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**FRONT COVER**

Not a loving act: A calf licks  
her mother's coat to extract  
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for all livestock on dry winter grazing.

**COMMENT, by Pete Bower**

# Back to nature



In a move that is being hailed as a step in the right direction by many, the South African Dept of Agriculture has banned the commercial sale of genetically modified potatoes.

The logic behind this move escapes us, given that South Africa has for many years allowed and indeed encouraged the wholesale planting of genetically modified maize. Both potatoes and maize are starchy staple foodstuffs, constituting a significant part of the diets of most South Africans so why one should be banned and the other encouraged seems a bit irrational.

Nevertheless, for the anti-GM lobby the move is seen as a victory and some are asking whether other GM crops will be similarly outlawed.

For the fact is that there is something of a backlash movement developing worldwide against anything that seeks to tamper with "natural" crops and growing methods.

Indeed, having gone so far down the line of allowing GM maize production, the South African government finds itself out of step with international sentiment and is actually now caught between a rock and a hard place. Given the amount of investment in GM crops and the chemicals used to keep them healthy and weed-free (such as the dreaded glyphosate pesticides) the government could hardly now do a *volte face* and ban them.

What it could do, however, is take seriously the moves overseas to ban the wholesale use of pesticides that are now being revealed as being carcinogenic and toxic in many, many ways not originally intended.

Removing these poisons from the food production system would be seen by many as doing something good for the wellbeing of the citizens of this country.

For, in truth, many of the supposed benefits of genetically modified crops in agriculture have not been realised. They were supposed to yield more than conventional crops.

They haven't. They were supposed to lead to a reduction in the use of chemical inputs. They haven't. In fact they've resulted in an increase in the use of toxic substances such as glyphosate.

In truth the GM debate tends to generate more heat than light with many of those both for and against not fully understanding the science behind genetic modification, or the costs, benefits and dangers involved, or how genetic modification differs from long-standing hybridisation.

So the GM debate is hardly cut and dried, and is only one of a number of issues that the government needs to bear in mind when overseeing South Africa's agriculture and the food security of her people.

In one of these fields at least the government is making noteworthy progress, albeit slowly, and that's in its plans to encourage smallholder agriculture among the previously disadvantaged.

While this requires the expropriation of large tracts of land, a process that is slow and painful, and politically fraught in itself, the establishment on their own lands of thousands of otherwise impoverished citizens will go a long way towards upliftment of families and communities. Provided, of course, the establishment of these families goes hand in hand with the provision of the necessary infrastructural help in the form of material such as fencing, piping and other inputs, as well as help with marketing and distribution and, most crucially of all, suitable training and education.

In the overall scheme of things, it's easy to buy up an old farm, chop it up into smaller bits and dish these out to families that have added their names to a waiting list. It's much more difficult to identify the needs of these new farmers, both in terms of infrastructure but also in terms of education etc, and to hand-hold them through the process of becoming profitable. That requires long-term commitment. Let's hope the government is up to the task.

For there can be no doubt that the development of a smallholder-based agricultural sector will go a long way to achieving food security at all levels.

With literally thousands of small farmers each producing small quantities of various foodstuffs imagine the huge variety that will be available.

And the best aspect of all is that many of these will be from older, more traditional, tastier heirloom varieties ~ all of which are open pollinated and can therefore be propagated from seed that is saved from season to season rather than bought: varieties which are ideally-suited to small scale production but which have been found wanting on a commercial scale.



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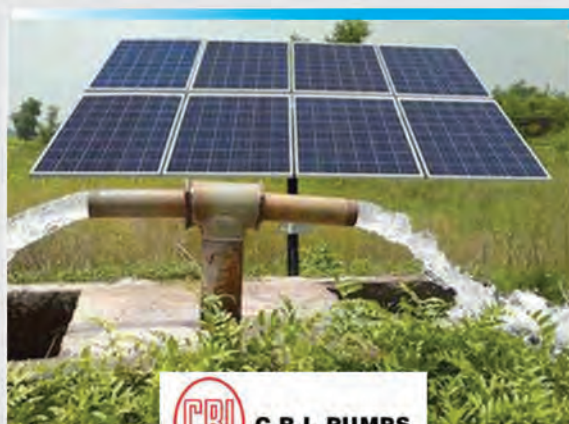
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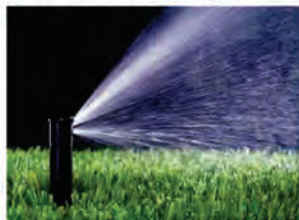
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## Magazine is much appreciated

Sir ~ I personally distribute ten copies of the Gauteng Smallholder magazine to a few close friends and from us all we would like to express a great big heartfelt thank you and appreciation for an excellent,

new on-line publication will prove an effective alternative. Previously we have published components of the magazine, lists of advertisers, the Classified advertisements,

open and honest valuable piece of reading material. The magazine continues to outshine itself monthly. The hard work and effort is much appreciated. Well done on the website. This move was very much needed in this techno age

Diary etc, on our website, [www.sasmallholder.co.za](http://www.sasmallholder.co.za), rather than the magazine as printed and published in paper form.

Last month, however, we

launched a full electronic version, identical to the copy you are reading now, complete with convenient zoom facilities, animated page turning etc. And, also the ability to download a pdf file of each edition to enjoy on your computer at your leisure. Like the paper version the online edition is free to access and requires no registration. You simply go to the website and click on the prominent image of the front cover on

Continued on page 6

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# NEWS

From page 5

the Home Page.

At this stage the pdf version is available only for PCs.

Depending on its popularity, and demand, we may add an Android version later for reading on smartphones and tablets.

In addition to the current edition, back issues will also remain available from now on (in fact there are three back issues on the site already).

The publication of an online

version of the magazine does not mean that the rest of the website becomes redundant and falls away.

The site remains an online portal for prospective advertisers, giving our rates and advertising data and, from time to time, advice to prospective advertisers as to the benefits and necessity of various forms of advertising in different economic conditions. In addition, we will continue to publish, before they appear

in print, classified advertisements and events in Gauteng, on the Classified page and Diary page respectively. The latter, particularly, gives organisers of events taking place too soon for publicity in the printed magazine to reach a significant target audience. The site is liberally sprinkled with convenient email links for the submission of enquiries regarding advertising, editorial, classified ads etc. In addition, the website

includes a page of links to documents, forms and websites frequently used by smallholders and farmers. Want to know how to size a septic tank? Go to our resource page. Need a blank stock removal permit? Go to our resource page. Advice on starting a farmer's market? Go to our resource page. Links on the page are constantly

Continued on page 8

## MAILBAG

From page 5

hardcopy in hand is best.

Kindly forward me the details on how to obtain the 2000-2009 back page articles. The link on the website doesn't seem work.

Thank you and keep up the good work. We are reading and benefiting.

**Basheer Essop**

By email

Thank you for your note. The link on the website has been fixed. ~ Editor



WINNER: Maria du Toit of De Wildt with her prizes, having won the Garden World/Hadeco competition we ran in the past few editions.



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# BEEKEEPING

## Why bees swarm off in Spring

Spring and early summer is the usual time for non-beekeepers to make frantic enquiries along the lines of "there's a swarm of bees under the eaves of my house. Where can I find somebody to take it away?" And, by extension, now is a

**Another in our regular series of articles on bees and beekeeping, by veteran beekeeper Peter Clark**

busy time for bee removal experts, both of the kind that do the job ethically and who rehouse the bees, and those unscrupulous rogues who employ poisons and fire to

simply destroy the colony. Fact is, swarming is a natural part of a bee colony's life. There are three categories of swarming:  
☐ Natural swarming, as in

the case of natural propagation of all living creatures,  
☐ Migratory swarming and  
☐ Nest absconding.

Some instances are beyond the control of the beekeeper, while in others he can take certain precautions to prevent swarming off of his colonies.

☐ Natural swarming ~ Profuse swarming off as part of the propagation of the species is an inherent trait in African bees, but not so in European bees. This was one of the main reasons for the importation of African bees in the late 1950s into South America in an effort to improve the European bees in America. The effort failed dismally. The queens they propagated had the strong genes to swarm off as the population in the colonies built up and they could no

Continued on page 10

## ONLINE MAGAZINE

From page 6

being expanded so it is worth checking in regularly to see what's new.

And, of course, there is a list of contents, classified by subject, of everything published in the magazine since 2009. All of these articles are available to you by email. You simply email us the titles required and you will receive the full text of the article/s requested by return. This service is free of charge. There is also the facility for

you as a smallholder to comment on any aspect of smallholder life, or to ask questions of your fellow smallholders (not only in Gauteng) through a link off the website to our Facebook page.

Before the introduction of the online magazine the website was receiving an average of more than 100 visitors daily, with well over 2 000 page hits. We expect the number of daily visitors to increase dramatically following the

introduction of the online edition (in our first week of online publication, with only a small amount of publicity, the online version received more than 400 readers), particularly as the online version opens up the magazine to a countrywide, indeed a worldwide, audience.

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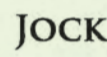
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# BEEKEEPING

From page 8

longer build the large swarms that occur in European bees that do not swarm off as readily.

I am of the opinion that in the early Spring and October there is a rapid breeding of young bees and our swarms become overloaded with too many young bees that have not as yet become foraging bees. With all these young-

sters about the hive the older bees decide that this is not the life for them, and a swarming instinct prevails, and the mother queen, too, decides it's time to move on. The scouts set about finding a new home and away they go. The first sign of these many energetic young bees is a regular, at practically the same time daily, flight out of the hives for what are called

orientation flights. Another sign is that one will notice that the bees cluster up the front of the hive.

Once the scout bees have found new premises, there is not much one can do to stop the swarm off of the primary swarm.

□ Migratory swarms ~ This is a process of swarming brought about by a number of factors, mainly by mismanagement of the beekeeper himself.

A shortage of forage and no follow-on of forage after the main source of forage has expired can cause migratory swarming. This is the case where a migrating beekeeper moves hives to, say, a sunflower crop where there is an abundance of pollen and nectar. This flow lasts about six weeks after which time there is absolutely no further forage about in the near vicinity for the bees.

The beekeeper crops the

honey but fails to move the bees and they become exceedingly hungry. They clean out the entire hive of every morsel of pollen and nectar, no dead brood will be found but only a mass of clean empty cells throughout the hive.

Another cause is over-robbing of the honey crop from a very strong hive. The beekeeper under-estimates the volume of honey that a very strong swarm needs to perform daily and the bees soon become hungry and move off.

These swarms will move great distances to find adequate forage for their survival, perhaps being on the move as long as three weeks. By that time many of the older bees will have died of exhaustion and hunger, but sufficient survive to start up a new nest again.

Continued on page 12

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| 6.4 x 6.4  | 0.70         | R 1245   | R 52      | R 1650   | R 63      | --       | --        |
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| 13 x 13    | 1.00         | R 1100   | R 46      | R 1480   | R 57      | R 2225   | R 86      |
| 13 x 13    | 1.60         | R 2510   | R 97      | R 3330   | R 132     | R 4995   | R 194     |
| 13 x 25    | 1.00         | R 835    | R 35      | R 1110   | R 46      | R 1665   | R 69      |
| 13 x 25    | 1.25         | R 1195   | R 52      | R 1595   | R 63      | R 2395   | R 97      |
| 13 x 25    | 1.50         | R 1725   | R 69      | R 2285   | R 92      | R 3415   | R 132     |
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| 25 x 25    | 1.00         | R 670    | R 29      | R 880    | R 35      | R 1330   | R 52      |
| 25 x 25    | 1.50         | R 1240   | R 52      | R 1645   | R 63      | R 2470   | R 97      |
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|------------|--------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
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| 25 x 50    | 2.50         | R 1985   | R 80      | R 2640   | R 103     | R 4360   | R 171     |
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| 50 x 50    | 2.00         | R 1005   | R 40      | R 1280   | R 52      | R 1995   | R 80      |
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## BEE FORAGE

# Alien eucalypts are useful bee forage

If you grew up in Gauteng you will probably have early childhood of gum trees, with their distinctive smell.

The gum tree or Eucalyptus is a diverse genus of flowering trees and shrubs belonging to the myrtle family. There are no indigenous eucalypts in South Africa, but about 85

different species were introduced from Australia along with the development of the mining industry. Because they flower at various times of the year, they provide a constant and reliable flow of nectar and a source of pollen, making them most important in the survival of bees and the

beekeeping industry. According to the year-old Alien & Invasive Species Regulations, six gum species have been listed as invaders. However, under certain circumstances they do not need to be removed. If the gums are within cultivated

land and are at least 50m away from untransformed or natural land (natural land may not be cleared to achieve this), they do not need to be removed. If the gums are within 50m of the main house on a farm, they

Continued on page 14

## SWARMING

From page 10

Where a beekeeper neglects to provide sufficient space for the expansion of the hive in a heavy honey flow, the hive becomes absolutely chock-a-block full of honey. The bees become very frustrated when there is an abundant amount of nectar and pollen about and no space to store. The simple answer is just to move on but not far away.

□ Absconding swarms ~ This process of swarming is recognised by honey about the combs and dead brood in capped and uncapped cells where a sudden instant occurrence has forced them to depart from the hive. Examples of this can be flooding, fire or the interference of a predator such as a honey badger.

The constant menace by ants, yellow banded pirate bees, toads, over population of hive beetles, especially the greater hive beetle, bee eating birds, and too much interference by the beekeeper constantly

opening the hive for his own curiosity, is worst of all. The bees simply give up and move out.

Article by veteran beekeeper Peter Clark (tel 011 362-2904), author of his book "Tales of an African Beekeeper" and member of the Eastern Highveld Beekeeper's Association, (secretary Mike Alter tel 011 965-6040).



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# BEE FORAGE

From page 12

are exempt from removal. Gum trees in urban areas are exempt from removal if their trunk diameter is more than 400mm (at 1 000mm height) at the time of publishing of the Regulations (1 October, 2014). If the gums are an existing formal plantation, no intervention is required. Smallholders must guard against unscrupulous contractors who claim that all gums must be removed. This is not

true and the often unnecessary removal of gums can be avoided.

However, if they are along or near the banks of a river or within 32m of the edge of a lake, dam, wetland or estuary, they must be removed, even if any of the above is true.

Listed gums in Protected Areas (nature reserves, national parks) or in ecosystems identified for conservation should also be removed. We are encouraged to look

out for Red flowering gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*), Grey ironbark (*Eucalyptus paniculata*), Yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Black ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) as these are favoured by bees.

To help you to identify the gums on your plot refer to the booklet published by the S A Biodiversity Institute available for downloading at <http://www.sanbi.org/sites/default/files/documents/documenten>

[ts/gumsbees-web-version-hyperlinks.pdf](#).

The following are the six gum species listed as invasive:

- ☐ River red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)
- ☐ Spider gum (*Eucalyptus conferruminata*)
- ☐ Sugar gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
- ☐ Karri (*Eucalyptus diversicolor*)
- ☐ Saligna gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*)
- ☐ Forest red gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*)

If the gum tree species on your property is a listed invasive and is not exempted by the provisions mentioned above, but is used as part of a plantation, woodlot, bee-forage area, wind-row or to line avenues, you may still maintain these gum trees. However, you must apply for a permit to demarcate them as Category 2 invasive species under the Nemba AIS Regulations.

Category 2 listed invasive species require a permit to carry out a restricted activity. The restricted activities most relevant to landowners include 'having in possession'; 'growing, breeding, propagating'; and 'spreading or allowing the spread of.' Although the permit will allow you to maintain the specimens in the demarcated area, you will have to clear them outside of those areas. You will also be accountable should your gum trees spread into a neighbouring property. Applicants applying for a permit to carry out a restricted activity involving Category 2 species need to compile a risk assessment report that will accompany their permit

Continued on page 16



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# BEE FORAGE

From page 14

assessment report that will accompany their permit application.

Permit applications and queries to AISpermits@environment.gov.za.

Download a permit application for your Category 2 gum tree species from:

www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms or

www.invasives.org.za

Selling a property populated with invasive gums means



Red flowering gum

passing on a liability to the new owner. Invasive gum trees need to be listed on the compulsory Declaration of Invasive Species form filled out by any seller of property – and handed as notification to the buyer – before any sale of property can be concluded in South Africa. A copy of this form needs to be sent to the Biosecurity Compliance Officer, Dept of Environmental Affairs, 14 Loop Street, Cape Town, 8001 or AIScompliance@environment.gov.za.

But smallholders can also consciously create bee-foraging areas by protecting our natural vegetation and avoiding unnecessary clearing of virgin land), and should be aware of the environmental impact of planting processes and animal husbandry practices.

Be sure to consider planting indigenous bee-friendly plants when gardening, planting windbreaks or when rehabili-

A stand of grey ironbark trees



livestock, and firewood. Gums should be planted a fair

tating land.

The following grow in Gauteng: Acacia trees such as hook thorn, monkey thorn and sweet thorn; buchu; aloes such as kanniedood, spotted aloe or mountain aloe; wild asparagus; bushwillow; wild pear; bushveld boekenhout; protea species; cat thorn; karee; *Senecio apiifolius* (winter weed) and buffalo thorn.

One should plant species that are appropriate to the area and which flower at different times of the year. Check with your local nursery for subspecies or varieties that occur in your area to avoid invasive problems or hybridisations with veld species in the vicinity.

Consider planting unlisted Eucalyptus trees on marginal land. Planting gums in rows along roads or between fields will establish forage for honey bees, and provide shade for

Continued on page 17



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in the printing rubber, leather and paint industries, as well as tobacco and vehicle exhaust smoke, and ammonia, found in window cleaners, floor

polish and fertilizers. All of these chemicals have an adverse effect on humans,

Continued on page 18

## EUCALYPTS

From page 16

distance apart to give the canopy space to flower. A lack of good quality and variety of forage can lead to unhealthy bee colonies and absconding swarms.

The Working for Water (WfW) programme seeks to prevent ruinous eco-damage in bee foraging areas by clearing invasive species, implementing biocontrol programmes and

restoring the functioning of natural ecosystems. During 2013-2014, WfW-affiliated nation-wide teams cleared 639 621 ha infested with invasive species, rehabilitated 19 580 ha, restored 105 wetlands, removed aquatic invasives from 195 000 ha of water surface, did 1 900 biological control releases and implemented fire-breaks across 95 523 ha.

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# IN THE HOME

From page 17

especially those prone to respiratory ailments such as asthma and tuberculosis, and allergies.

However, a study conducted some years ago by the US National Aeronautical & Space Administration (Nasa) identified a number of common house-plants that actively remove these chemicals from the atmosphere, leaving the air purer.

These include the dwarf date palm (*Phoenix robelenii*), Boston fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*), Kimberly queen fern (*Nephrolepis obliterated*), spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*), Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema modestum*), bamboo palm (*Chamaedorea seifrizii*), weeping fig (*Ficus benjamina*), devil's ivy (*Epipremnum aureum*), flamingo lily (*Anthurium*

*andraeanum*) lilyturf (*Liriope spicata*), broadleaf lady palm (*Rhapis excelsa*), our own Barberton daisy (*Gerbera jamesonii*), cornstalk dracaena (*Dracaena fragrans* "Messangeana"), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), variegated snake plant (*Sansiviera trifasciata* "Laurentis"), red-edged dracaena (*D marginata*),



House plants make excellent air purifiers and humidifiers

peace lily (*Spathiphyllum* "Mauna Loa"), and florist's chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*).

In addition to the chemical-removing properties of these (and other) plants, all plants sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen through the process of photosynthesis. Moreover, many plants aid in humidifying the atmosphere through the process of transpiration, both effects which are beneficial to inhabitants suffering from respiratory and skin complaints.



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## From hobby to business: starting with eggs

From keeping a few hens to supply the household with eggs to starting a small egg business is not such

a great step if one has some simple plans and precautions in place first. With an expanding flock one

is often left with the uneconomic prospect of giving away eggs to staff, friends and family, which might keep one

in their good books but certainly doesn't help to balance the budget. The time may therefore come that maybe one could make some money by selling eggs.

Before one commits oneself and the layers to this, do your research, as one would for

Continued on page 20

## Useful book on weeds from ARC

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) offers a useful book for smallholders who grow crops, entitled Common Weeds of Crops and Gardens in Southern Africa, by Chris Botha of the Grain Crops Institute.

This comprehensive publication only assists with the identification of the different weeds, but does not elaborate on weed control.

It is critically important to identify the weed correctly, even in an early growth stage, before chemical or any other control can be considered.

Weeds also play an important role in other disciplines, such as entomology and plant pathology, where insects or fungi, bacteria and viruses may survive, hibernate or reproduce in or on weeds, from where they can infect crops. Detailed colour photographs and short descriptions, together with the common names of the weeds ensure implementation of cost-effective and sufficient control measures, minimising the danger of contamination and ensuring continuous production, regardless of the scale of farming.

For more information: Mary James, jamesm@arc.-agric.za.



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# POULTRY

From page 19

any new business.

Firstly, ensure that a market for home-grown eggs exists in the area. Establish that not only are there enough people who will buy the eggs but there are enough who will be prepared to pay enough to ensure a profit. Remember also that the number of prospective egg buyers in a smallholding area will probably be fewer than in the suburbs because many ~ but by no means all ~

smallholders keep their own chickens for precisely that purpose. How one describes the eggs will affect what one can charge for them. Think about what you can offer and examine the terms that are bandied about when it comes to eggs. Can you describe your eggs as free range? This means eggs which are produced by poultry which are not caged and have daily access to an outdoor range area accessible through openings in the side of a barn.

Do you want to run the gauntlet of "organic" requirements? Organic would imply that not only are the hens reared on pasture that has no pesticides etc, but in addition, the food given to them has been grown in pesticide-free conditions, without the addition of any chemicals, hormones or artificial additives. Few smallholders can live up to

that.

You will need to consider where you will sell your eggs. Will you take a stall at a regular farmer's market? Will you supply a store in your area? Will you simply set up a little stall outside your plot? Depending on your local bylaws each of these options may come with hindrances in the form of permits and licenses. Transport of the produce, and the cost of sales staff, should be factored in, or if you intend to do the selling yourself, the cost of your time.

There is legislation governing the sale of eggs, in the form of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990. The latest regulations regarding the grading, packing and marking of eggs destined for sale were published in 2011. No person shall sell eggs for human consumption in the Republic of South Africa, unless:

☐ Eggs are sorted according

to size and grade,

☐ Eggs comply with prescribed standards,

☐ The container/outer container complies with specifications,

☐ The container/outer container complies with the marking requirements,

☐ The eggs sold in loose quantity comply with specifications ,

☐ Eggs do not contain any prohibited articles as per the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics & Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act No. 54 of 1972).

Sizes range from Small, which is a minimum of 33g, to Super Jumbo, which is more than 72g.

Eggs should be clean and have intact shells. The shell membrane may be slightly quivery. Eggs should be free of blood spots, absorbed odours, and any signs of embryo development or mould.

There are tables which

Continued on page 21



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## POULTRY

From page 20

indicate how eggs will be classified as Grade 1, 2 or 3. There are also regulations governing the packaging of the eggs.

The whole document can be found at

<http://www.daff.gov.za/daffweb3/Branches/Agricultural-Production-Health-Food-Safety/Food-Safety-Quality-Assurance/Local-and-Import-Regulations/Animal-Products>.

The second step after establishing your market is to formalise your plan by writing a business plan.

A smallholder's business plan will not only identify your target market, it will also look at how you might grow your business in the future, what price to set your eggs at, what costs contribute to producing the eggs, and what profit you can hope to generate.

With your business plan in place, you can work backward from the number of eggs you plan to sell each week, to how many chicks you need to get to meet that goal.

During her prime, a good laying hen will, on average, produce three to five eggs a week, with more in the peak laying season and less in the winter. If you plan to sell ten dozen eggs a week, or 120 eggs, you will probably decide that 25 or 30 chicks will be a good number to start with.

Make sure you've done your homework and that you have a market that can support the number of chicks you are getting for your flock.

Here, you can also figure out pricing. What are your expenses each month in feed and other costs? Divide that by the number of dozens of eggs you plan to sell, and make sure you're charging well above your break-even point. You may have to spread the investment of building a chicken coop or putting up fencing over several years in order to make a profit, however, so don't calculate in the initial

investment when setting your price.

If you are going to raise chicks until they are old enough to start laying, you will not have any income from them for at least 18 weeks. Obviously choose a breed that is known to produce. Some experts recommend commercial breeds such as Amberlink or Hy-line laying hens, while more traditional good layers are Leghorns and Rhode Island Reds. You might also consider an indigenous breed such as the Potch Koekoek.

The other option is to buy point-of-lay pullets. They are much more expensive than day-olds or week-olds, and more difficult to source, but the upside is that you will start receiving a weekly cash flow almost immediately, as they will start laying within two weeks after being bought, when they are 20–21 weeks old.

The hens you buy must be of very good quality and be fully vaccinated against all known poultry diseases.

The number of eggs laid also peaks halfway through the year and then starts dropping. The hens should be kept for one year and then sold as laid-out hens.

Poultrymen will not admit to it (because the practice is frowned upon by animal rights activists, if not simply illegal) but some undertake a process called forced moulting where they withhold food from the laid out hens to bring on a moult. This in turn persuades the hen to come back into lay when feed is reintroduced after a few days, extending her laying life, albeit at a slightly lower rate, to two years or more.

How you collect and clean eggs is extra important when you are selling them. Make sure that you know how to properly clean your eggs so that you minimise the risk of salmonella poisoning.

Continued on page 23

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## The many benefits of a few chooks

Given that specimens of the hardier breeds will look after themselves with little more than the odd scrap of stale bread being tossed their way, one would expect every Gauteng smallholding to have at least a few chickens scabbling about, if not being properly housed in a chicken run and kept for their eggs and meat. Yet our statistics show that

nearly 40% of Gauteng smallholders do not keep poultry. The advantages of keeping chickens will be obvious – fresh eggs, meat for the non-vegetarians, fertiliser and walking pest control. Free-range eggs are a good source of omega-3, an essential mood-boosting fat, as well as an excellent source of protein, thus making them an integral part of modern diets such as

the Banting Diet and Dr Tim Noakes' diabetes-fighting low-carb, high-fat diet. But there is another reason to keep chickens, and that is the therapeutic value of having a few "girls" wandering around one's plot. People suffering from depression or loneliness have discovered that having a small

flock of hens to care for has given them a focus outside of themselves. Having to get up and go outside to feed their chickens has had a disproportionately positive effect. They are outside in the fresh air and interacting with uncomplicated, amusing little creatures, each with a

Continued on page 24

## EGGS

From page 21

Once collected, it's time to package and sell. Consider your business plan when thinking about how to package your eggs. A striking label with a graphic logo can make your product more attractive than another local brand. Make sure you comply with the regulations when designing the packaging.

With any business, ongoing assessment and evaluation is key. If things are not running smoothly with your egg business, it may be time to reassess - the markets, your infrastructure such as the coop, pastures and fencing, and even whether continuing to sell eggs is the right choice for you.



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# POULTRY

From page 23  
personality of her own. Anyone who has raised backyard chickens will confirm the feel-good effect hens have on their owners. This is probably due to increased oxytocin, which is a stress-lowering chemical in the body that is released when one hugs a loved one, or pets a dog or cat. The elderly respond very well to programmes such as HenPower, where small flocks of chickens have been

introduced to retirement homes. Men in particular become involved in the care of the hens. In the UK they are referred to as 'henshioners'. Other programmes have introduced some hens in the grounds of homes caring for patients with dementia. Terry Golson, a "chicken captain" at just such a programme says, "having chickens in the backyard is like looking at the ocean. There's a lot of movement and at the same



An Australian family poses with more than 1 000 rescued layers.

time it feels calming. What could be better for memory-loss patients than this constant ebb and flow in which they can engage? It's a perfect

match."

A quite different reason for keeping chickens is put forward by Candace Ristic, who runs the Chicken Rescue & Rehabilitation NPO in Gauteng.

"We are always looking for loving homes for laid-out battery chickens and other hens that have been saved from appallingly inhumane circumstances. We also work with the SPCA, who contact us to help them to find homes for these distressed hens."

But the organisation does not allow the hens to go to a new home without their undertaking an on-site inspection of the property where they will be housed.

They also offer detailed advice to the new owners, so that the transition to the happier circumstances can be as untraumatic for the chickens as possible.

They draw attention to the fact that at the point of rescue, the hen will be tired, immune-compromised and thus vulnerable to infections, stressed and frightened, thirsty and hungry and possibly ill. Very often they will have sore feet, with nails that may be too long for comfortable walking or they might have swollen legs.

They are likely to be terrified of open spaces, strange noise, pets, children and anything new or different – even an aluminium or stainless steel water dish with a moving reflection can be terrifying. Many will be unable to handle direct sunlight for a few days.

Continued on page 26

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## PLANNING

# Strategies for cutting food costs

With a little planning and only a modicum of effort the cost of growing one's own vegetables (and flowers) can, over a couple of years, be reduced to no more than the labour involved in planting watering, weeding and harvesting. The planning involved starts

when choosing the varieties of vegetables one wants to grow, and the cultivars one prefers.

It goes without saying that one should avoid growing

## POULTRY

From page 24

They recommend that the new owners find a place in

those vegetables that are not enjoyed by one's family because they will, inevitably, go to waste.

Secondly, the gardener who plans ahead will take into

consideration the amount of any vegetable consumed by the household, the nature of the plant from which it comes, the ability to store or

Continued on page 27

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their home where their hens can be relatively undisturbed for the first few days.

"Place a cardboard box on its side with a clean towel inside the box. Place newspaper under and around the box. Provide a bowl the size of a cereal bowl filled with clean water, and a similar sized bowl with layers mash. It's usually a good idea to offer electrolyte solution for the first few days, alternating with water, as most of these chickens will have a high degree of stress and dehydration and will be prone to

electrolyte imbalances."

The rescued chicken will spend the next few days resting inside, before gradually being introduced to the strange new world outside. To find out more about the work that this organisation does or to offer yourself as a potential rescuer, contact Ristic on 083 480 5554 or [candy@discoverymail.co.za](mailto:candy@discoverymail.co.za) or go to <http://chickenrescueandrehabilitation.com>.



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From page 26

preserve the produce and the growing season.

Thus, succession planting of quick-growing vegetables such as beans should be matched with single plantings of slow-maturing and easily-stored varieties such as onions.

With those considerations in place the canny gardener will have a good idea of the bed-space necessary for each vegetable, and the timing of when to plant, taking into account, of course, the need to rotate beds year-by-year.

A useful tool is to have a simple blank plan of one's vegetable patch which can be re-used each year. When planning for the season ahead one marks down what should be planted where and when, revising the plans as one goes, and noting on it any successes and failures. This plan is then filed away at the end of the

## Seed harvesting is a way to cut costs and ensure you enjoy the varieties you prefer year after year

season, to act as an *aide memoire* next year.

With the plan in place, soil testing can take place before anything is sown and nutrients and pH can be adjusted to suit the crop. But, if one is aiming for cost-free crops grown naturally, one should avoid bought-in chemical fertilizers and concentrate rather on adding liberal quantities of home-made compost to one's beds, and using naturally-occurring substances and practices to add nutrients for specific purposes, adjust pH etc. Examples would be to plan to plant a nitrogen-needy variety (eg, a green leafy vegetable such as spinach) this year in a bed that held a nitrogen-fixing crop last year (eg, peas). Or, if one needs to make

one's soil more acidic, pour one's coffee-grounds into the bed each day, or add pine needles to the bed as organic matter.

There is a strong revival of interest among home gardeners in old-style vegetable varieties. While they may be shy-bearing, less resistant to extremes of weather, pests and disease, and produce fruits of inconsistent shape and size, there is little doubt that the old-style heirloom varieties of everything from tomatoes to carrots have vastly superior flavour to the modern hybrids.

But there's another reason to grow heirloom vegetables and that is that it is easy to harvest viable seed from old-style open pollinated varieties, in

contrast to some modern hybrids that produce no viable seed and thus force one to buy fresh seed each year.

To harvest seed from most species, allow a plant or two of the chosen variety to remain in the ground long after the crop has been harvested, allowing it to flower. As the flower dies it will go to seed. When the flower is properly dead (but before it naturally starts to shed its seeds) pluck it and pull it apart, removing the seed from the surrounding matter.

The seed should be stored only when it is absolutely dry or it will quickly go mouldy and become useless, and storage should be in a sealed packet in a cool, dry cupboard. Don't neglect to carefully label the packet with the full details of the species, variety, etc because a year is

Continued on page 30



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# PLANNING

From page 27

a long time and you will inevitably have forgotten what is what next season if you don't.

Nature's bounty is such that for normal purposes the seed harvested from one flower or at least plant should be enough to provide for one's requirements in the following season, but if in doubt harvest seed from more than one plant.

Do not, however, hold seed over for more than one season as it will deteriorate and fail to germinate satisfactorily. Also, choose only the best, most vigorous plants,

## No smallholding should be without some method of turning its spent organic matter into compost and mulch

and the best, most vigorous flowers, for seed harvesting. To harvest seed from fruits such as tomatoes, pumpkins and squashes choose good quality specimens, scoop out the seeds, separate from the flesh and allow to dry before storage. Choose a coolish, dry spot in which to dry the seed, rather than full sun, and allow the process to take place over a few days.

With your seed saving in place the other area in cost-saving is in plant nutrition. If you can avoid buying fertilizer by feeding your plants with manure, compost, worm tea, bokashi or one of the many now-popular methods of natural recycling of organic matter you will save a packet each year.

Compost-making, worm

farming and bokashi making are subjects of their own, but suffice to say that no smallholding should be without some method of returning its spent organic matter (eg lawn clippings, dead flowers, vegetable peelings etc) to the garden, and each process has its unique benefits.

At the same time, a knowledge of the chemical characteristics of naturally-occurring substances found on one's smallholding is useful. For example, the different effects of wood ash and coal ash on the soil, the effect of mulching with certain waste materials, or adding them to the soil, and the effect of "green" fertilizers such as plants specifically-grown and ploughed into the soil to supply nutrients to

subsequent crops.

Finally, no plants can survive without adequate moisture, and vegetables generally need more water than flowers and shrubs. Even if one's water is "free" from a borehole, a consideration in its use is the (increasingly expensive) cost of electricity with which to extract it and pump it to where it is required.

Thus, any measure one can take to minimise one's use of water in the garden will realise a small saving in money. This inevitably means

Continued on page 32

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## IN THE WORKSHOP

# Blades: It's a question of balance

There is no quicker way, short of mowing through a field of rocks, to destroy any kind of rotary cutting device such as a tractor-drawn slasher or mower, than to run it with unbalanced blades. That's because the vibration caused by the blades of different weights rotating about the shaft will soon destroy any shaft bearings, not to mention wearing

**...because if your blades AREN'T balanced you'll destroy your mower through vibration**

the shaft itself.

In the process, of course, the vibration will cause other components to wear and break, including cracking welds, loosening bolts and causing unnecessary engine

wear through vibration.

It is imperative, therefore, that the two, or four bolt-on blades of whatever system one has weigh exactly the same.

For small bolt-on blades this

can be achieved very accurately after sharpening by weighing them on a small kitchen scale ~ the kind one uses to measure out very small quantities of flour for baking. Simply weigh each blade in turn, and dress the heavier blades till their weights correspond to that of

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## PLANNING

From page 30

scheduling watering times to avoid the heat of the sun, when more will be lost to evaporation than at cooler times, and use of mulches on one's beds to help seal in the moisture in the soil, as well as to help keep the soil cool. Another advantage of a good layer of mulch is that it will help suppress weed growth. Good sources of mulch are

any seed-free organic matter of sufficiently small size that it can be spread around small plants without damaging them.

Thus, a useful addition to one's range of garden equipment is a shredder which is able to chop up small branches, scrub, dry fruit tree prunings etc. Such material should not be added to the compost heap but should be

reserved for use as mulch. Having made that point, the shredder can also be used to chop up dry leaves and other plant material for addition to the compost heap where it will take up less space and be processed into usable compost faster than if added whole.

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# IN THE WORKSHOP

From page 32

the lightest.

For slasher blades and heavier mower blades a small, accurate kitchen scale will be inadequate, while a bathroom scale will be too inaccurate to achieve the desired result.

In such a case one must make an old-fashioned balancing scale.

Place a length of threaded rod or steel fence dropper, or very sturdy straight wire on a blade held firm in a vertical position,

## For heavier blades, such as those from a slasher, you will need to fashion a balancing scale

for example in a vice, so that approximately half of the rod is on either side of the blade. If there is a small nick in the blade it will prevent the rod from rolling up and down the blade. Move the rod to the left or right till it balances absolutely horizontally, and using a pencil or a koki pen mark the exact spot on the rod where it lies on the blade. Hang two of the sharpened blades off the each end of the rod approximately equidistant from the centre. One side will likely dip downward. Move the blade on the downward side a little towards the centre and check again. Continue until the rod hangs horizontally. Now mark where the lighter blade is hanging on the rod and carefully measure the distance between the centre

and the lighter blade.

Remove the blades and the rod and mark off this distance on the side of the heavier blade.

Dress the heavier blade and repeat the hanging process. As the heavier blade loses weight through the dressing process, its position on the balancing rod will gradually move outwards until it finally reaches the exact same distance from centre point that the lighter blade has at the other end, while the rod is perfectly horizontal. At that stage you are assured that the two blades weigh the same. If your mower has four such blades you will need to establish the weight of the lightest one first and dress the other three in turn till they match it.

If your mower blade is a

single unit you can ensure both sides are in balance by suspending it through its centre hole off a nail or length of sturdy wire held horizontally in a vice.

The side that dips downward is the heavier.

Because of the large diameter of the centre hole and the fact that a blade may hang a bit off-centre, and thus give you an inaccurate indication of weight, it is advisable to repeat the exercise a couple of times, turning the blade over each time, to gain an "average" idea of the amount of dressing needed.



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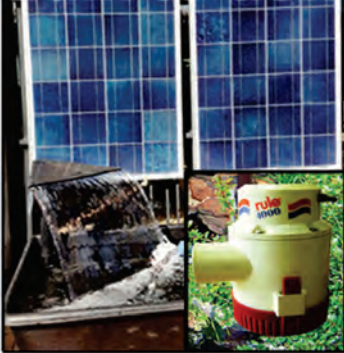


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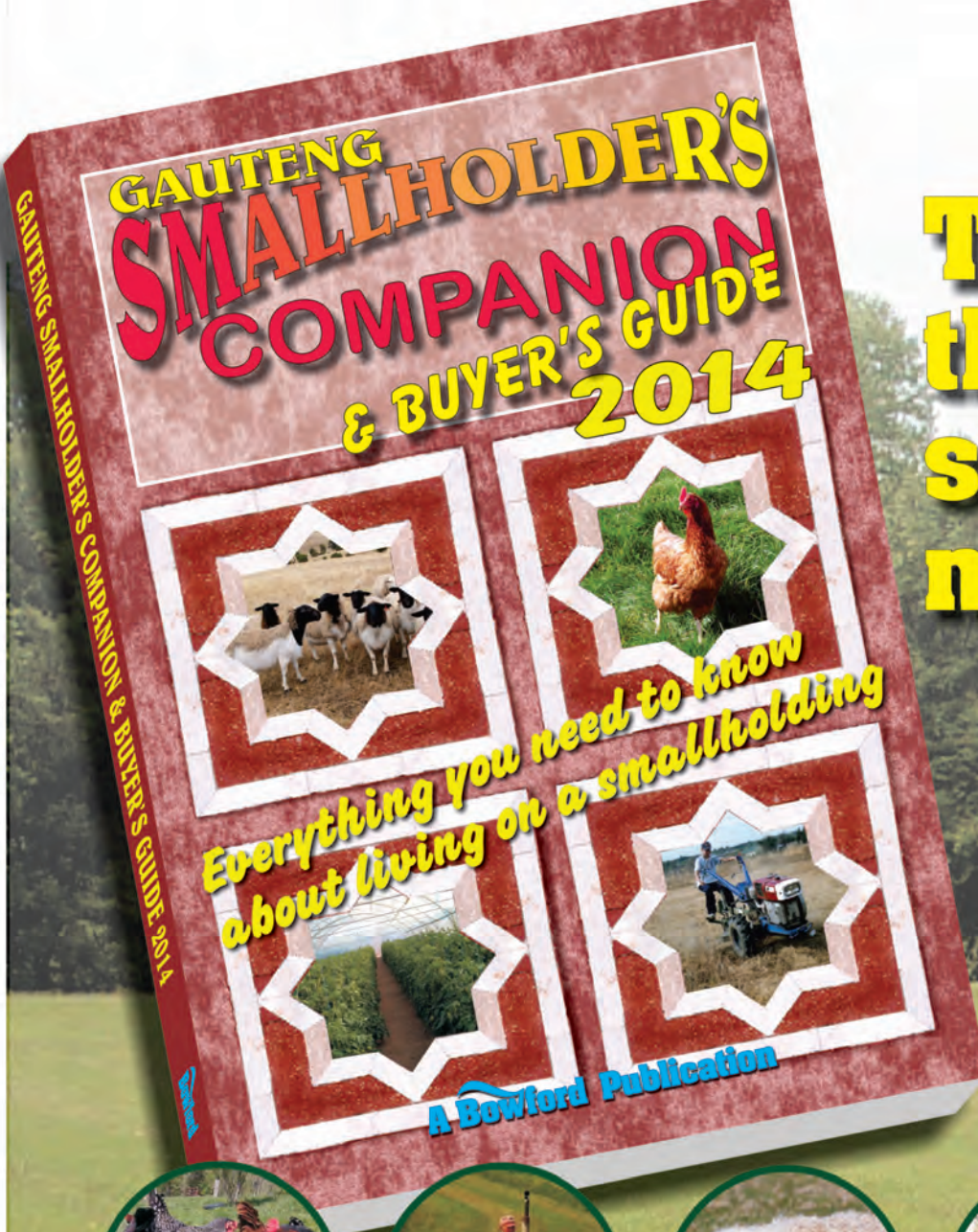
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# HOOF CARE

## Caring for your livestock's feet

The saying "No hoof no horse" can also be applied to all livestock ~ care of your animals' hooves is fundamental to their

well-being. And a good hoof and foot maintenance programme goes a long way to preventing foot problems from arising. A good hoof care programme also leads to lowered expenses in treatment of problems, as well as fewer losses due to decreased performance and productivity of the animal.

Apart from horses, donkeys and mules, smallholder livestock is cloven hoofed. This means the hoof is split into two toes. The two digits of cloven hoofed animals can be compared with the third and fourth fingers of the hand. They are called claws and are named according to where they are found on the foot: the outer or lateral claw and the inner or medial claw. The hard outer covering of

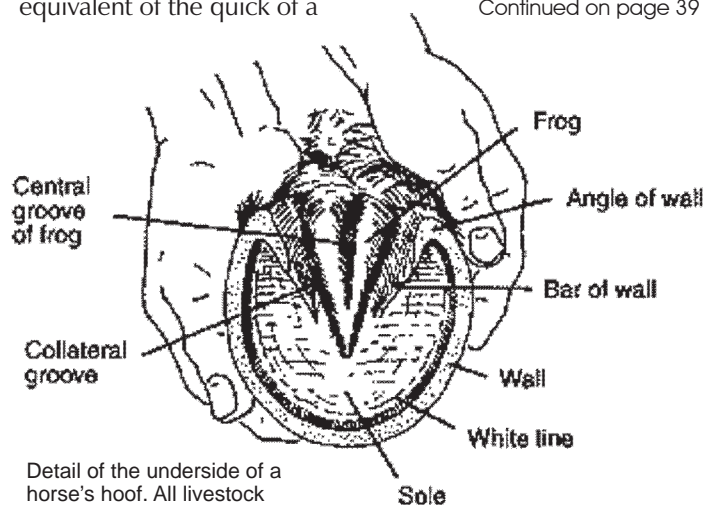
the hoof is called the hoof wall, or horn. It is a hard surface, similar to the human fingernail. The cells that form the horn are produced by the tissue directly beneath the hoof wall, called the corium, at the hoof head (the equivalent of the quick of a

human nail). The corium is a nutrient-rich tissue that contains many important blood vessels and nerves inside the hoof.

Underneath the hoof is a slightly softer region, called the sole. The tissue that

Continued on page 39

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Detail of the underside of a horse's hoof. All livestock have similar features to their feet.

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## HOOF CARE

From page 38

makes up the sole is produced by the corium of the sole, and is suppler than the horn of the hoof wall. The point where the hoof wall is bound to the sole is called the white line. The white line is a somewhat flexible junction between the sole and wall, allowing the hoof to



Donkey's hoof with injury

be more flexible as the animal moves. The front region of the sole is called the toe, and the two bulbs at the opposite end of the foot are referred to as the heel bulbs. Inside the hoof, there are bones that play a key role not only in forming the shape of the hoof, but also in serving as a support structure for the leg and the rest of the body. However, the bones in the hoof do not entirely formulate the movement of the foot and the leg. Several tendons

allow the animal its range of motion.

The structure of the equine foot is very similar to the cloven-footed hoof anatomy described above, but there are a few differences. Firstly, the hoof of the horse consists of one continuous structure. The outer wall is the same as that of a cow or sheep.

However, the sole is slightly different. In the middle of a horse's sole is a V-shaped cleft, called the frog. This frog serves as a cushion, weight bearing surface that absorbs shock and aids in pumping blood throughout the hoof and up the leg. On either side of the V there are deep clefts, followed by ridges called the bars. The bars are a continuation of the hoof wall from the heel. The general bone structure of a horse's hoof is like that

of a cow, except that the horse only has one set of bones, as opposed to the two claws of a bovine hoof. A well-maintained routine of cleaning and trimming animals' feet will lead to a far lower incidence of discomfort and lameness in the animals. Nutrition also plays a key role in hoof health and maintaining proper growth rate.

By keeping an animal well fed with the proper nutrients

Continued on page 40



Sheep's forehooves

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# HOOF CARE

From page 39

such as zinc and biotin, it is much more likely that they will produce good-quality hoof horn and have stronger feet.

However, over-feeding a horse can lead to a painful and potentially serious

ailment of the foot named laminitis.

Different species require different amounts of routine hoof management practices to keep them in healthy condition. Cattle, horses, sheep and goats do not require extensive trimming if the hoof remains balanced and wears down evenly on all

walls of the hoof. Trimming of the hoof is necessary if you need to restore the natural shape of the hoof and keep the bearing surfaces correctly proportioned.

Horses, particularly heavy animals, highly-bred types such as thoroughbreds and those in heavy work, will probably require additional hoof care and maintenance,

including shoeing.

Foot growth is affected by the breed of the animal, the soil moisture and soil characteristics.

Your will need proper tools to take care of your live-stock's hooves, particularly those of a horse.

☐ Hoof pick. A hoof pick is used to clean debris from the bottom of the hoof, along the grooves on the sides of the frog, and from the sole area.

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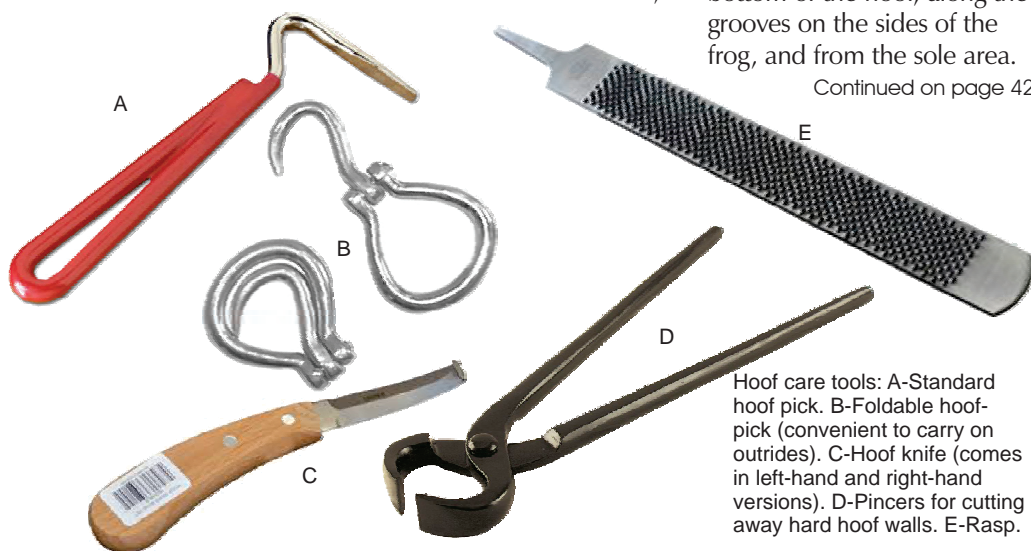
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# HOOF CARE

From page 40

This debris, if not removed, will dull your hand tools and may hide injuries to the hoof.

☐ Hoof knife. A hoof knife is for trimming away loose dried-out sole. Do not cut into live flesh or the sole will be sore and may bleed—not a good thing. The hoof knife is also used to trim off loose and ragged frog in horses.

☐ Pincers. Pincers are used to trim the outgrowth of hoof wall from the hoof.

☐ Rasp. Use the rasp to smooth and level the bottom of the hoof. Every stroke should go the entire length of the hoof.

When trimming feet, avoid doing it at stressful times such as in hot weather or late in gestation.

If you are going to do the trimming yourself, it is important that you ask your veterinarian or someone with experience to demonstrate how to perform this procedure.

dure.

If you are dealing with a sheep, goat or pig, you will need a pair of hoof shears. You will also need someone to hold the animal while you are doing the trimming. The assistant must put the animal in a comfortable sitting position. Using the tip of the hoof shears, remove dirt and mud from the hoof. Determine the level of the sole of the hoof before starting to cut any of the wall

of the hoof away. First trim off the point of the hoof of one claw. Then trim the outer side of the hoof.

Finally trim the inner side of the hoof. Then repeat the process on the hoof of the other claw. Gradually trim the hooves down until you can see the white line of new hoof growth.

When dealing with a horse's hooves, secure the horse first. Stand next to the horse's shoulder, pick up the hoof and hold it in place between your knees so you can use both hands to work. Clean the horse's hooves using a hoof pick to ensure nothing has become lodged in the hoofs' natural depressions. Begin cleaning at the back of the hoof and work forward, removing any debris from the hoof. Include cleaning between the frog and the cleft.

If the hoof needs trimming, use the pincers to trim away the excess hoof wall from the hooves. Make sure you have a hand on each handle of the pincers to get an even cut and make sure the blade of the nippers is parallel to the horse's foot while trimming. Go from heel to toe to ensure the hoof wall is trimmed evenly. This should only be done if you are comfortable using the tool, and are certain of your ability not to cut away too much.

Then use the rasp to smooth and level the bottom of the hoof. Every stroke should go the entire length of the hoof. This will make sure there aren't any uneven spots or ridges. Use smooth strokes and apply equal downward pressure. Only use the rasp from heel to toe and never from side to side. Keep checking for levelness every few strokes or you might remove more than you intended and hurt the cow or horse. You should never file the sole of the hoof.

Continued on page 43



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# HOOF CARE

From page 42

Check and make sure that the hooves are even and level. The hoof wall should be the same thickness all around the hoof. To remove rough or chipped edges, use the rasp once more to round and smooth the edges of the hoof but don't take off too much or you will weaken the wall of the hoof.

It may not be possible to restore the normal shape to overgrown hooves at the first attempt. You may need to do this by gradually reshaping the hooves over a few weeks. Trimming schedules can depend on a variety of factors. For example, animals that are kept on pasture are less likely to develop painful foot problems than those living on hard or stony ground.

It is a general recommendation that a dairy cow's hooves are checked and trimmed (if

## Trimming of ALL livestock's hooves should be an integral part of your management programme to ensure the animals are comfortable and healthy

needed) twice a year, preferably in the dry period and 120 days after calving. The general rule for equine hooves is that they should be trimmed every six to eight weeks. Again, this can differ from animal to animal, as well as from season to season. Sheep and goats may be trimmed from once to twice yearly, although this largely depends on the conditions they are raised in and any health issues of the hoof. Pigs, especially elderly ones with limited mobility, need their hooves trimmed every two months, although some pigs require more frequent trimming and more active pigs require trimming only a few times a year. Learn what a pig's foot is supposed to

look like and make sure that you are keeping it trimmed well, because foot infections, which often start with hoof problems, can be fatal in pigs. Because horses are primarily used for riding or driving, this puts a lot of stress on their

feet, leading to the need for added support and maintenance of their feet. This support and protection can come in the form of a horse shoe. Shoes serve as a mechanism to protect the hoof wall from excessive wear, and they keep the proper weight distribution of the hoof, while raising the more delicate parts of the hoof off of the ground to

Continued on page 44

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## HOOF CARE

From page 43

protect it from any injuries that may come during exercise. The shoe is nailed or glued onto the hoof around the outer rim of the wall.

With the onset of the rainy season horses will find themselves walking in mud. This, and the moisturising effect of wetness is a major cause of shoe loss, as the mud works its way in between the hoof and the shoe, while the nails holding the shoe work loose in the softened hoof wall. Before long the shoe is sucked off the hoof, the clinches of the nails ripping through the hoof wall in the process.

Daily checks should be carried out, therefore, to ensure that shoes remain tight. Doing so is easy: simply clean the hooves well and walk the horse on a concrete or brick-paved surface. If you hear a clanking sound from the shoe, it is loose. To tighten it back into position is most easily done with a tool called a nail clincher or crocodile jaw. The effect of the tool is to push the head of the nail into the shoe and hoof while simulta-

neously exerting a tightening pressure on the cinch. It is important that owners become familiar with the rate of growth of their animals' feet, not only so that they can keep them trimmed, but so that they are attentive to any changes in the rate of growth, which could be an indication of a serious problem.

Any hoof overgrowth can cause discomfort to the animal. The bones in the hoof are meant to sit squarely inside the hoof, at an approximately 50 degree angle to the ground. When hooves become too long, the weight-bearing surfaces of the hoof can be changed and unbalanced, and the bones can begin to splay inside the foot. The main goal of trimming hooves is to restore the natural shape of the hoof so that weight is distributed evenly and in a manner that is best for all structures of the hoof and the comfort of the animal. You might also want to consider using footbaths. There are different concentrated hoof care solutions available for different species, for regular cleaning and hoof strengthening. You can build a concrete footbath or use a portable footbath.

Further preventative measures include ensuring that the animal's bedding and walking areas are clean and well maintained – with no holes or foreign bodies. Regular inspection of the pasture is very important, as wire and other dangerous waste material will mysteriously appear and pose a danger to your livestock's feet.

While good maintenance can help eliminate lameness problems, there is always some chance that an animal will contract a disease or develop a condition that must be treated.



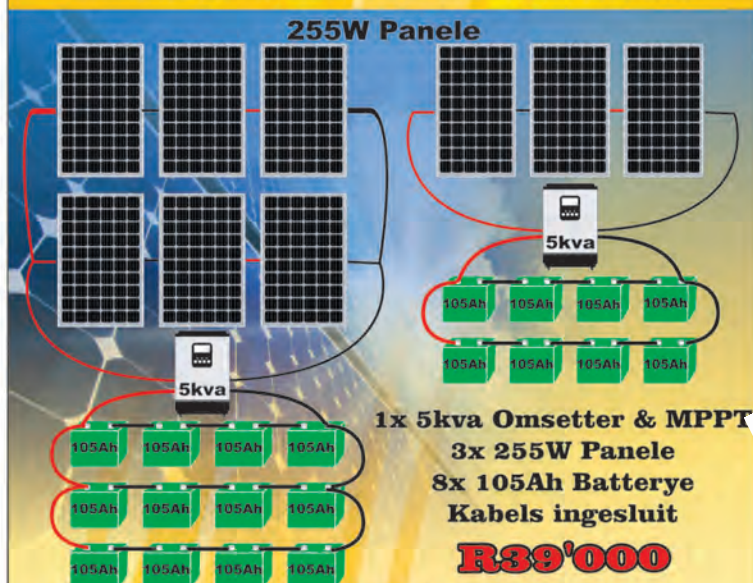
Nail clincher  
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## In praise of a 2 litre Coke bottle

For something that contains a substance so poisonous to humans as sugar-and-chemical-laden cold drink it is refreshing that the plastic bottle should be such a useful thing about a smallholding.

For a 2-litre PET bottle is, indeed a versatile thing! Here are just some of its uses about

the plot.

□ Funnel ~ Remove the cap and cut away the top, making the "body" as long or as short as you like. The top end, inverted, makes an invaluable funnel for filling generators, mowers and tractors with petrol or diesel in a spill-proof way. (A small 500ml cold drink bottle subjected to similar treatment makes a handy funnel for filling the same machines' sumps with oil).

The bottoms of bottles thus cut up make handy disposable containers for washing paint brushes, washing machine components in petrol, storing nuts and bolts in the workshop, scooping animal feed in measurable quantities, and spreading fertilizers

The bottoms, with holes

punched in them, also make handy, if not very attractive, flower pots.

□ Fly catcher ~ Remove the cap and cut away the top about 1cm down the vertical side. Turn it upside down and force it inside the bottom so that the two cut away edges align. Using a standard office stapler, fix the two sections together.

Punch two holes, on opposite sides of the container and thread a loop of wire through, hooking the ends inside the container.

Mix up a dose of proprietary fly-bait (or make your own out of meat scraps, syrup and water) and pour this into the container.

Hang the container in full sun, (but under a protective overhang to prevent rain water from filling the bottle).

Shake the bottle every day for a couple of days till the mixture it contains is good and ripe and pongy and you

Continued on page 47



Coke bottle fly trap

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From page 46

will soon start catching flies just as efficiently as you would with expensive shop-bought fly catching bags. Add more bait and water as necessary, or simply add water and shake up the contents allowing the dead fly bodies to rot and become bait themselves. If, and when, the container becomes overly full, simply discard it and start again.



Mole deterrent

❑ Deep root waterer ~ Remove the cap, cut a hosepipe-diameter hole in the base and bury the bottle upside down near the plant you wish to water, leaving about 2cm of the base exposed. The neck now being about 35cm deep in the ground, when you fill the bottle with water you are ensured of delivering 2 litres of water, slowly, to the roots of the plant where it is needed, rather than allowing a large proportion of your water delivered on the surface merely to evaporate. (This device is particularly useful for ensuring that plants that tend to be neglected in the watering cycle receive a regular effective soaking, for example, when going away on holiday).  
❑ Mole deterrent ~ Some people maintain that simply scattering 2-litre cold drink

bottles filled with water about one's lawn acts as a deterrent to moles. How remains a mystery, and the nett effect, surely is simply to leave one's lawn looking like Zoo Lake after a Mandoza concert. A more effective (well, marginally, in our experience) deterrent is to use the power of the breeze to set up a windmill, the noise and vibration of which is said to

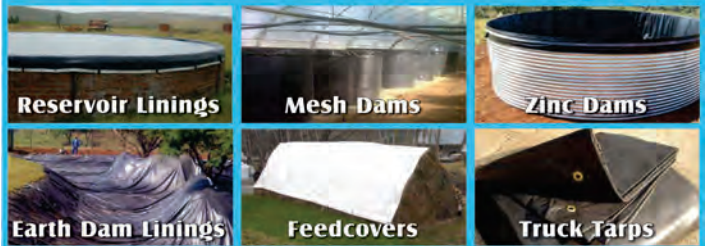
deter moles.

Remove the cap, cut three or four flaps in the side of the bottle, so that they all face the same way. Drill a short self-tapping screw into the base, dead centre.

In the end of a 1,2m long length of dowelling or thin bamboo trimmed off exactly at the node (the horizontal bit that forms the end of each

Continued on page 48

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# IN THE KITCHEN

## Some simple dairy delights

You needn't be an expert, or invest in expensive equipment and chemicals, to make a couple of simple yet delicious dairy products in the home. The simplest, by far, is a cottage cheese that requires

no special additives whatsoever. Fill a wide-mouthed jar with milk, close it and stand it in a warm place such as a sunny windowsill for a couple of days till the milk semi-solidifies and starts to separate

from the whey. A wide-mouthed jar is necessary because you won't be able to get the solidified milk out of a conventional bottle. Depending on the milk you use you might find an unattractive top layer of

cream has separated out and formed a skin. Scrape this off and discard. Into a sieve lined with cheesecloth pour the contents of the jar and allow it to separate out for at least

Continued on page 49

## BOTTLES

From page 47  
hollow section of bamboo) make a small depression Plunge the dowelling or

bamboo into the ground to a depth of about 30cm. Place the bottle over the rod and position it so the point of the screw is in the depression on the end of the rod. The slightest breeze should turn the bottle, the neck rattling against the rod sending vibrations and noises deep into the ground, unsettling the moles.

□ Terrarium ~ A cut away bottle, upended and placed over a small potplant, will quickly generate a hot, moist microclimate when placed on

a sunny windowsill. Similarly, cutting away a section of the side of a bottle, and lying the bottle on its side filled with soil, can make an interesting small bed for small indoor plants, cacti, etc

□ Seed storage ~ Cold drink bottles, being rat-proof and with their good seals, make useful storage containers for harvested seeds from one season to the next, particularly of large varieties such as beans, maize, peas etc. Just ensure that the inside of the container is absolutely clean

and dry, and that the seeds themselves are absolutely dry, before they are placed in the bottle and sealed.

□ Recycle ~ If you have a surplus of bottles, or actually no use for them, they are fully recyclable.

□ NOT: Liquid storage ~ CAUTION: Cold drink (or milk) bottles should never be used for the domestic or workshop storage of fuels or chemicals such as acids and pesticides. That's because they can easily (and are

Continued on page 49

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# IN THE KITCHEN

From page 48

twelve hours in a cool place, until you are left with a small patty of milk solids in the cloth.

To the milk solids add salt to taste and mix it in well with a fork. Now add herbs or spices of your choice to make a simple, cheap yet delicious flavoured cottage cheese. Caraway seed works well, as does coarsely-ground black pepper or chili flakes for a cheese with bite. Or try garlic and chives. For a dessert cheese add a handful of finely chopped seedless raisins or



Baby's bottle-warmer cum yoghurt-maker

other dried fruit.

Only slightly more complicated to make is fresh yoghurt, which can also be made without any chemicals or equipment.

Heat a litre of milk until the first shimmer of boiling is seen. On the Highveld this will mean the milk has reached about 95°C, effectively killing off any harmful bacteria in the milk that may spoil the finished product.

Some swear by the addition of a couple of spoons of powdered milk to make the yoghurt richer and creamier, but if you use a good, fresh full cream milk this is unnecessary.

Allow the milk to cool to lukewarm. This can be speeded up by placing the saucepan into a sink full of cold water.

To the milk add a generous dessert-spoon-ful of unflavoured natural yoghurt which you will have bought from

your supermarket. Look for Greek or Bulgarian yoghurts for the purpose.

Blend this in well using a whisk till the added yoghurt has dissolved completely.

Decant this mixture into a bowl, cover it and allow it to stand for six to twelve hours in a warm place. Overnight in a gently-cooling oven after dinner has been cooked is ideal. In summer, when even night-time temperatures are in the 20s one can get away with leaving the bowl on one's counter-top.

Or, invest in a baby's bottle-warmer which will double as a yoghurt-maker.

By morning the cultures in the mixture will have worked their magic and the milk will have solidified into yoghurt.

It will still, however, contain a large volume of whey, which will separate out over time. To speed up the process, in turn making what has become known as Greek yoghurt (of which no self-respecting

Greek has any knowledge whatsoever) pour the yoghurt into a cheesecloth-lined sieve and allow the whey to drain for twelve hours or so.

The resulting yoghurt, when cooled can be consumed plain or sweetened with honey or fruit jam to make the home-made equivalent of bought flavoured yoghurt.

To take your yoghurt-making a bit more seriously, you can buy small sachets of freeze-dried yoghurt culture from daily suppliers. After heating and cooling the milk you dissolve a few grains of culture in a couple of spoons of the milk and mix this well into the milk.

Various different cultures are to be found, some of which make a mild yoghurt, others of which make a more tart, sour variety.

If your family members are big yoghurt-eaters you will want to have a regular supply, so reserve a generous spoonful of each batch for use as starter culture for the next.

## BOTTLES

From page 48

frequently) mistaken by illiterate workers and children as containing drinkable substances, with disastrous and often fatal results.

In this regard the sale by retailers of paraffin in cold drink bottles, while convenient and cheap, results in many poisonings and deaths each year and is vigorously discouraged.



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Farm quad: 200cc Linhai, meganies baie goed. R15 000 OHB. Vaas 081 092-7646 Marie 082 553-0801 Delmas

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7.5kW motor R8 000. Phone 072 206-2442.

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## PROPERTY FOR SALE/TO LET/WANTED

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Gariepdam: Fully furnished 3 bedroom house to let, short or long term. Contact owner on 082 326 5714

Pretoria East: (Bashewa). Gemeubileerde 1 slaapkamer tuinwoning met afdak te huur vir enkel manlike persoon. Private tuin. R3 000 per maand water en elektrisiteit ingesluit. Onmiddelik beskikbaar. Anita 084 3729 510/012 940 4447

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**Johan 082 535 4576**  
e-mail: johan@scarabsa.co.za

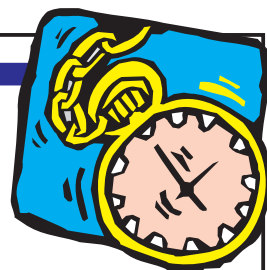
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# DIARY



**ATTENTION CRAFT MARKETS, CLUBS ETC:** If you would like details of your events included in the Diary, please fax or email your information to the Editor. For non-commercial enterprises this service is FREE.

**NOTE: FARMERS' & CRAFT MARKETS.** For a listing of REGULARLY HELD markets and fairs please see the separate section on page 55. Only markets that are held infrequently are now listed in this calendar section.

**Every Sunday**  
Cattle drive with City Slickers breakfast, Diamond X Cowboy Ranch, near Cullinan. Call Rudan on 082 410-3180 horses@diamondxranh.co.za, www.diamondx.co.za., R400 per person.

Mnandi Methodist Church, 09:00, Mnandi Centre, cnr Tulip and Short Streets, Jen 012 651-5509. Gail 072 477-0708., A small community who worship together. We have a Youth and Children's church.

Premier Mine Presbyterian Church, Lower Oak Ave, Cullinan. Garden of Remembrance (Columbarium), 079 060-9990 or 012 734-1640, Worship and Sunday school. Holy Communion for all on the 1st Sunday of every month.

**Every Monday**  
Alcoholics Anonymous. 'Courage to Change' Group meeting, 19:30, Benoni Agricultural Holdings, Marcus 082 042-7730. Warren 082 335-0049. Glen 072 239-3024., If you want to drink – that's your problem! If you want to stop – that's our problem! No fees; no dues; just concerned fellowship.

## 2015

### October

3: Aquaponics workshop hosted by Myaquaponics. R1 250 per person. Call 011 465-8579

4: Last Quarter

4: Spring Flower walk at Smuts House Museum, Jan Smuts Ave, Irene. 08:00 for 08:30. R50 per person includes bird/plant list. Contact Cheryl 083 376-1734 or friends@smutshouse.co.za.

5 - 8 Jun 2016: Crop Production Course (nine months duration), Buhle Farmers Academy, Delmas. Call 087 803-0563

9-11: Organic Life Fair, Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens. For more info go to www.organiclifeair.co.za

10 Oct: Fur & Feather Show hosted by the Gauteng Rabbit Breeders Association and

Poultryclub SA, Walkerville Showgrounds, from 0900 hrs to 1600hrs. A show for beginners, experienced breeders and farmers. Meals and refreshments on sale, no Gate Fees. For stall space call Gavin 082 554-9412 or Gareth 082 472-9037

10: Bird walk at Smuts House Museum, Jan Smuts Ave, Irene. 06:00 for 06:30. R50 per person includes bird/plant list. Contact Cheryl 083 376-1734 or friends@smutshouse.co.za.

10-11: Eastern Highveld Beekeepers Association annual honey show, Heckers Nursery, North Rand Rd, Beyers Park, Boksburg, from 09h00 to 16h00 daily. Call Mike Alter 011 965-6040.

11: Dog walk for Husky Rescue at Smuts House Museum, Jan Smuts Ave, Irene. Contact Cheryl 083 376-1734 or info@smutshouse.co.za.

12-16: Poultry Production Course, ARC Dairy Science Centre, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or aloubser@arc.agric.za.

13: New Moon

17: Christmas in October at the Bokkie Park, Southvale Road, Boksburg. Free Christmas Tree Hunt. Great shopping opportunity. Contact 072 713-3332 or info@craftsinthepark.co.za.

18: Dog walk for SPCA at Smuts House Museum, Jan Smuts Ave, Irene. Contact Cheryl 083 376-1734 or info@smutshouse.co.za.

18: Tree Walk in the Crocodile Nature Reserve. Name that tree! A walk into wooded areas to observe trees. Contact Jenny Cornish, jcornish@mweb.co.za or 082 997-7880.

20: First Quarter

20-22: Artificial Insemination for Cattle. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.

23: Pregnancy Awareness for Cattle. Rothman Livestock Training Services,

Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. www.rltsafrica.com.

24: Dog walk for Chihuahua Get Together at Smuts House Museum, Jan Smuts Ave, Irene. Contact Cheryl 083 376-1734 or info@smutshouse.co.za.

25: Aloe Valley Meander Market, 10h00 – 15h00, Serendipity Art Café, R511, Doornrandjie. Contact Debbie 072 617-7517

27: Full Moon

28: Broiler Day at Hi Performance Feeds, Meyerton. Broiler farming for beginners. Topics include nutrition & management, vaccinations & bio-security, managing broilers in their first week and diatoms to increase weight production and decrease mortalities. Booking essential. Call 016 366-1398 or 082 907-6519

30 - 1: Herb Happening weekend. Beautiful designer herb gardens, a herb market including herbal products and specialist herbs, talks by herbal experts and guided walks through the labyrinth-inspired Herb Spiral, at the Healthy Living Herbs farm in Midrand. Other attractions

## Classified Adverts

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**Auctions: Bronkhorstspuit - Every Tuesday**  
**Gys Taute 083 253 6906**  
**Delmas - 2nd & 4th Thursday**  
**Johan Taute 073 204 7646**  
Belfast: Wednesdays • Ermelo: Thursdays • Standerton: Fridays  
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# DIARY, cont'd

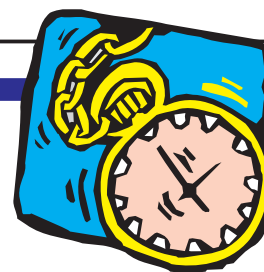
include a perfumed rose garden, lavender lane featuring 15 different lavenders, a monastic garden and refreshments overlooking the gardens at the Herb Café. Entrance R40 for adults, R30 for pensioners, R10 for children under 12. For more information contact 011 464-0921 or 0861CHIVES or visit [www.healthyliving-herbs.co.za](http://www.healthyliving-herbs.co.za) or [Chanel@herbfarm.co.za](mailto:Chanel@herbfarm.co.za). Doonholm Herb Farm, is at 264 Summit Road (R526), Midrand (GPS S25° 55.800' E 28° 03.894')

31: Victus Christi Farmers Market at Reformed Church, 24 Miles Sharp St, Rynfield, Benoni. Call George 081 381-0824 or [info@victuschristi.org.za](mailto:info@victuschristi.org.za)  
31: Snake Awareness and Venomous Snake Handling Course, Heia Safari Ranch, Plot 59, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. Contact Johan 082 494-2039.

## November

1: Dog walk for Husky Rescue at Smuts House Museum, Jan Smuts Ave, Irene. Contact Cheryl 083 376-1734 or [info@smutshouse.co.za](mailto:info@smutshouse.co.za).  
3: Last Quarter  
3-6: Pig Production Course, ARC Dairy Science Centre, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser 012 672-9153 or [aloubser@arc.agric.za](mailto:aloubser@arc.agric.za).  
9-10: Animal Husbandry/Stockman for Cattle. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. [www.rltsafrica.com](http://www.rltsafrica.com).  
11: New Moon  
11-12: Cattle Nutrition/Feed. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. [www.rltsafrica.com](http://www.rltsafrica.com).  
15: Wildflowers and Grasses in the Crocodile Nature Reserve. Contact Jenny Cornish, [jcornich@mweb.co.za](mailto:jcornich@mweb.co.za) or 082 997-7880.  
19: First Quarter  
19: Summer Graduation Ceremony, Buhle Farmers Academy, Delmas, Call 087 803-0563  
23-25: Artificial Insemination for Cattle. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. [www.rltsafrica.com](http://www.rltsafrica.com).  
25: Full Moon  
26: Pregnancy Awareness for Cattle. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman

082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. [www.rltsafrica.com](http://www.rltsafrica.com).  
27: Calf Rearing. Rothman Livestock Training Services, Irene. Call Andy 082 770-0480, Norman 082 547-7949 or Di 082 772-1208. [www.rltsafrica.com](http://www.rltsafrica.com).  
28: Christmas Market at Groenvoer, 410 Olifantsfontein Road, Midrand. Call Cathy 011 314-1211  
28: Victus Christi Farmers Market at Reformed Church, 24 Miles Sharp St, Rynfield, Benoni. Call George 081 381-0824 or [info@victuschristi.org.za](mailto:info@victuschristi.org.za)  
28: Snake Awareness and Venomous Snake Handling Course, Heia Safari Ranch, Plot 59, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. Contact Johan 082 494-2039.  
29: Dog walk for Husky Rescue at Smuts House Museum, Jan Smuts Ave, Irene. Contact Cheryl 083 376-1734 or [info@smutshouse.co.za](mailto:info@smutshouse.co.za).  
29: Aloe Valley Meander Market, 10h00 – 15h00, Serendipity Art Café, R511, Doornrandjie.  
Contact Debbie 072 617-7517



Contact Cheryl 083 376-1734 or [info@smutshouse.co.za](mailto:info@smutshouse.co.za).  
12: Victus Christi Farmers Market at Reformed Church, 24 Miles Sharp St, Rynfield, Benoni. Call George 081 381-0824 or [info@victuschristi.org.za](mailto:info@victuschristi.org.za)  
18: First Quarter  
22: Solstice  
25: Full Moon  
26: Dog walk for Dogs For Cats at Smuts House Museum, Jan Smuts Ave, Irene. Contact Cheryl 083 376-1734 or [info@smutshouse.co.za](mailto:info@smutshouse.co.za).

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## December

3: Last Quarter  
3: Carols by Candlelight at Garden World, Beyers Naude Drive, Muldersdrift. Contact Magriet or Come on 011 956-3003, 011 957-2545 or 083 997-6142.  
11: New Moon  
6: Dog walk for Dogs For Cats at Smuts House Museum, Jan Smuts Ave, Irene.

**Fruit Trees**  
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# Regular Gauteng Farmers' Food Markets

NOTE: This is a listing ONLY of markets held to a regular weekly or monthly schedule. Markets held less frequently are listed in the DIARY section of the magazine and we urge readers to check each month for dates and events of interest. We would like this list of food markets to be as comprehensive as possible. If you know of farmers' food markets that are not listed here, please email us the contact details of the organisers, and details of the market. Only FOOD markets are included. Similarly, if you know of markets in this list that have CLOSED please inform us so that we can delete incorrect or outdated information. We invite you to tell us of your experiences when visiting these markets so that we can better inform our readers. Were they as advertised? Was the produce on sale plentiful, well-priced, well-presented and fresh? Email your comments to [gautengsmallholder@gmail.com](mailto:gautengsmallholder@gmail.com)

| DAY             | WHAT                                     | WHEN           | WHERE   | WHO TO CONTACT  | WHAT TO EXPECT   |
|-----------------|--|----------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Thursday</b> |  |                |   |   |  |
| Every Thursday  | Bryanston Organic & Natural Market       | 09:00 to 15:00 | Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston.                                    | Konrad or Glenda 011 706-3671 or <a href="mailto:glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za">glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za</a> | Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce                       |
| <b>Friday</b>   |  |                |   |   |  |
| 1st Friday      | The Shed Night Market                    | 18:00 to 22:00 | 109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal  | Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456   | Food & craft market.   |
| <b>Saturday</b> |  |                |   |   |  |
| Every Saturday  | Wholefood Country Market                 | 09:00 to 14:00 | Sawasdee Exotic Nursery, cnr Main & Zinnia Roads, Kyalami                   | Robyn 083 311-4768 <a href="mailto:wholefoodmarket@gmail.com">wholefoodmarket@gmail.com</a>                                   | Variety of organic & homemade foods.   |
| Every Saturday  | The Shed Food & Craft Market             | 08:00 to 15:00 | 109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal  | Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456   | Food & craft market.   |
| Every Saturday  | Pretoria Boeremark                       | 05:30 to 09:30 | Pioneer Open Air Museum, Silverton.   | 012 804-8031 or 082 416-3900 <a href="mailto:blingsa@lantic.net">blingsa@lantic.net</a>                                       | Fresh produce and traditional bazaar treats like jaffles, kaings with pap and boerewors rolls.             |
| Every Saturday  | Bryanston Organic & Natural Market       | 09:00 to 15:00 | Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston                                     | Konrad or Glenda on 011 706-3671 <a href="mailto:glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za">glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za</a> | Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce                       |
| Every Saturday  | The Hazel Food Market                    | 08:00 to 14:00 | Greenlyn Village Centre, cor Thomas Edison & Mackenzie Sts, Menlo Park, Pta | Rietha 083 554-5636. <a href="http://www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za">www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za</a>                                 | Fresh produce straight from the producer. Coffee, eats on sale   |
| Every Saturday  | Walkerville Farmers Market               | 09:00 to 15:00 | 112 Main Road (R82), Walkerville.   | 079 076-7680 <a href="mailto:info@wfm.co.za">info@wfm.co.za</a>   | Organic produce and Crafter's Market. <a href="http://www.wfm.co.za">www.wfm.co.za</a> .                   |
| Every Saturday  | Bosheueel Fresh Produce                  | 09:00 to 15:00 | 54 Glory Road, Muldersdrift   | Mitch 082 553-2846  | Meats and vegetables, delicacies, honey, cheese, brewery, crafter's market and children's entertainment.   |
| Every Saturday  | Jozi Real Food Market                    | 08:30 to 13:00 | Pirates Sports Club, Braeside Avenue, Greenside                             | 083 532 2992 <a href="mailto:whitespace@mweb.co.za">whitespace@mweb.co.za</a>   | Arts & crafts, music & entertainment, inspired cuisine organic vegetables & coffee, pet products           |
| 1st Saturday    | The Green Market                         | 09:00 to 12:00 | Pretoria Botanical Gardens<br>2 Cussonia Avenue, Brummeria, Pretoria        | Melissa 083 562-5249  | Products ranging from solar equipment to organic food  |
| 1st Saturday    | Victus Christi Arts & Crafts Market      | 08:00 to 14:00 | 24b Miles Sharp Street, Rynfield, Benoni                                    | Schalk 082 561-9409 <a href="mailto:info@victuschristi.org.za">info@victuschristi.org.za</a>                                  | Arts & crafts, fine art, food, fresh meat & produce and home industry                                      |
| Last Saturday   | Rynoue Plaas Mark/ Rynoue Country Market | 07:00 to 14:00 | Cnr Moloto Road (R573) and Protea Road Opposite Roodeplaat Spar             | Bruce 083 442-2552<br>Sue 082 891-7546 <a href="mailto:waydack@worldonline.co.za">waydack@worldonline.co.za</a>               | Fresh vegetables, fruit in season, preserves, flower and plants, homemade food and cakes, arts and crafts. |
| Last Saturday   | Fresh2U Farmers Market                   | 08:00 to 14:00 | Corner Main Street and High Street Modderfontein (behind 33 High Street)    | Jane 083 376 5567<br>Chantelle 082 338 7818 <a href="mailto:wardek@iafrica.com">wardek@iafrica.com</a>                        | Over 50 stalls. Fresh produce, home made goods, plants, food and more.                                     |
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| Every Sunday    | Fourways Farmers Market                  | 10:00 to 15:00 | Corner Montecasino Boulevard and William Nicol Drive, Fourways              | 011 465 0827 <a href="http://www.fmarket.co.za">www.fmarket.co.za</a>   | Get your groceries...In the garden!  |
| Every Sunday    | Jozi Real Food Market                    | 09:00 to 14:00 | Northcliff Country Club, Fir Avenue, Northcliff                             | 083 532 2992 <a href="mailto:whitespace@mweb.co.za">whitespace@mweb.co.za</a>   | Arts & crafts, music & entertainment, inspired cuisine organic vegetables & coffee, pet products           |



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# Getting gathered

It isn't going to be your problem when you pop your clogs but if you're eco-conscious you'll have given some thought to how your mortal remains are to be disposed of.

Well, there's a new way of disposing of human bodies that, proponents say, minimises the impact on the planet and those left behind, namely green funerals.

First of all, of course, is the question of the coffin. Good old wood, preferably unvarnished, will eventually return to dust, but cutting down trees is hardly an eco-friendly practice. Cardboard coffins, introduced in South Africa by the late Tony Factor, sound quite practical, particularly as they can be decorated by those who are left behind – the children can have a lot of fun with that.

Other options include willow wicker, bamboo, seagrass and, presumably in America, "corn skin" coffins.

You can even order a coffin in a kit, which you will assemble yourself and put to use while still kicking. Remember when your grandparents used theirs for the storage of dried peaches? Ecopods made from papier-mâché are also gaining in popularity.

Some religions opt for a simple shroud, which is also biodegradable.

The problem, however, is not so much with the container, but the burial itself. According to the environmentalists this is because municipal legislation requires bodies to be buried at a certain depth, like DEEP.

This means that decomposition is mostly anaerobic and very slow, generating methane which slowly seeps up through the soil over many decades. Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas so traditional burials cannot be regarded as "green".

Many opt for cremation. But the problem with cremation is that the energy used in the process is considerable: some estimates suggest it may be equivalent to an 800km car journey. This also results in a lot of carbon dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, and other pollutants such as mercury vapour, furans and dioxins being released into the atmosphere.

So the calls now are for burials to take place in areas that serve a conservation purpose. "Natural burial grounds" are fields where wild flowers, shrubs and trees grow or they might be woodlands or even agricultural land used for grazing. Here the grave is not marked or personalised by any sort of permanent memorial.

The eco-puritans say that instead of showing how much you

care for your dear departed one by erecting an expensive tombstone, why not rather allow nature to receive them back in a natural cycle, letting them become part of a natural habitat?

There is apparently a great deal of resistance to this from the relatives of most deceased.

Perhaps a compromise in the form of a small marker of natural local stone or wood or planting a tree should be allowed, which would still be an eco-friendly way of commemorating the memory of the departed.

Naturally, the green funeral activists go the whole hog. They prefer a hand-dug grave. Embalming is a no-no and they are not at all keen on cremation either.

The coffin or shroud should be made of local natural, sustainable materials. The grave will not be tended, their thinking being that it is not the grave that commemorates the life lived, but rather the whole site.

They also discourage visiting the burial ground unless you can walk or cycle to and fro.

This is all in response to what is seen as the waste of land and resources in traditional cemeteries.

It is true that there are many graves that are neglected as the rest of the family dies off or moves away. There is nothing as sad as a derelict grave, the tombstone having cracked and fallen over in a storm. Upkeep of cemeteries also places a burden on ratepayers. And then there is the deeply distasteful habit of our criminal element who gouge the brass lettering off tombstones and nick anything else that they might be able to make a quick buck out of.

Personally, I quite like the idea of feeding some worms, daisies and a tree or two when I'm gone.

And, without thinking too hard I could name some people for whom this might prove more purposeful than anything they achieved while alive.



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