improving soil health and helping build more resilient farming communities.”

Her work is now attracting attention from farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs across Africa interested in sustainable livestock feed alternatives.

During the discussion, Nyirenda explained that the model can be easily replicated across different African countries using lo-

cally available organic waste.

“You can replicate it across Africa by using local organic waste, market or food waste to grow Black Soldier Fly Larvae (BSFL), which is then used to partially replace expensive poultry feed,” she explained.

Instead of changing everything at once, she advised that farmers can test it gradually to see results.

Despite growing interest in Black Soldier Fly farming, Nyirenda says many people mistakenly assume the business requires large capital investments.

“One thing I always tell people about starting Black Soldier Fly farming is, it is chilled,” she laughed.

“It does not require a big setup to start. Consistency matters more than scale.”

She says success depends less on size and more on discipline.



“BSF farming isn’t about having a big setup, it’s about managing the small details every day: feeding at the right time, keeping the right moisture levels, and maintaining a healthy breeding cycle.”

Nyirenda also believes one of the biggest misconceptions is that Black Soldier Fly farming is purely about insects.

“BSF farming is really a waste management system first, and an insect business second.”

As climate change, rising production costs, and food insecurity continue placing pressure on African agriculture, Nyirenda believes young people have an important role to play in reimagining the continent’s food systems.

“My hope for the future is to see more young people stepping into agriculture, not just as farmers, but as innovators and problem solvers because the future of our food systems depends on us thinking differently and acting boldly.”

Today, SeedBiz is expanding production to meet growing demand from farmers seeking affordable feed solutions and sustainable farming inputs.

But for Nyirenda, the business remains rooted in something much deeper than profit.

“What keeps me going is knowing that this work is bigger than me. It’s about families. It’s about farmers who just need a fair chance. It’s about creating systems that allow people not just to survive, but to thrive.” Her message to young Africans facing setbacks is equally powerful.

“Don’t let one setback define your story. Sometimes what feels like the end is actually the beginning of something greater. So, start where you are. Use what you have and trust that your journey, even the difficult parts, has purpose.”

Lesotho Pushes Potato Sector Expansion Amid Rising Demand and Import Dependence

By Lungile Maseela

Lesotho marked International Potato Day on 29 May 2026, calling for expanded local production and reduced reliance on imports as demand for potatoes continues to exceed domestic supply.

The commemoration, held at Avani Lesotho, brought together farmers, policymakers, and agricultural stakeholders under the theme “Where potatoes grow, livelihoods flourish.” Discussions focused on production constraints, value chain gaps, and investment needs in the potato sector.

Minister of Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security Selibe Mochoboroane said Lesotho is using the observance to strengthen its focus on potatoes as a strategic crop for food security and income generation.

He said a potato sector assessment supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had identified both production opportunities and structural constraints.

“While demand for potatoes continues to increase, local production still remains below market demand, resulting in continued reliance on imports,” Mochoboroane said.

He called for increased investment, partnerships, and innovation to strengthen the potato value chain and improve output.

“Together we can build resilient food systems, create employment opportunities, reduce poverty, improve nutrition, and secure a more prosperous future,” he said.

Stakeholders said production challenges extend beyond yields to include access to certified seed, irrigation systems, storage infrastructure, trans-



port, and stable markets. Limited storage capacity continues to contribute to post-harvest losses and forced early sales at lower prices.

Potato Lesotho Association representative Joele Sekila Molapo said potatoes play a central role in rural livelihoods.

“In many rural communities, potatoes are not just a crop — they are a source of survival, education for children, and hope for a better future,” Molapo said.

He said FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture have supported farmers through seed distribution, mechanisation programmes, and production equipment, including tractors and harvesting tools aimed at improving efficiency and output.

Director of Crop Services Seleballo Moeketsi said potatoes remain a key crop in global food systems due to yield efficiency and adaptability.

“What makes potatoes remarkable is their adaptability. They thrive in different climates, soil

types, and altitudes,” Moeketsi said.

He said potatoes require less water than several staple crops, making them suitable for the climate variability conditions affecting Lesotho.

He added that the potato value chain supports employment across production, transport, storage, and processing.

“Potatoes are affordable, nutritious, and accessible to low-income households,” he said.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr Khothatso Tšooana, said potatoes are part of government plans under the National Strategic Development Plan II and the One Country, One Priority Product initiative.

He said the programme aims to increase commercial production and address nutrition challenges.

“We are celebrating more than just a crop. We are celebrating a pathway from subsistence to commercial success,” Tšooana said.

He said the government, with support from FAO and the International Potato Centre (CIP), plans to introduce iron- and zinc-biofortified potato varieties to address malnutrition and stunting.

According to the World Integrated Trade Solutions, Lesotho imports over 450,000 kg of processed/preserved potatoes, valued at nearly \$1 million.

PS Tšooana also stressed that Lesotho continues to import potatoes to meet domestic demand, saying closing the gap between production and consumption remains a priority.

Speakers at the event, including farmers and officials, said that improving infrastructure, seed systems, and market access will determine whether the sector can move beyond subsistence production to commercial-scale output.

