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FRONT COVER
"Hear ye... hear ye..." a donkey gives it his all as he brays. Which gives us the opportunity toi wish you all a lovely Festive Season.

#### **COMMENT, by Pete Bower** Apocalypse, now

ne couldn't help but notice the irony involved in the tragic forest fires which ravaged California last month: one of the fires ~ the worst as it turns out ~ was named the Camp Fire. wipedFar from being the benign and warming Boy Scout's pile of crackling logs around which one sang songs and toasted marshmallows as a kid, this killer roared through a town of 27 000 inhabitants, totally destroying it. Paradise, Ca, USA is no more. The town is gone, nothing more now than heaps of ash and debris. To give the loss of Paradise a local perspective, that's about the same as if one wiped Bronkhorstspruit off the face of the earth.

The Camp Fire and the loss of Paradise was not the only fire. Just south of Paradise another fire swept through the hills of upmarket Malibu, razing the homes of a number of celebrities and causing the evacuation of a quarter of a million people, many of whom took refuge on a long strip of sandy shoreline named Zuma Beach (not named, we are sure, after our erstwhile kleptocratic president).

Closer to home, at the same time that these fires were raging, large swathes of the Tsitsikamma Forest were also ablaze yet again, as were large swathes of forest and scrub around Sydney, Australia, yet again.

And talking of taking refuge on Zuma Beach, not many months ago residents and tourists in a Mediterranean holiday paradise near Athens were driven into the sea (and had to be plucked from the waves by rescue boats) by a killer wall of flames that destroyed their town.

What is alarming is that these fires were not once-off affairs. In all four countries they were repeats of what has happened in recent years, and often for the same reasons, and often with similarly deadly results.

Is this the "new normal?" Is this what we get for allowing global warming to affect our climate?

It must be noted that many of these disasters were not started by natural means such as lightning strikes but had man-made origins. The Camp Fire, for example, was believed to have been started by sparks from a shorting power line, while the Greek blaze was reported to have been as a result of arson, as were last year's Australian fires. But what is a natural exacerbating factor is that they were all made much more intense and deadly by a "perfect storm" of the forces of nature, including prolonged dry conditions, hot weather and howling wind.

Thankfully, Gauteng is relatively unforested, so such destructive wildfires are not possible here, although we still have devastating winter grass fires. Remember the wind-driven runaway fire which swept through Bashewa about ten years ago? But fires or not, the effects of climate change upon even us in Gauteng are becoming plain to see. For what is clear, if these wildfires are a dramatic display of climate change, is that the Apocalypse is indeed here, now. It's not a case of in five or ten or 20 years, if we don't mend our ways, we'll be facing a calamity. We are IN the calamity. Throughout Africa, as predicted, the average temperature is rising. While this is not as noticeable for residents of relatively temperate Gauteng, spare a thought for residents of hotter regions.

And maybe this is just developing into another dry summer as a result of a heightened El Nino effect, but we are, as a province, a country and a continent, going to run short of water in the future.

Meanwhile, in other news, a transport planner recently calculated that, if more roads aren't built soon, commuters can expect the trip between Johannesburg and Pretoria to become a six-hour commute by 2037, on the basis of the increasing number of vehicles. That assumes, of course, that by 2037 ~ only two decades hence ~ we will still be driving cars at all. What, by then, will they be fueled with? And why will we be driving at all? Already driverless mini-copters are being designed that will flit one over the rooftops with ease and speed. Or teleportation may be an option.

Frankly, we don't have the means to slow or prevent the real cause of climate change, which is the growing world population. The planet is, simply, too full of people, who consume too much stuff often made of substances that are finite in quantity, and once that stuff has been used we cause too much waste.

Being so negative is not a natural condition for us at the Gauteng Smallholder, and especially not at this time of festivity and good cheer. But the fact is we as a species, and the earth upon which we live, are in deep, deep trouble. And unless mankind somehow curtails its breeding habits we have no feasible means of escape.

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## Daff launches farmer's register for maplotters

mallholder producers and farmers have been urged to register during the compilation of the Producer/Farmer Register by agriculture minister Senzeni Zokwana. "Our extension officers will be approaching smallholder producers and farmers and I am urging them to open their gates to allow this project to succeed. Related to this is our request

for producers and farmers to

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volunteer the relevant information they have which is necessary for this project," said Zokwana.

"We want to emphasize that this registration project has no link to the current discourse

around expropriation of land without compensation." The project by the Dept of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (Daff) assisted by Statistics South Africa as a

expertise, will run from 2018 to 2021.

"As the Dept of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries we have asked StatSA to provide us with services in embarking on Continued on page 7

#### ARC to hold soil property course in Feb

he Agricultural Research Council (ARC) is offering a course on basic soil properties, soil analysis and interpretation of results.

The training will take place next year, running 12 to 14 February.

The theoretical work will be presented at the ARC-Soil. Climate & Water offices in Arcadia, Pretoria, and the practical work will take place at the ARC-Vegetable & Ornamental Plants at Roodeplaat.

Course content includes:

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- ☐ Soil classification (based on a new Soil Classification book published in 2018)
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- ■Soil interpretations,
- ☐ Soil fertility and soil analysis,
- ☐ Soil degradation and pollution, and,
- A practical field demonstration.

The cost is R3 500 (excluding VAT) per person, which will include lunch. There must be

a minimum of ten participants for the course to be presented.

The ARC advises that this is not an accredited course. Contact Adri Laas, Tel 012 310-2518 or e-mail adril@arc.agric.za.











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#### **NEWS**

### Smallholder marketing & logistics support app

SMALLHOLDER farmers know well the difficulties of finding buyers for their sometimes sporadic production, getting that produce to the point of sale, and receiving a decent return for their efforts. Happily, technology has now come to the fore with the launch of the Khula farmer's cellphone app, which uses cellphone technology to connect producers to customers who are looking

for locally grown fresh produce right from the soil (market access), participate in sharing a cold chain to deliver product fresh, and to access low cost inputs through group buying. "With hundreds of farmers all buying together we bring discounted inputs to you," says Khula.

The app allows farmers to list their produce and tracks real time inventory levels from

Continued on page 8

particular the smallholder

farmers across the country.

commercial sector, in

From page 5 a process of statistics collection of commercial and noncommercial farmers. The statistics on commercial farmers will be collected through a Census of Commercial Agriculture (Coca) and statistics on noncommercial farmers will be collected through the Producer/Farmer register. While the Daff will collect data on non-commercial farmers, StatsSA is collecting data on commercial agriculture on behalf of the Daff. The establishment of the Producer/Farmer Register for South Africa is going to the sector and the country:

☐ To have a basis from which the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector performance can be measured in the noncommercial sector. ☐ To enable development of indicators in line with Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and National Development Plan (NDP). These indicators will help in identifying progress in achieving government outcomes. ☐ To accurately identify smallholder farmers in terms of their geographic distribuaddress the following areas for tion and agricultural activities. ☐ To establish an up-to-date ☐ To improve the inaccurate frame of reference for and misrepresented statistics conducting agricultural sector of famers in the nonsurveys in the country. ■ To track the impact of agricultural support amongst beneficiaries in agriculture and development of strategies to help producers overcome the challenges related to natural and unnatural disasters, and, ☐ To account for beneficia-Stop crime on your property Affordable & Practical ries in agriculture who are entitled to support services. Simple Installation The project has been endorsed by the UN Food &



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Agriculture Organization.

(FAO).

#### **RAINFALL**

### Hot, dry summer: El Nino or global warming?

s this summer turning out to be exceptionally dry, the catastrophic result of global warming? Or is it just another cyclical dry season as a result of an El Nino effect in the mid-Pacific Ocean? Traditionally, highveld rain can be measured as starting in earnest from September, and building up gradually towards December with, therefore, October being a bit wetter than September and November being wetter than October. At least that's what our daily rainfall records show, collected in Bredell on the East Rand since 2000. On this basis, and bearing in Continued on page 13

#### SMALLHOLDER APP

From page 7 emerging farmers as well as basic production forecasting. The app also includes a crowd-sourcing marketplace where farmers can satisfy market demand and incoming orders.

The system includes a driver app which allows for shared logistics costs amongst many farmers. Local truck owners register on the app and get notified when a delivery job is available. The Drivers App lets

drivers manage their deliveries.

There is also a warehouse management platform. This manages farmer profiles, allows the viewing of inventory levels in the warehouse location radius, and it manages incoming products, processing and packaging inventory as well as outgoing orders.

The E-Commerce aspect of the app allows clients to make orders from a range of produce directly from the farm, clients can also select and manage their preferred suppliers, view invoices and view real time inventory as well as future production schedules.

The recent focus on the need to increase small-scale farming in the country makes the app especially important in helping them to over come the common challenges with marketing, selling and transporting their produce to supermarkets. Developed by entrepreneurs Karidas Tshintsholo and Matthew Piper, the Khula app connects rising smallscale farmers with supermarkets throughout the country. The app enables supermarkets and restaurants to order fresh produce and organic vegetables from farmers. More than 600 small-scale farmers already use the Khula app, with some of them affirming the growth it has produced in their farming business.

The app makes its money by charging a small percentage from the transaction between the farmers and the clients. The app can be downloaded and installed from your playstore.



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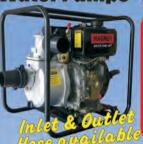
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ww.magnum power.co.za From page 8 mind that at the time of writing we are only halfway through November, the second half of November is going to have to be exceptionally wet (and that doesn't look likely from the current longrange forecasts) for this year not to be the second driest we have recorded, the three months of September to November 2002 having been the driest at a total of only 65mm, for to 16 November this year only 78mm of rain has fallen on our plot.

210mm which we enjoyed last year, and miniscule compared to the wettest period we have recorded, namely the 339mm which fell from September to November 2016.

What's the cause of this decline? Back in July the evercautious SA Weather Service was predicting a "70% chance" of a moderate El Nino effect in the early summer months. Given that weathermen thrive on complicated statistics in their predictions, that's their way of saying that they thought, back in July, there was a more than fighting chance of an El Nino affecting our summer rainfall. What is an El Nino effect? El Nino (Spanish for "Little Boy")and its counterpart La Nina (Little Girl) are colloquial names given historically by Chilean fishermen to the temperatures of offshore currents which affect Chilean

anchovy stocks available to them in December.

These current temperatures, it has been found, are in turn affected by what happens to temperatures of the water in the mid-Pacific and thus the terms have been appropriated by oceanographers who more portentiously use the term El Nino Southern Oscillation, or Enso, which is defined as "a recurring climate pattern

#### RAINFALL

involving changes in the temperature of waters in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean."

Changes of a degree in the ocean temperature, or of even a few parts of a degree, affect the amount of moisture in the atmosphere, atmosphere which is carried by the prevailing westerly winds over South America, and then on

Continued on page 15



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#### ON THE PLOT

### Here are some common poisonous plants

f you have livestock on your smallholding you need to arm yourself with knowledge of the plants that can be harmful to your

animals, and this is especially important in a dry season such as we are experiencing right now, because poisonous plants, both indigenous and

alien, often do well in drought poisoning can be direct or conditions. Or, they might be the first plants to emerge after fires or early in spring. The losses as a result of plant

indirect and include death, loss of condition and ill-thrift, poor production (for exam-Continued on page 17

From page 13

prevailing westerly winds over South America, and then on to Africa, and even on to Australia.

And it's that moisture in the atmosphere which is dumped periodically as rain.

The oscillation in temperature is, of course, not absolute,



either one way or the other, in the same way that a pendulum swings back and forth. Some years temperatures may not vary from the average at all, other years there may only be a slight variation and in others it may be extreme. Thus, the effect is not absolute either. Some years may be average, others a little wetter, or drier, than average. And others extreme.

The problem is predicting what's coming, and here the scientists are on more shaky ground.

The first difficulty they face is gathering temperature data in sufficient amounts from an

area as vast as the central Pacific Ocean.

Next, while it would be convenient if a pattern of cyclical variation could be ascertained in the data collected over time, sadly this appears not necessarily to be the case. Thus, until further underlying research is completed they are not able to say, for example, that if

Year 1 is a strong El Nino, Year 3, or 5, or 6, will be a La Nina.

The best we can glean at present, therefore, is some prediction of what might happen in the upcoming summer based on ocean temperature readings in midwinter. Hence the weathermen's "70% chance" prediction in July.



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#### ON THE PLOT

From page 15

ple, loss of milk yield) and reproductive failure (abortions, stillbirths, birth defects or failure to become pregnant).

Further economic losses include the cost of control and treatment measures (fencing, strategic grazing practices, supplementary feeding, veterinary expenses, and medicine), temporary or permanent non-utilisation of toxic pastures and diminished value of infested lands. Animals usually avoid poisonous plants, but they might eat them if they are

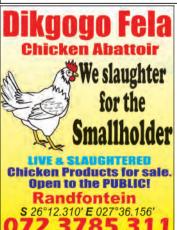


Cotyledon orbiculata

newly introduced in the area or when there is little else to eat. Animals that are moved from familiar areas to new pastures tend to graze less selectively and will become poisoned more easily.

A number of poisonous plants are also at their most poisonous in the young stage when they are most attractive to stock.

The toxicity (degree of poisonousness) of many of these plants is not affected when the plants are dried, so



the animal might unwittingly eat them in hay and then suffer the same consequences as if eaten in the field. When grazing is scarce livestock are sometimes allowed to graze along roadsides and the noxious plants often thrive there. Young animals and those in poor condition are more susceptible to poisoning. Thirsty animals look for plants with a high moisture content, which they would normally avoid. Some of these plants may be poisonous. Pregnant animals are sometimes hungrier and less selective in grazing.

The different toxins affect different organs in the body ~ some affect the heart, some the nervous system, some the liver and some the digestive system.

If the nervous system is affected, symptoms include restlessness, sensitivity to sounds and touch, highstepping, difficulty in walking, muscle tremors, aimless wandering, staggering, stumbling, pushing against objects, star-gazing, blindness, convulsions or paralysis. Cotyledon orbiculata can be the cause of this poisoning. If the digestive system is affected the animal might stop eating, salivation, or it may be dehydrated, emit fluid from the mouth and nose, vomit, show stomach pains, its stomach may stop working, it may suffer from constipation, diarrhoea or a swollen belly. In dead animals large quantities of fluid or gas in the gut may be visible, changes in colour and smell of the gut contents, reddening of areas of the gut, or bleeding.

If the urinary tract is affected the signs include little or no urine production, swelling of the belly with fluid, change in colour of the urine and the urine may contain crystals (small stones) and the animal drinks a lot. In dead animals

Continued on page 19





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Lantana camara From page 17

crystals in the kidney, swollen, wet kidneys filled with fluid, large and pale kidneys, change in shape of the kidneys and bleeding may be observed.

Plants that affect the functioning of the heart account for 33 % of all mortalities from plant poisonings of cattle and 10 % of those in small stock. (Prof C J Botha). When the heart is affected, an animal may drop dead suddenly, for example, when it is chased or when drinking water.

The animal tends to stand with its head in a low position and the stomach tucked in. It sometimes grinds its teeth or groans, and the heart rate increases. Bloat, diarrhoea and weakness of the hind legs can also occur. In the dead animal you may notice pinpoint or larger areas of bleeding, lungs swollen with fluid, fluid in the chest cavity, around the stomach and in the sac around the heart. froth in the windpipe and a heart that is enlarged, flabby or pale.

In Gauteng, poisonous plants to be on the lookout for include *Moraea pallida* (yellow tulp), *Drimia* sanguinea (Transvaal



Drimia sanguinea

slangkop), Nerium oleander (oleander or selonsroos) and Gomphocarpus fruticosus (milkweed/melkbos), all of which contain cardiac glycoside.

If the plant has affected the respiratory system signs include increased breathing rate, difficult breathing, animal grunts when breathing, frothing at the mouth. If the plant has affected the liver, there might be vomit-

Continued on page 20



Dichapetalum cymosum (Gifblaar)



#### ON THE PLOT

From page 19

ing, weight loss, yellow discoloration of membranes. swelling of the belly with fluid, sunburn, swelling of the face or sore feet.

In dead animals you may notice yellow colour of the carcass, bleeding in the body, fluid in the chest and abdomen, hard and small liver. intense reddening of the liver, soft and swollen liver, swollen gall bladder.

Lantana camara poisoning is known to damage the livers of

Other plants that affect livestock include Fadogia

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homblei which causes gousiekte, Seneciosi spp and Dichapetalum cymosum (Gifblaar).

Cattle loss is also caused by diplodiosis, which is poisoning caused by diplodia maydis, a toxic fungus which grows on grain; causes inco-ordination and paresis in cattle which are pastured on crops carrying infected cobs.

Sheep and goats can also be poisoned by Tribulus terrestris (duwweltjie, devil's thorn) causing the disease known as geeldikkop.

Unfortunately, in many cases there is no treatment for plant poisoning. In specific cases there may be treatment available (such as activated charcoal), but you first need to know which type of poisoning has occurred.

Although many animals recover, a number of plant toxins affect the animals for the rest of their lives and growth and productivity of stock as

well as their resistance to other diseases are reduced.

Poisoned animals have a better chance of surviving if they are not forced to walk long distances.

Prevention is therefore better than treatment. Try to keep your livestock away from the localities where the plants can be found. Prevent overgrazing and veld fires.

Keep animals in good condition with supplementary food and licks during the dry season. Always provide water for livestock.

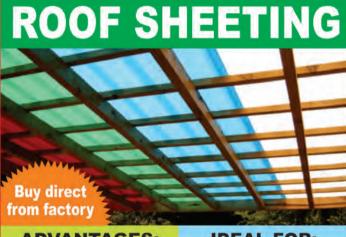
Take care when introducing animals from other areas (especially exotic breeds).

It may be necessary to eradicate some poisonous plants from your fields. Do not feed mouldy hav or hay from areas with poisonous plants.



Above: Moraea pallida (yellow tulp). Below: Nerium oleander (selonsroos or oleander), which is also poisonous to humans.





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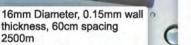
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# **BEEKEEPING** When all the bees are dea

Scientists are refining designs for a robotic bee which will pollinate crops in place of bees, but which won't make wax or honey... another in our regular series on bees and beekeeping

viven the pesticides and other destructive practices such as large-scale monoculture, as well as habitat destruction and the effects of global warming, and diseases such as American Foulbrood or Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), the days of the actual live bee as a species are probably numbered.

The usefulness of a swarm of bees in the horticultural sphere, of course, is as a natural pollinator of all manner of crops for human consumption.

Sadly, there are already many areas around the world where bees are extinct and where, as a result, pollination must be done by some other means.

In parts of China, for exam-

ple, it is not unusual in Springtime to see hordes of men and women up ladders in orchards flitting little brushes from blossom to blossom to pollenate them. But with all the problems ~ and costs ~ associated with human labour that's not likely to be a permanent solution. So it's not surprising that scientists and technicians have designed tiny electromechanical drones that will perform the task of pollination similarly to that of a bee.

Continued on page 26



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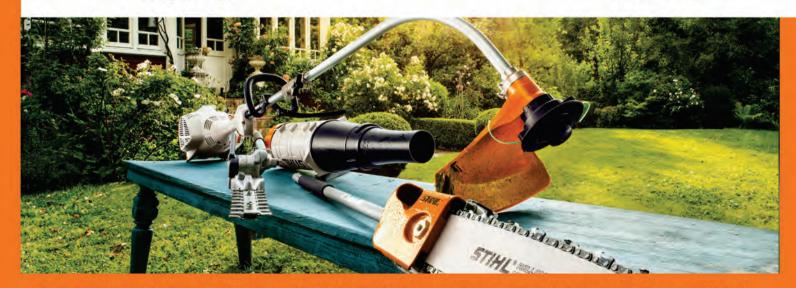
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#### LIVESTOCK

### What happens in a ruminant's belly

nutrients from plantbased food by fermenting it in a specialised stomach prior to digestion, principally through microbial action.

The Afrikaans word for a ruminant is "herkouer", literally "re-chewer" which aptly describes ruminants,

uminants are mammals which are characterised by that are able to acquire their "four" stomachs and "cud-chewing" behaviour. The cud is a food bolus that has been regurgitated.

> Often it's said that ruminants have four stomachs. In reality, their "stomach" has four parts. The four parts of the stomach have Latin names. The rumen occupies a large percentage

of the abdominal cavity of the ruminant. It is a large storage space for food that is quickly consumed, then later regurgitated, re-chewed, and re-swallowed in a process called cud chewing. Rumination or cud chewing occurs primarily when the animal is resting and not

eating. Healthy mature ruminants will chew their cuds for several hours each

The rumen is also a large fermentation vat. It contains billions of micro-organisms, including bacteria and protozoa, which allow

Continued on page 27

#### BEEKEE

From page 23 The drones would carry pollen from one plant to another, using sensors and cameras to detect the locations of the crops. Harvard University's School of **Engineering and Applied** Sciences, for example, introduced the first RoboBees in 2013.

The researchers believe these RoboBees could soon artificially pollinate fields of crops. Though Harvard's bees can do several tricks, they still can't be remotely controlled. Recently, US retail giant Walmart has filed a patent for autonomous robotic bees, technically called pollination drones, that could potentially pollinate crops just like real bees.

Walmart's robot bee patent appears along five other patents for farming drones, including one that would identify pests and another that would monitor crop health.



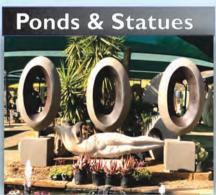
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PANEL AND SUBMERSIBLE

From page 26

ruminants to digest fibrous feeds such as grass, hay, and silage that other animals cannot efficiently utilise. Fermentation in the rumen produces enormous quantities of gas that ruminants get rid of by belching (burping). Anything that interferes with belching is life threatening to the ruminant and may result in a condition called bloat. Mild cases of bloat can usually be successful treated with an antacid.

The reticulum is closely

associated with the rumen. Contents mix continually between both sections. The reticulum looks like a "honey comb" in appearance. Relatively little digestive activity occurs in the omasum. It is called "many piles" because it contains many layers of tissue.

The abomasum is the "true" stomach of the ruminant. It has a similar function as the stomach of a non-ruminant:

secretion of enzymes and acids to break down nutri-

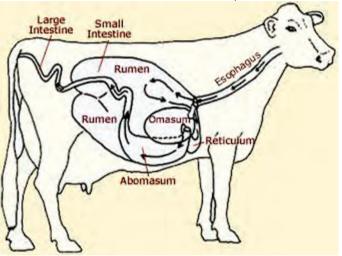
The main by-products of this digestion process are methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and manure. The CH<sub>4</sub> part is belched directly into the atmosphere, while the manure decomposes gradually, releasing nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), into the atmosphere and depletes nitrogen (a valuable fertiliser) from the system.

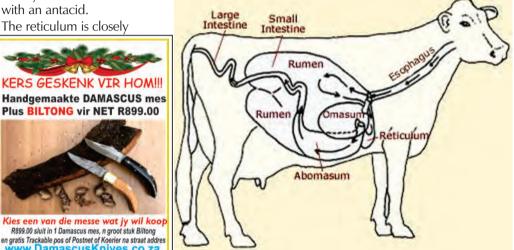
Much has been written about global warming through the increase in greenhouse gases (GHGs). Although these gases constitute just 1% of the Earth's atmosphere, they are largely responsible for regulating our climate. Agriculture's contribution as a whole to global warming is estimated at between 18% and 20%.

**IVESTOC** 

Climate change will affect animal production in four ways: the impact of changes on livestock feed-grain availability and price; the

Continued on page 28











#### LIVESTOCK

From page 27

impact on livestock pastures and forage crop production and quality; changes in livestock diseases and pests; and the direct effects of weather and extreme events on animal health, growth and reproduction.

Yet, the UN's Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) has predicted a growth in demand for livestock products of 70% by 2050, driven by a growing population. So humankind needs to think about how we can reduce the gaseous emissions of livestock, while still meeting the rising need for food security. In adopting more effective



Goats ruminating and environmentally friendly farming practices, we must work towards ensuring more efficient nutrition, starting with the fundamentals of how the ruminant derives its nourishment from grazing and browsing, often eating plant material that would not support other species.

Trials have shown that feeding calves higher amounts of concentrates has led to greater intake and less waste of nutrients, as well as reduced CH<sub>4</sub> output.

The smallholder can focus on breeding more efficient animals, which will be smaller, lighter in colour,

reproductively sound, with a high feed to milk conversion and milk output, high feed to meat conversion and substantial disease tolerance. Even within our own small flocks or herds, we can carry out selective breeding in favour of animals that are genetically more efficient at converting feed to muscle and milk. This requires careful record keeping. We can also modify production systems to become less dependent on water for production and irrigation. Part of this approach will look at using more droughtresistant dry land crops and pastures for livestock consumption.

In managing our pastures, we need to consider the characteristics of the different species. In contrast to sheep and cattle that avoid bush thickets, browsing goats prune and inhibit bush growth, which in turn will advance the growth of grasses. With the right management and grazing controls, keeping a few goats along with your sheep or cattle can be a further tool.











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From page 28

We can further consider planting modern grass varieties which are more digestible, and have a higher feed value than most native grasses.

Adjusting the lambing or kidding season to take advantage of highly nutritious new season grass growth for the ewes and nannies will lead to more efficient nutrition uptake.

We should always be striving for grassland improvement ~ by adjusting grazing intensities to match demand, forage production can be significantly increased; hard grazing followed by a fallow period can improve both quality and growth rates of the grass, as well as increasing the amount of carbon stored in the soil. We do need to acknowledge that the microbial community of the rumen is highly



Nguni ruminating

complex. A whole ecosystem within the ruminant, including hundreds of different species of microbes, has evolved over thousands of years. Removing one group of microbes affects others and can negatively impact the whole digestive process.

For example, removing archaea that produce methane by combining hydrogen and CO<sub>2</sub>, can result

in an excess of hydrogen in the cow's rumen, which may impair digestion. The

protozoa that produce the hydrogen are important for the breakdown of plant material and digestive efficiency, and ultimately the productivity of the cow. So while exploring the options of methane mitigation, we must keep in mind that removing specific players, responsible for methanogenesis, may affect the delicate balance of the microbial ecosystem within the digestive system and have a negative effect on the cow's ability to digest food and

LIVESTO

Continued on page 31







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#### WILDLIFE

# A useful critter on you plot...

#### ... but beware of rabies

ou might have seen a lithe, light brown or dark red-brown little creature on your smallholding. If it has a long, blacktipped tail it is probably a Slender Mongoose (Galerella sanguinea).

The body ranges from 27.5 to 40 cm in length, the tail can

be up to 33 cm long and the average size of these animals is between 640 and 715g in weight.

It inhabits open woodland savannah, within which it favours more heavily wooded areas. Dens are established in disused termitaria, rock

Continued on page 32

#### LIVESTOCK

From page 29 ultimately to thrive.

Feed additives might include probiotics, which can shift the microbial community in the rumen towards a lower proportion of methanogens and a higher proportion of microbes producing more volatile fatty acids, used as a source of energy by the ruminant.

Many plant secondary compounds such as tannins, saponins or essential oils have been shown to directly reduce methanogens and hydrogen production in the rumen. Some oils such as linseed, coconut, garlic and cotton oil are considered to be among the most effective additives for methane mitigation.

Although many feed additives

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have the potential to reduce methane emissions, more research is needed on the long-term effects.

A further suggestion is that replacing a pure grass diet with forage mixtures can be beneficial, as some plants with flowers could have the potential to lower methane emission due to secondary plant compounds inhibiting methanogenesis. Tannin rich legumes like big trefoil or sainfoin have also been reported to reduce methane emission. In general, cows fed on maize silage emit less methane than cows fed on grass silage.

However, smallholders should consult their veterinarians or animal nutrition specialists before making changes to the diet of their livestock.

One option for lowering the carbon footprint of livestock farming would be to offset the CH<sub>4</sub> produced by the animals by maintaining enough plants to take up an equivalent amount of CO<sub>2</sub>. However, in order to balance out the CH<sub>4</sub> emissions of one dairy cow, you would need roughly 0.5





#### WILDLIFE

From page 31 crevices, holes in the ground and hollow trees. Koppies are also frequented.

These small carnivores are very adaptive to most temperatures, climates, rain patterns and humidity levels, living in a diverse range of habitats and regions throughout their distribution range in Africa, wherever food is readily and consistently available.

The Slender Mongoose feeds primarily on grasshoppers, rodents, snakes, birds, lizards and termites. Unfortunately, they are also known to eat eggs and chicks, so if you

Slender mongoose

have one on your smallholding, you need to ensure that they can't get into your hen house.

It is a year-round breeder, but births occur more often in the rainy season. They have a gestation period of eight to nine weeks and deliver one or two litters per year, each consisting of between one and three young.

They are diurnal, so if you see a mongoose during the day it is likely to be a Slender Mongoose, as most of the other mongooses only come out at night.

They are solitary creatures and both male and female will each have their own territory. In the wild, the male territory can cover half a square kilometre and it will overlap the territories of probably two females. These females mate with the male

whose territory overlaps with theirs.

The mongoose is well known for its ability to fight and kill venomous snakes. It is adept at such tasks due to its ability to move quickly, its thick coat, and specialised acetylcholine receptors that render it resistant or immune to snake venom.

If you do have one on your plot try to ensure that your domestic animals do not engage with it, because mongooses are often carriers of rabies.



















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# Vhy keep a feathered alarm clock? uggest to most pros on the matter

uggest to most smallholders that they don't need to keep a cock with their hens and you are likely to be greeted with disbelief or derision.

However, some would say that the cons outweigh the

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A cockerel is a young male bird under a year old. Once he has had his first adult moult, at around 18 months, he is known as a rooster or

The advantage of having a

cock is that he tends to keep the flock together if they wander free range on your plot.

He calls them to let them know that he has found food and is often very gentlemanly

in letting them eat the best

He is always on the lookout for predators and sounds the alarm if there is danger. He has different calls depending upon whether the predator is on the ground or airborne. In challenge the predator, but it is not expected that he lays down his life for them.

But the most obvious reason for keep a rooster is to fertilise the eggs. So if you want to increase your flock your hens will need his services. Sadly, many modern hens do not sit on their own eggs, but that is

Hatching your own chicks, whether naturally or in an incubator inevitably means that at some stage you will have a surplus of cockerels. It is extremely difficult to find nice homes for your excess and hard to sell them for breeding if they do not

Continued on page 37









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conform to breed standards. One solution would be to fatten the cockerels for the

If you are only keeping hens for their eggs, you don't need a rooster. They will lay delicious and nutritious eggs regardless of whether there is a cock with them or not, provided they have a balanced diet, access to water and a relatively stress-free environment.

Many small-scale poultry keepers will tell you that their hens seem far happier and content in the company of a rooster, foraging and preening in his presence. Perhaps they feel a sense of security, knowing that they can let down their guard to preen or sunbathe whilst the rooster remains alert, watching over them.

So what are the disadvantages of keeping a cock?

If you are an early riser you



A rooster protecting his "girls"

won't mind the 4 am wake up call. If you have more than one rooster or your neighbours have one, the crowing is likely to go on and on, preventing you from going back to sleep even if you wanted to.

Some poultry keepers shut their roosters in the hen house for the night, in the belief that if it is dark they won't crow. However vou will have to go to great lengths to ensure that absolutely no light gets in and in fact, they often begin to crow before it gets

light, working on their own circadian rhythm.

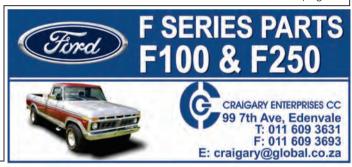
Crowing is part of the rooster's territorial display. If you have more than one rooster, or there is another in the vicinity. the crowing can increase

significantly as the roosters compete against each other to declare their patch of turf. This will happen throughout the day. Most smallholders will acceed that this is a typical sound of rural life. Some breeds can be aggressive and would not be suitable if you have young children. Nobody relishes having their legs pecked at as they move among their flock. They can also be seen sometimes chasing other poultry away as well. The Smallholder knows of a case of a small lamb bleeding to

death after a very unlucky

POULTR

Continued on page 39





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### HORSEMANSHIP

## Stuff you can do for your horse-mad kid

arents who didn't grow up with ponies themselves are often at a loss as to what to do on their properties when their own offspring declare an interest in horsemanship. As a

result, it becomes easy to be conned into buying a whole lot of expensive equipment to enhance their kids' riding, good substitutes for which are readily available and easily made at home. If you have

horses on your plot for your children here are some constructions that you can do that will make their riding a whole lot more enjoyable, and at the same time benefit them in particular ways, and

which will leave you with some money in the bank. The first thing, after having provided a stable, a feed room and a secure, lockable tack room, is to give them somewhere flat and with a soft, grippable surface, on which to exercise the horse. For a rank beginner a circular

ring, 20m in diameter,

surrounded by a chest-high post and rail fence, with a surface of river sand, will prove sufficient. The child's instructor remains in easy

shouting distance and will

exercise the child and horse Continued on page 41

From page 37

peck by a rooster which caught the poor creature's jugular vein ~ but that was an unusual incident.

If you have more than one rooster there might also be problems while dominance is established and maintained. Injuries from fighting can be

so bad that the loser has to be euthanased.

If you only have a few hens, a young testosterone-fuelled male will be constantly mounting the hens, which can cause feather loss and even damage to the 'saddle' area or wings. Their beaks also damage the skin on the back of the hen's neck. Hens lower in the pecking order are more likely to submit to mating and

A cockerel's spurs may need trimming to prevent damage to hens - if you can catch and securely hold him, this is a

therefore suffer more broken

feathers.

simple job (you can use toenail clippers and a nail file, but beware of cutting too far as this will bleed profusely). It's recommended to have a minimum cockerel to hen ratio of 1:6 and for the male to be of a similar breed and

size to the hens.

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in both directions, round and round, while the child does not have to worry unduly about steering the pony, but can concentrate on what he or she is being taught, eg how to perform a rising trot, how to hold the reins without snagging the pony's mouth, balance, foot position etc. A 20m diameter circular ring will also enable the pony or horse to be lunged for exercise on days when the child is unable to exercise the animal itself.

More ambitious, but necessary for any rider beyond a beginner, is a rectangular area measuring at least 20m x 40m, for this is the size of a small (eg, used for children and beginners) dressage arena, also called a "manege".

Although you can build it with high sides, eg post and rail fence, it is actually better to do so with a low wall of some sort, high enough only to contain the filling which, again, is commonly river sand.

Suitable material for the retaining wall are lengths of scrap rubber conveyor belting, the lower end of which is buried about 20cm into the ground to provide a flexible vertical wall.

Scrap car tyres, buried end-to end to half their diameter.

end to half their diameter also provide a good wall. Cinder blocks, Stumbelblocs about two courses high and double brick walls can also be used.

You can also make a low (30cm high) post-and-rail fence although this won't keep the sand in the arena. Sharp, inflexible material such as old corrugated iron or fibreglass sheeting should never be used because of the danger of injury to the horse or rider in a fall.

Part of the idea behind a wallless manege is that the rider must learn to control and steer the steed in addition to performing actions such as rising in the trot, standing in the stirrups etc, for any lack of control soon sees the pony leaving the arena with a quick hop over the wall and a glint in its eye.

If your budget allows, or if the rider is more advanced or adult, build a longer 20m x 60m dressage arena. In fact, if you're in it for the long haul, choose a piece of ground with at least a further **HORSEMANSHIP** 

30m so that when the need arises you can simply extend your 40m manege to a 60m one and still have sufficient space surrounding it. (There needs to be at least 5m around each side if you want to do the job properly and have the arena suitable for properly judged competitions).

If your child's interest is not in dressage at all but is solely in jumping and equitation, and if your budget allows, build as

big a sand arena that you can afford. You can always partition off a smaller area within this arena for dressage and lessons if required, using movable items such as small jumps, drums and poles to fashion the edges.

Assuming a minimum of 5m of clear area between any side of the arena, the smallest piece of flat, level and well-drained land you are looking at, therefore is 30m x 50m.

Continued on page 43



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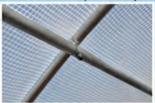
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So if your land is sloped this might require a grub-and clear to smooth it, and even an excavating-and-backfill job to level it.

Assuming a 40m arena, you will need 80m of river sand to fill it to a depth of 10cm. Over time the horse will push this material into the corners of the arena and form a "track" with its hooves. You will periodically want to loosen and smooth this. A small diamond-tine harrow drawn behind a tractor or even a quad bike or lawn tractor will do this adequately.

Or you can buy a purpose made arena rake.

You can also rotavate the arena, but the action of a rotavator over time is to break up the particles of sand into dust, which you want to avoid

With your dressage arena in place, your child will want a set of dressage letters to

enable it to practice simple dressage tests.

These can be painted on to old 5 litre paint tins, 20 litre plastic drums or pieces of sheet iron bent into a right angle. (Ideally you want the letters on two sides of your tins, drums etc so that they can be seen by the rider approaching down the side of the arena.)

The letters are A, K, E, H, C, M, B, and F, remembered by the mnemonic "All King Edward's Horses Carry Many Brave Fighters," and the letters are positioned with A in the middle of the short side at the entrance and the others following on in sequence, three down the left side, then with C in the middle of the opposite short side, and the remaining three back up the right side. The letters at either end of the long sides, ie K, H, M and F are positioned 6m in from the corners, with the remaining two midway down HORSEMANS each long side. dropping down the

The lettering for a 60m arena is different.

Sets of dressage letters can be bought from good equestrian stores and make yet another option of a horsey present for a horse-mad child at Christmas.

There are a number of other things you can do on your smallholding to make your child's riding experience more enjoyable, none of which need to be expensive, and here are some guidelines to the sort of natural obstacles you can build and the secondhand stuff you should never give away and in fact should actively seek out. Any kind of natural undulation, such as a donga, or a manmade donga such as a disused quarry, or a grassed over mound of soil or builder's rubble covered and grassed are excellent for teaching a beginner balance, and the ponies usually love cantering up one side and

dropping down the other, or jumping off the edge of the donga and cantering up out again. Hours of fun, good training, and fine exercise can thus be had.

Similarly, a couple of ditches, about 500mm deep and 500mm wide, clearly marked, make a good jump. Beginner ponies will usually stop and refuse to jump them on the first few attempts but once they

Continued on page 44



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### HORSEMANSHIP

From page 43

become used to them they will jump with ease. Fallen trees also make excellent natural jumps. Before using them, however, cut away any exposed protruding branches to make the log as smooth as possible and check that the log can be jumped safely, ie that there is a clear run-up on both sides, with no sharp turns, fences or other logs in the way.

The point of building obstacles in one's fields must always be to provide the pony and rider with an obstacle that aims to achieve a level of training and exercise, in as much safety as horsemanship allows, while at the same time not being inappropriately difficult for either the pony or its rider.

Old baths – In every paddock old baths, particularly the heavy metal ones,

make excellent water troughs. Seek these out from friends and family when they renovate their homes.

Two baths positioned end-on can also be used as an unusual water jump, albeit at a fairly advanced level, on a cross country course. They need "padding" with hay bales in front to hide the sharp edges and, possibly wings of some sort. And of course any sharp

taps must be removed.

Drums – Placed in the stable and filled to threequarters full with sand topped off with concrete (fashioned into a bowlshape), a 210 litre (44-gallon) drum makes an excellent feed trough.

Clean drums with tight-fitting

protruberances such as old

lids are excellent storage containers for pelleted feed. In the arena, drums combined with poles on top can be used to make temporary partitions for smaller arenas etc. They can be used in gymkhana games in myriad ways and they can be used in jumping arenas as both uprights when stood on end, and jumps themselves when laid down three in a row. Two rows of three lying next to one another with another row on top makes a formidable solid jump with no sharp edges.

Tyres – of all types (eg car, truck or tractor) can be used effectively in a horsey environment. As outlined above, half buried tyres can be used as arena edging and two tractor tyres half buried with three car tyres half buried between them makes a nice permanent small jump out in your field.

make a movable jump. Thread them through a pole and hang the pole off two uprights (thereby making the jump height adjustable) rather than making piles of tyres on the ground. That's because should the approaching horse decide to stop before the jump and become entangled with the tyres there is a chance that one may ride up his leg (tyres bounce) and, particularly if this should happen to his hind-leg ... and the tyre become hooked above his hock ... mayhem will ensue, you can be sure. One, two, three or more tyres stacked atop each other make

Continued on page 45



easily-adjustable, portable uprights when topped off with poles, and a combination of two single tyres and two stacks of two tyres, when correctly spaced and topped off with poles make useful cavaletti, the small jumps essential for training both horse and rider.

Tyres are also useful in the gymkhana ring.

Paint tins – filled with concrete with a 1,8m length of bamboo (or if you want to spend money on it, electrical conduit tube) a 5 litre paint tin converts into a useful flag pole for marking jumps both in the arena and on a cross country course, and they make excellent bending poles in the gymkhana ring. Also, a 5 litre paint tin when lettered can, as suggested above, be used for dressage marking.

To secure either bamboo or conduit permanently in concrete, drill two sets of 3mm holes right through, one 10cm from the bottom and another 10cm higher up and thread a short length of 3mm galvanised wire through, bending it at right angles to the hole on both sides. This provides the reinforcing which prevents the pole from pulling loose with time.

☐ Pallets – Used wooden pallets are a most useful item on your smallholding. Firstly, any fodder destined for longterm storage should be placed on pallets. This will ensure an airflow beneath which will prevent spoilage of the lower layers.

But pallets can also be used in the arena, both as jumps themselves and, with a bit of carpentry, as simple uprights. Six 1m x 1,2m Europallets (the standard jobs) leant up against each other to form a triangle will make a formidable looking spread jump of about 850mm high, or more or less depending on how far apart the bottom edges are

positioned. And, of course, in such a position the jump has its own ground line (the bottom edge of the pallets). Plus, the jump is approachable from both sides. Cut two pallets in half, place in a line on their edges and stuff the space between what was the top and bottom of the pallet with soft scrub to form a brush jump. Single bits of pallet thus stuffed make attractive rustic jump wings.

Remove two of the planks of

**HORSEMANS** a pallet and renail them on to the edge of the pallet, so that when it is on its edge the planks of the pallet are horizontal and the removed bits form feet. Two pallets thusly modified make 1m high, deep jump uprights and you slot the poles of the jump into spaces from which you removed

the planks. (You can,

edge of each pallet

additionally, fill the top

with flowers or brush to raise its height and add further substance to the jump wings). When using pallets in the arena just beware of splintered planks, loose nails etc.



Cut up pallets form a sturdy jump



### **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 FRFF

NOTE: FARMERS' & CRAFT MARKETS. For a listing of REGULARLY HELD markets and fairs please see the separate section on page 48. 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 Rayton.
Call Rudan on 082 410-3180
horses@diamondxranch.co.za,
www.diamondx.co.za, R500 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.

#### 2018

#### December

- 1: Bonaero Market, Evangelical Lutheran Church, 26 Geldenhuys Rd, Bonaero Park, 08h00-14h00. Craft, food stalls, coffee shop, white elephant, veg, books, kids' play area, safe parking. Call Magda 083 845-7660
- 1: Charity Country Market with Food & Entertainment, Uitzicht, Van der Hoff Rd extension, Pretoria West, in aid of the Manger Care Centre. 09h00 15h00. Family & pet friendly. Call 012 376-0042 or 087 944-2110
- 1: Bokkie Park Food & Craft Market at the Bokkie Park, Southvale Rd, Parkdene, Boksburg. 09h00 14h30. Huge variety of crafts and food stalls, live entertainment, tea garden, park activities, pony and camel rides. A great outing for the whole family. Contact Janine 072 713-3332
- 8: Glenfresh Xmas Night Market, 17h00 21h00, 118 Allan Rd, Coffee Shop, Glen Austin. Call Stefan, 082 829-0185 or email market@qlenfresh.co.za
- 9: Easter Highveld Beekeepers Association fundraiser for Beecon at the Barnyard Theatre, Emperor's Palace. Big Top Rock.14h00. Cash bar available and you can bring your own food. Tickets R185 each. Ticket sales close 9 Nov. Contact Taryn Flee 082 647 7322

15: Brakpan Boeremark, cor van der Walt & Dirk van der Hoff Rds, Brakpan 09h00-14h00. Over 50 stalls, food, art, crafts, etc. Call Marius 082 904-8852 or 011 744-2322 15: Northerns Beekeeping Association members' meeting. Visitors invited from Pretoria & surrounds. For times, venue and details call Riekie van den Berg 082 972-1889

28: The Market in the Garden, Garden Shop, Bram Fischer Dr, Bryanston. 09h00-15h00. Fresh produce, home industry & craft, food etc. Robyn 083 311-4768 24: Fresh2U Farmers Market, Cor Main & High Sts, Modderfontein (behind 33 High St), 08h00-14h00. Over 50 stalls, fresh produce, homemade goods, plants, food



etc. Call Jane 083 376-5567 or Chantelle 082 338-7818

24: Windpomp Market, Broodblik & Koffiepit on the R51 between Petit & Bapsfontein, 08h00-14h00. Homemade crafts, food stalls, bakery & coffee shop and entertainment. Call 083 445-1608



Auctions: Bronkhorstspruit - Every Tuesday
Gys Taute 083 253 6906

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### Regular Gauteng Farmers' Food Markets

NOTE: This is a listing ONLY of markets held weekly. Markets held less frequently (eg 1st Saturday of each month) 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 editor@gautengsmallholder.com

DAY	WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	CONTACT	WHAT TO EXPECT			
Thursday								
Every Thursday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 - 15:00	40 Culross Road, Bryanston (off Main Road)	Konrad or Glenda 011 706 3671 glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce.			
	Saturday							
Every Saturday	The Red Windmill Village Market	09:00 - 15:00	104 Main Road, Walkerville	082 627 3134 or 072 637 9355 Stalls: 082 641 8982	Fresh produce, food stalls, coffee shop, plants, arts & crafts, book etc.			
Every Saturday	Waterfall Estate Farmers Market	09:00 - 15:00	Waterfall Estate, Waterfall Cor Midrand	Robyn 083 311 4768	Fresh produce, pickles, preserves and home industry & craft, food etc. Enquire about stall prices.			
Every Saturday	Pretoria Boeremark	05:30 - 09:30	Moreleta Street entrance, Krige Street ext, Silverton	012 804 8031 or 079 987 1025	Fresh produce & traditional bazaar treats like jaffles, kaiings with pap & boerewors rolls.			
Every Saturday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 - 15:00	40 Culross Road, Bryanston (off Main Road)	Konrad or Glenda 011 706 3671 glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce.			
Every Saturday	The Hazel Food Market	08:00 - 14:00	Greenlyn Village Centre, Cor Thomas Edison & Mackenzie St, Menlo Park, Pretoria	Rietha 083 554 5636 www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za	Fresh produce straight from the producer. Coffee, eats on sale			
Every Saturday	Walkerville Farmers Market	09:00 - 15:00	112 R82 Main Road, Walkerville	079 076 7680 info@wfmarket.co.za	Fresh produce, arts & crafts, food court and kids play area.			
Every Saturday	Walkerville Country Market	09:00 - 15:00	Walkerville Country Market @ the Showgrounds	lvan 084 590 2312 market@walkervillesa.co.za	Fresh produce, crafter's market, food court, craft beer, kids play area and pet friendly.			
Every Saturday	Bosheuvel Fresh Produce	10:00 - 19:00	54 Glory Road, Muldersdrift	Mitch 082 553 2846	Outdoor country experience working farm cattle, sheep pigs. Free range meat, cheese, eggs and poultry. Craft beer			
Every Saturday	The Fresh Co-op Weekly Farmers Market	07:00 - 10:30	204 Allan Road, Glen Austin Halfway House, Gauteng	info.freshproducecoop@gmail.com 082 369 7755	Fresh produce, pickles, preserves, home industry, arts and crafts, food etc.			
Every Saturday	Jozi Real Food Market	08:30 - 13:30	Pirates Sports Club, 25 Braeside Road, Greenside	Ingrid 083 532 2992 jozirealfoodmarket@gmail.com	Outdoor pet & child friendly, organic vegetables, food, arts & crafts			
Every Saturday	Waenhuiskrans Plaas / Farmers Market	08:00 - 14:00	Cor of Veda & Enkeldoorn Ave opposite Montana Traders and next to Kollonade Centre	Phil Jansen - 083 5050 329 or office 012 567 6076 to book a stall	Stalls: Food, arts and crafts Fresh produce, eggs, chicken, meat, fruit and veg, Kiosk, Maders Pies, coffee			
Every Saturday	Glenfresh Farmers Market	08:00 - 12:30	118 Allan rd, Glen Austin	Stefan: 082 829 0185 market@glenfresh.co.za	Local naturally grown produce, hand crafted goods, home baked treats, raw honey, biltong			
Sunday								
Every Sunday	The Red Windmill Village Market	09:00 - 15:00	104 Main Road, Walkerville	082 627 3134 or 072 637 9355 Stalls: 082 641 8982	Fresh produce, food stalls, coffee shop, plants, arts & crafts, book			
Every Sunday	Fourways Farmers Market	10:00 - 15:00	Cor Montecasino Boulevard & William Nicol Drive, Fourways	011 465 0827 www.ffmarket.co.za	Get your groceries in the garden!			
Every Sunday	Carlington Food & Craft Market	09:00 - 15:00	The Bru House on the R563 Hekpoort-Krugersdorp Road	For stalls 0827824142 Debbie.Prinsloo@outlook.com	Restaurant, live music, safe kids play area, safe parking			







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### THE BACK PAGE

# **Lest we forget**

outh Africa's involvement in World War 1 is well-known, and was amply remembered last month in this, the centenary year of what was billed to be "the war to end all wars".

White South African troops fought and died bravely in many battles in the killing fields of France and Belgium, most notably remembered by their heroic involvement in the Battle of Delville Wood.

Those who died are honoured by a huge and dignified memorial at Thiepval, northern France.

The loss by drowning of hundreds of Black non-combatant troops (they were destined to be support personnel) being transported to Europe aboard the ss Mendi, struck by another vessel in the Bay of Biscay has also, now, been properly remembered and is commemorated fully. The UK government recently handed over the ship's bell, salvaged from the wreck, to the South African government.

Less well-known, maybe, was the heroic defence against Turkish forces of Square Hill in Palestine by coloured troops of the Cape Corps, probably the first section of people of colour ever to formally bear arms for South Africa.

And then, of course, there were the events in East Africa, led by Gen Jan Smuts among others, against the only German general never to have been defeated in battle, Gen Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck. With a small German force made up largely of local Askaris, von Lettow-Vorbeck led the Allied forces up hill and down dale throughout Tanganyika, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, continuing to fight on well into November 1918 because nobody bothered to tell him that the Armistice had been signed.

Upon his return to Germany he was feted as a hero, became involved in politics and is reputed to have told Adolph Hitler to "go f\*ck yourself" when the latter offered him the position of Ambassador to the Court of St James. He survived insulting Der Fuhrer, too, and lived until the age of 93, dying in 1964. More enduringly than the South African history of battles lost or won in the Great War, perhaps, is the commonly-observed tradition to mark solemn occasions by observing two minutes' silence.

The silence originates in Cape Town in World War 1 where there was a daily three-minute silence, known as the Three Minute Pause, initiated by the daily firing of the noonday gun on Signal Hill, (itself a practice that continues to this day).

This was instituted by the then Cape Town Mayor, Sir Harry Hands, at the suggestion of councillor Robert Rutherford Brydone, in May 1918, after receiving the news of the death of his son Reginald Hands by gassing on 20 April, thus adopting into public observance a gesture that had been practised sporadically in Cape Town's churches since 1916.

Signalled by the firing of the Signal Hill gun at noon, one minute was a time of thanksgiving for those who had returned

third was for all those affected by the war. Brydone and Hands organised an area where the traffic would be brought to a standstill and the first silence was observed at Cartwright's Corner in Adderley Street. As the city fell silent, a trumpeter on the balcony of the Fletcher & Cartwright's Building on the corner of Adderley and Darling Streets sounded the Last Post, and the Reveille was played at the end of the midday pause. It was repeated daily for

A Reuters correspondent in

tion of the event to London and from there word spread to Canada and Australia. Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, writing to Lord Milner in November 1919, described the silence that fell on the city during this daily ritual, and proposed that this become an official part of the annual service on Armistice Day.

He acknowledged that the idea came from Mr Brydone's Cape Town pause, saying that other towns followed its example but "nothing was as dramatic as the Cape Town observation simply because of the noonday gun".

Sir Percy's letter was received by Lord Milner on 4 November 1919, reviewed and accepted by the War Cabinet on 5 November, and immediately approved by King George V, who wrote a stirring order to all his dominions instituting the gesture. Interestingly, the Australian government recognises Edward George Honey as originator of the idea, but he only aired the suggestion nearly a year after the custom had been initiated in Cape Town.

