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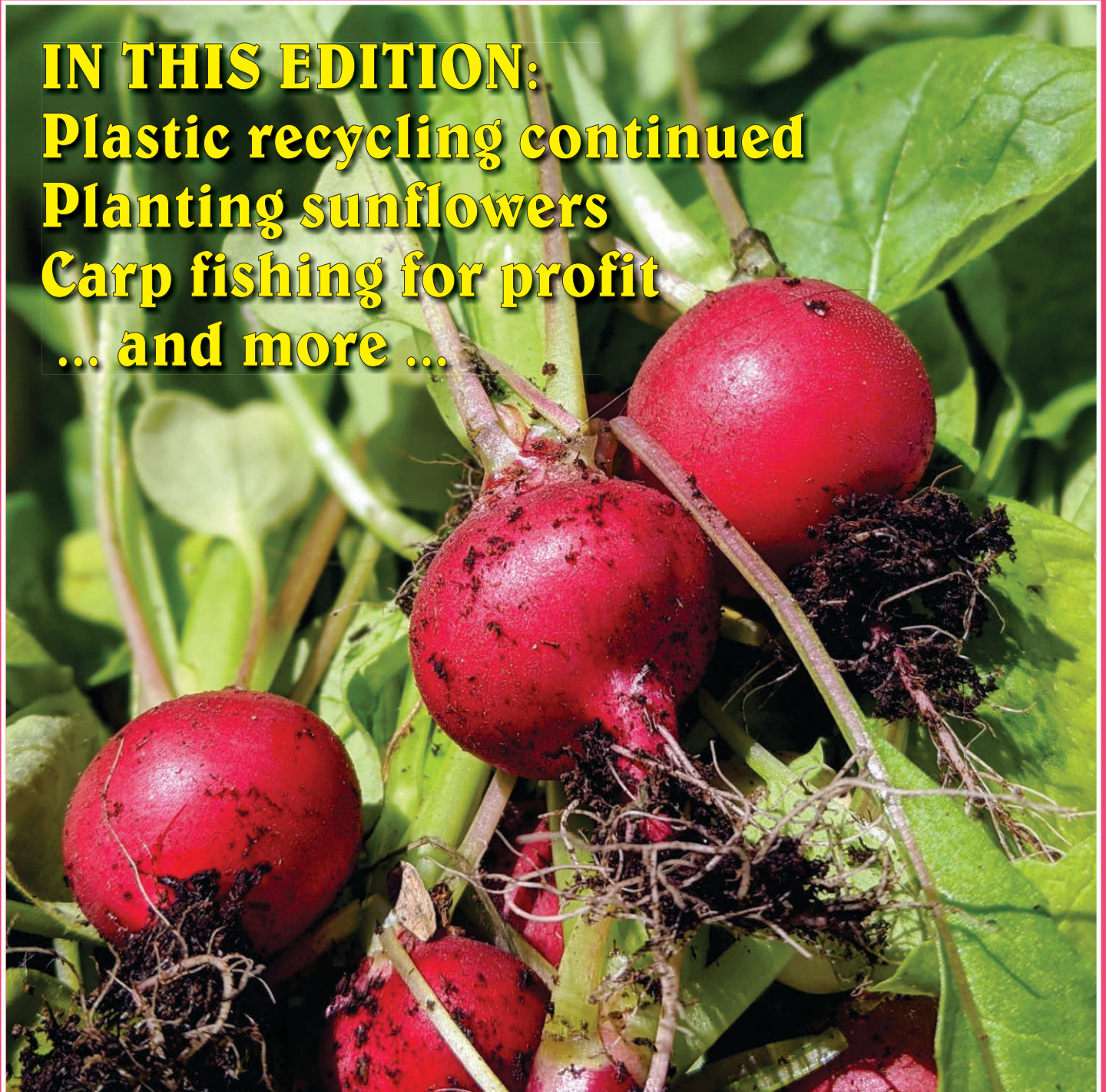
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FRONT COVER

The promise of the Springtime harvest. Fresh, crunchy radishes ready to eat.

COMMENT, by Pete Bower

Four more years



For the first time, recently, political commentators are starting to seriously suggest the demise of the ANC as the ruling party. The reasons they cite are varied, but often focus on the revelations of greed and malfeasance that have become the modus operandi of many of the ANC's bigwigs and their hangers-on.

Many South Africans are coming to view the ANC's leading hierarchy ~ certainly members thereof ~ as evil. Not just politically, but evil in the moral sense, particularly after it became clear that emergency measures put in place to provide equipment and supplies necessary in the fight against the Covid pandemic became nothing more than a stream of largesse available for looting.

And, as if that wasn't enough, the ANC's bigwigs cemented their venality in the public eye when a suggestion by President Ramaphosa that, perhaps, ANC bigwigs' family members should be prohibited from doing business with the state was roundly, soundly and very quickly shot down in flames. Because even the most dim-witted member of the ANC hierarchy can see that to prevent family members from accessing the state's tender gravy train would severely curtail their earnings.

The problem with the ANC is, of course, fundamental. It isn't, and never was, a political party in the true sense of the word. It was founded as a liberation movement, and cobbled together a host of organisations of disparate political, moral and philosophical views in the noble pursuit of political reform and racial equality. It is, by its own admission, "a broad church".

Post-1994, this state of affairs continued, with its "tripartite alliance" which brings into this broad church organised labour in the form of Cosatu and the last vestiges of communism, in the form of the SA Communist Party. How anybody aiming to run a modern avowedly capitalist country with this bunch in the tent only Alice in Wonderland could answer.

And that is the problem. The ANC is great on idealism: "Let's make healthcare more affordable for all our citizens by introducing a National Health Insurance scheme..." but hopeless at thinking through to the nuts and bolts of their ideas, (like who will pay for it?), or the consequences (like the thousands of doctors and nurses who will up sticks and leave for less onerous, better paying positions overseas).

You can see the same pattern in policy after policy, and decision after decision.

So, if the ANC finally does start to disintegrate, who takes over? The answer, at this stage, is nobody. No current political party, either to the left or to the right of the ANC is anywhere near big enough to take over governance of the country. The odd metropole or municipality, maybe, or maybe even a province or two. But the whole country? Not yet, anyway. So South Africa will enter a period of coalition government with all the messiness, horse-trading and political cynicism that this implies.

And that is not a bad thing. For even if coalition politics is messy and not particularly efficient it inevitably leads to cleaner government ~ less corruption, in other words ~ because each party in the coalition spends a lot of time and effort looking at ways to trip up and unseat their coalition partners.

But it's not just the disarray and greed of its leaders that will cause the ANC to implode. History tells us this, too. If one looks at other countries that have undergone cataclysmic liberation struggles similar to ours, it takes about 30 years for the newly elected government to rule, and then fall apart. So, given that the ANC has held the reins for the past 26 years we have only four or so more to go for history to be proven right, again.

And so things will continue to fall apart as we become like the frog in the pot on the stove. We aren't really noticing the day-by-day little infringements on our rights as citizens and inconveniences to our families, our lives and our staff that will, when the water is truly boiling, eventually kill us.

We're probably not headed as far down the chute as Zimbabwe or Venezuela because the aforementioned demise of the ANC and the coming era of coalition politics may provide something of a brake to our fall. But we've sure as hell seen the last of the sunshine from the democratic miracle that we experienced post-1994 and those commentators who are now warning that unless the government acts immediately to arrest the rot are Pollyannas.

That bird flew the coop a while back. The ANC is simply incapable of changing course and morphing into a party of probity.

Thus, darkness looms, sad to say. But it's the darkness before the dawn.

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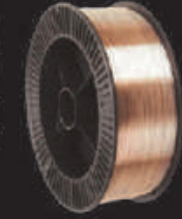
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5G tech ~ Is it just big business BS?

Sir ~ Having read the comments made on 5G in the August *Smallholder* I get the impression it was written and/or researched by someone with a certain amount of technical understanding but with a bias towards using 5G in the future. My many years in the electronic and radio engineering field gave me a chance to study and see first-hand the effects of radio signals. The article was correct on many points but failed to look

at the evidence of research done 20 years ago by many laboratories around the world, some even done by cell phone manufacturers, research results which are to this day not being published or discussed openly. Here's a little experiment if you can calculate the numbers. Take a microwave on low setting (around 100W) and assume that the food is in the middle which is about 30cm away from the 2,4GHz power source. Now work out that power relative to the power of a cell phone aerial 2cm away from the brain of the human being?

Using the square of the power to distance calculation the answer is 3W, which just happens to be about the kind of power a cell phone will use in its maximum setting. No wonder there have been so many reports of people getting headaches with long use of cell phones cooking their brains. Interestingly there have been increasingly more test reports showing that it is not necessarily the radio signal itself but the on/off bursts of radio signal data that does all the damage. That kind of damage goes for most of the living things on

the planet as they are all made of living cells and tissue. I feel that not enough research has been done in spite of there being enough laboratories with the equipment and skilled staff to be able to for once and for all produce credible data. I guess it's a case of those in power turning a blind eye with big business doing all the talking and controlling. The little man in the street not having any say in the matter, with our employees (the public servants and the politicians) making decisions not for us but for their own personal gain in conjunction with big business.

Harry Bartelink
By email

The Editor welcomes your letters, comments and opinions, but reserves the right to edit and shorten as necessary. Senders' names and addresses must be included. Afrikaans letters will be translated. Send your letters to: gautengsmallholder@gmail.com, SMS or WhatsApp 076 176 7392.



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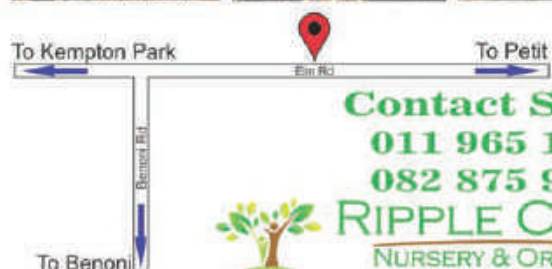
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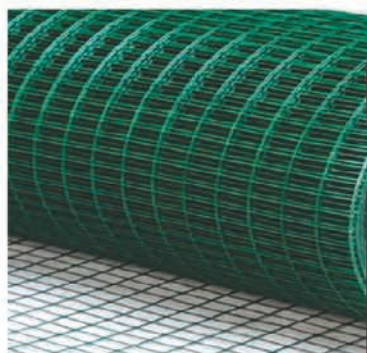
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Good rains predicted for this summer

Good news (at last) for South Africans. There's a chance, small though it may be at the moment, that the country will experience slightly better-

than-average rainfall in the coming summer.

That's because oceanographers are predicting a 60% chance of a weak La Nina effect developing over the

Central Pacific Ocean later this year.

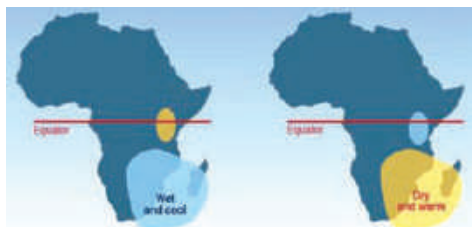
According to the SA Weather Service, "The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (Enso) is currently in a neutral state and

the forecast indicates that it will most likely move towards a weak La Nina state during spring. The likelihood of a La Nina phase during the coming summer months has drastically improved in the last few months, and it will be closely monitored as we move closer to the summer forecasts."

As a result, the multi-model rainfall forecast for early-spring (Aug to Oct) indicates increased chances of above-normal rainfall over the south-

western and southern parts of the country with drier than normal conditions throughout the rest of South Africa.

However, during spring itself (Sep-Oct-Nov) forecasts indicate increased chances of above-normal rainfall over the eastern parts of South Africa as well as the south-western parts. In general, most of the country is expected to experience above-normal temperatures during early-spring and spring. 🌱



The effects of La Nina (left) and El Niño (right). Source: Climate Prediction Centre, NCEP

MAILBAG

Burning plastic is not the solution to its disposal

Sir ~ Your short piece on plastic recycling in the August edition refers. I don't need to tell you or

your readers that plastic pollution impacts directly on our environment, polluting both land and aquatic ecosystems.

I am particularly concerned about the burning of plastic. Airborne pollutants enter the atmosphere from the open burning of plastic and from unregulated waste incineration. So this is also adding to the growing carbon dioxide emissions each year.

I'd like to draw your attention

to the SA Plastic Pact.

This is a collaboration between businesses, manufacturers, government departments and NGOs to tackle plastic waste and pollution.

Go to their website <https://www.saplasticspact.org.za/> to find out which big companies have committed themselves to dealing with the problems, particularly those arising from packaging.

Keep on banging this drum, people have to be reminded

all the time!

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Crime remains a concern in rural areas

Are “farm murders” on the rise in South Africa? Judging by the number of protests organised by farming communities in various parts of the country, and the amount of media attention that rural crime attracts, South Africans could be forgiven for believing that the farming countryside is turning into a bloodbath. A look at the statistics, and an analysis thereof, reveals otherwise.

Using officially-gathered figures (and those of the SAPS and various agricultural organisations align quite accurately), the trend over the past 20 years has been, generally, downward.

By comparison, during the same period the number of commercial farmers has decreased at a much greater rate. So, proportionally, the murders of farmers versus existing farmers will look greater. When comparing statistics, it is therefore important to know what base numbers are being used in the calculation.

In a July interview, Senior Researcher at the Institute for Security Studies, Johan Burger, made the point that, while murders appear to be very slowly on the rise in rural areas, there is also a much larger increase in general crime on farms ~ stock and crop theft, implements and machinery being stolen and so on. Could this be the reason farmers are packing up and moving to the city? And, with the economy in its current

state due to the effects of the national lockdown, these sorts of crimes can only continue to increase. In the same interview, Burger said that since lockdown began, there has been a noticeable increase in theft of food products ~ people driven to steal food in order to survive. There is also often a blurring of boundaries, with peri-

urban crime in some instances being added in to the statistics. Thus, for example, do murders that occur on the smallholdings of Gauteng qualify as farm murders? Or are they more accurately described as suburban? Some researchers declare that land with no commercial agricultural activities taking place ~ even

if it falls in a predominantly agricultural area ~ will be declared suburban. Another aspect that is misrepresented is that rural murders are politically motivated. Investigations give the lie to this idea, as the vast majority of such killings are simply criminal acts of robbery.

Similarly, investigations show
Continued on next page



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Sustainable solution to the fly problem

With summer approaching, smallholders in Gauteng will be aware that with warm weather come flies. More than just an annoyance, flies can transmit disease and affect your livestock and pets negatively. While there are a number of products on the market to help keep fly numbers down,

few are environmentally friendly, with some chemical-based solutions also not suited to use around all animals. Bio-Insectaries SA (Bisa), an Eastern Cape-based company, breeds a parasite wasp, *Muscidifurax raptor*, that feeds exclusively on fly pupae (the stage between chrysalis and adult) to control fly numbers. The wasp is a natural enemy

of the house fly and stable fly. The female wasp stings the pupa, feeds on the developing fly and can also lay her eggs in the pupa. The developing fly in the pupa is thus killed and its place taken by a new generation of wasps that emerges through the process of parasitism. Because of the stage at which the wasp takes over, the flies are

controlled before they reach maturity and therefore are unable to cause irritation and damage.

Flies do not develop immunity to the wasps as they might to pesticides and the wasps can reach hard to reach breeding places, making this a consistent, long-term solution to the fly problem. Chemicals can also

Continued on next page

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CRIME

From previous page that farm attacks are no more violent in nature than similar attacks in town. Another misconception is that whites are disproportionately the victims of rural crime. The reality is that farm workers and their families often fall victim to crime, which goes unreported in the same way that crime in townships and suburbs has

become commonplace in the public eye. What may be of benefit in rural communities is that the perpetrators of crime are more likely to be caught than their counterparts in urban areas, because close-knit farming communities are able to mobilise considerable manpower in support of the SAPS at short notice to react to violent attacks. 🌱

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ENVIRONMENT

Know your plastics and how to recycle them

Plastics come in many formulations, not all of which are commercially recyclable. So, before saving your plastic waste for the waste pickers or a recycling company it is worth

knowing what material they will accept, and that which they won't. Internationally, plastics are classified for their recycling properties according to seven numbers, contained within the international

recycling symbol of three arrows chasing each other in a triangle.

☐ Number one is PET, which stands for polyethylene terephthalate, a form of polyester.

PET is recycled into filling for jackets, duvets and pillows, fibre for creating polyester used in items such as luggage and clothing. It is used in dam linings. It is even turned back into PET bottles.

Continued on next page

PEST CONTROL

From previous page long-term solution to the fly problem. Chemicals can also be harmful to other insects in a biome ~ beetles, bees, spiders etc ~ where these wasps do not affect the

natural fauna. Bisa, which has been around since 2005, rears the parasitoid in an insectary for releasing, and sells packs of 5 000. These parasitoids are

released into hot-spots on a regular basis. The company encourages that the parasitoids are released in safe places with protection against birds, cattle thoroughfare and

chemical sprays. The programme is seasonal, with parasitoids released at regular intervals to ensure success. Bisa recommends that for smallholders, neighbours work together to identify fly hotspots in their area to better target the wasps.

The company has seen success with a number of locations in Gauteng including feedlots, dairies and horse studs. In Kameeldrift, Pretoria East a stud farm has used the wasp for many years, seeing reductions in the number of flies around their animals. The owners have seen no adverse effects from the wasps, with no harm coming to their animals because of the wasp. In combination with other methods, such as the placement of compost heaps away from stables, the stud farm is pleased with the results of this fly control.

Bisa also encourages users to reduce fly breeding by paying special attention to manure management, reducing feed spillage, reducing spilling from silage pits and prevention of water leaks.

For more information contact Bio-Insectaries SA at www.bioinsectsa.com or call 083 270 4866 or 083 566 4784.



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ENVIRONMENT

From previous page

One kilogram is equal to around 50 500ml buddy bottles.
 South Africa's PET body, Petco, has been instrumental in driving the recycling of PET which grew from only 19 000 tons recycled in 2007 to 95 800 tons in 2019. Petco believes South Africa recycles around 62% of all PET plastic ~ above the global average and much higher than global powerhouses such as the US which only recycles 29% of PET, and most European countries which recycle around 50%. However, in South Africa, the industry is limited by the facilities available at recycling plants. In

some cases, this makes certain PET items unrecyclable. Most commonly, some food packaging such as to-go sandwich containers and clear plastic fruit punnets, are widely used but unrecyclable.



PET plastic bottles.

These are thermoform PET plastics. According to Petco, "thermoform products are by their nature far more flexible than PET bottles. This means that generally speaking, the plant and machinery installed by existing PET bottle recyclers is not suitable for converting PET thermoform products into PET flake. This process represents the first step in PET recycling." Petco also says that a lot of PET thermoform products used in the South African market either contain additives or are manufactured

with a multi-layer construction, comprising PET and other plastic polymers,

which compromises the quality of end-use products. The inconsistency in thickness and colour is also a challenge. Q Number two is HDPE ~ high density polyethylene. This is thicker, often coloured, plastic such as milk bottles, motor oil bottles, cleaning products, toiletries (shampoo, body wash etc), pipes used in industry and agriculture, as well as carrier bags.

Recycled HDPE is turned into dustbins, toys, car parts such as mud flaps, rubbish bags and pipes.

Q Number three is PVC ~ polyvinyl chloride. There are two basic types of PVC, rigid and flexible, both of which are recyclable. Rigid PVC is used mostly in construction

in things such as pipes, vents, conduit and guttering. Flexible PVC is used to make shower curtains, garden hoses, gumboots, tubes used in medical procedures and cable insulation. Recycled PVC is turned into shoe soles, hoses, door mats, conduit and pipes.

Q Number four is LDPE ~ Low-density polyethylene which is used predominantly for packaging, ie things such as the bags your frozen vegetables come in, one litre milk sachets, rubbish bags, cling-film, bubble wrap. When recycled, it is turned into bin liners, irrigation pipes, and film for

Continued on next page

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From previous page construction, etc.

□ Number five is PP ~ polypropylene. PP is commonly found in the kitchen in the form of ice cream and yoghurt containers, margarine and cream cheese tubs. Other items include lunch boxes, plastic chairs and outdoor garden furniture. The screw cap bottle tops found on PET bottles are made of PP and PP is also recyclable. It can be made into coat hangers, shopping baskets, paint trays and storage containers.

□ Number six is PS ~ polystyrene. There are two types of polystyrene: we are most familiar with the type of polystyrene used by the food and restaurant industry (called

expanded PS), while high-impact polystyrene is used in the manufacture of items such as coat hangers, bread tags and CD cases.

Contrary to common understanding, polystyrene is in fact recyclable. In fact, according to Plastics SA, it is the country's sixth most recycled polymer product. Recycled polystyrene can be turned into seedling trays, toys, hair combs and light-weight cement blocks.



Plastic recycling symbols.

Polystyrene recycling is managed by the Polystyrene Association of South Africa (Pasa).

HoWever, not all recycling centres accept Polystyrene. If you are a conscious recycler, it will be best to speak to your recycling centre directly. If you rely on waste pickers to pick out your recyclables, you cannot ensure they are taking your polystyrene products.

□ Number seven indicates all other plastics. The symbol should ~ in theory ~ be accompanied by the material name, but according to Plastics SA this doesn't always happen. Common number sevens include multi-layered plastics such as toothpaste tubes and filter coffee packs. Plastics SA says these plastics can only be recycled if they can be separated.

So, overall, plastic is ~ for the most part ~ recyclable. Unfortunately, not all municipalities in Gauteng run successful recycling collection programmes ~ so consumers have to learn to do it themselves. The first step is to clean your plastics: rinse them of all food waste. They do not need to be spotless but recycling plants will turn away or discard plastics with too much organic waste ~ it affects the recycling process and can damage the machinery.

Step two is to decide whether you will recycle yourself or rely on your local waste

Continued on page 23



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From page 19

pickers. There are pros and cons to both options. Waste pickers provide a useful service in our communities and are creating some form of income for themselves and their families. But, they do not always take all recyclables because not everything is financially viable for them. For example, PP bottle tops and polystyrene will not provide a waste picker much income, so they leave those items behind. The remainder of your rubbish is then

collected and items perfectly suited for recycling end up in landfills. Doing it yourself means you need to have a) somewhere to store your recyclables. This shouldn't be a big problem for smallholders ~ find an area on your property easily concealed, perhaps behind your garage or next to your compost heap. Build a simple means of containing your waste, for example four pieces of scrap corrugated iron wired together to make a square. Into this you can throw your recyclables (and this can include plastics, glass and cans). Once full you can either pack your bakkie and trailer with the goods and take it all to your nearest recycling plant or you can find a local recycling company that

will come and collect the items for you. Or, your third option is a compromise. Separate your recyclables ~ place those items that waste pickers will take such as plastic bottles, glass etc in a bag next to your wheelie bin on rubbish day. Store the items they will not take ~ bottle tops, polystyrene etc and, when you have enough, call your local recycler to collect them. But what do we do with the things that aren't recyclable, such as plastic fruit punnets, or takeaway sandwich containers. Instead of binning them as waste, consider repurposing them. For example, use your grape punnet as a water bowl for your dogs, use them as seed bowls for outdoor birds, or storage. But, not enough of us will do

this and these containers will still end up in landfills and floating in our oceans. So, here's another option: boycott them. Stop buying items that come in these plastics, make your own sandwich and do not buy a takeaway one, only shop at stores that sell loose fruit. Write to the supermarket chains to tell them you're upset and disappointed that they continue to use non-recyclable PET plastic containers for a large portion of their fresh fruit and vegetable products. While organizations such as Petco exist to oversee the industry, the final decision of what type of packaging is used is still made by the production company. They're the ones we need to be putting pressure on to change. 🌱



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AQUACULTURE Gone fishing...

Got a dam on your plot? There has never been a better time to develop an environmentally sound fishery which will be financially successful, and carp fishing is a smart choice for clever land management. So says fisheries development expert Dave Charley, who says South Africa's climate is ideally suited for carp, allowing for enormous growth, with fish of more than 50kg possible. Moreover, carp fishing as a sport is growing exponentially worldwide.

In South Africa, the sport has gone from a handful of dedicated anglers to nearly 200 000.

Today, carp are the most sought after species for recreational anglers in Europe. In the UK alone, freshwater angling has become an industry that generates £1,4 billion (R31 billion) annually. For dam owners, even of smaller venues of just a few acres, there lies lots of potential. Cleverly stocked and properly cared for, your dam could offer impressive returns on the investment,

becoming a valuable source of alternative income.

A new phenomenon is emerging in SA, namely private dams dedicated to specimen carp fishing. Carp anglers will often fish for several days straight, so the security of a private venue, rather than potentially dangerous public dams, is highly sought after and creates a profitable business opportunity for dam owners.

Many dams are already used for fishing, but stocking fast-growing carp and managing the venue for specimen angling will certainly increase revenue, says Charley.

The average cost for carp fishing is currently between R150-R250 per 24 hours, and additionally anglers might be paying a membership fee of able to fish at a particular venue. If the syndicate or club has 20-30 members, the potential income is clear to see.

One man who has imported world class carp into South Africa is Frederick Sterzel, owner of Mega Carp International, which is the

Continued on next page



Proteas Angling Team captain and world carp angling champion Gilbert Foxcroft with a huge fully-scaled mirror carp.



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AQUACULTURE

From previous page

only fish farm in the country to breed and rear giant carp specifically for stocking into recreational fisheries.

After a lifelong interest in fishing for carp, Sterzel was aware that the biggest carp in our waters were generally small in comparison to European carp.

Since carp came to South Africa from Europe in the first place, he realised we had ended up with an inferior strain of carp.

Mega Carp now breeds and rears exceptional carp in a bio-secure environment, where they never come into contact with any diseased fish or fish with inferior genetics. The very best are selected for sale, allowing fishing venues

to prosper by stocking and growing these carp that quickly grow into giants in the right environment.

Mega Carp's original brood stock was chosen by fish experts from some of the biggest fish ever caught. They were placed on a 20 year breeding programme with annual selection of the biggest fish bred. It is a selection of fish from these giants that Sterzel imported, guaranteeing only the best outcome in terms of size, quality, shape and scale patterns. These carp are disease free with local and international disease free certificates.

Says Sterzel: "We expected a growth rate of around 3 kgs



The pattern and size of carp scales vary between individual fish, making it possible to recognise, and even name them as they grow.

per year. Nothing could have prepared us for 7kgs per year and a fish reaching 0,5m in six months!

"Simply taking carp out of the 'wild' and expecting them to

produce great fish is wishful thinking. We have kept local carp for many years prior to the Mega Carp era and had fish which after 15 years had

Continued on next page



Poor quality: "wild" carp will rarely grow as big as specially-bred fish.

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AQUACULTURE

From previous page not reached 10kg". No carp fishery management should ever allow the introduction of wild South African Carp into any venue, regardless of the size of the fish, warns Charley. This will be the only way to prevent KHV and other diseases and parasites from being introduced into bodies of water. "Fish in one venue might not show signs of disease, and transferring them into another

dam can be disastrous, resulting in total wipe-out of the fish stocks and the future of the venue for years to come. " Not only does Mega Carp supply the fish, but they also have specialists to advise on how to transform any dam into a rich aquatic environment for the carp to flourish in. Their goal is to work with nature and create optimal conditions for the carp, so the dam owner's input is minimal



Note unique pattern of the scales. after stocking the fish. Their

team of experts will also assist in creating individual and confidential long term fishery management plans. Specimen carp fishing is not about catching the most fish, but is rather the endless pursuit for big, beautiful carp. Like any animal, if put into the right environment with little competition for food, carp will thrive and grow, reaching specimen sizes within two to three years, and live for decades.

Therefore, a dam owner doesn't have to stock vast numbers of carp, but combine the fish stocking with a focus on enhancing the aquatic ecosystem of the dam. Mirror carp have varied scale patterns, so individual fish are easily recognised. Many of the biggest specimens will be fondly named by the anglers who might spend years trying to lure that one fish to the bank.

For more information: Dave Charley, Fishery Improvement Specialist, email: specimenfisheries@gmail.com

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Protect your livestock from ticks

Livestock, like all plot-animals, are susceptible to external parasites such as ticks, lice and flies, and smallholders with livestock must be aware of these parasites and their dangers. A number of species of ticks occur in Gauteng, carrying different diseases. While ticks can carry disease, even those without disease can be a problem. If nothing else, ticks are energy thieves, sapping the host's vitality. The host needs to replace the blood lost to ticks, as well as repair the damage done to the skin at the attachment site. Ticks find a host in three ways, depending on the species: some lay in wait on vegetation, attaching themselves to a host that walks by; some actively seek

Another in our series of articles, in partnership with Bayer, on common ailments in pets, livestock & poultry

hosts by running over ground and some live in the nests or shelter of their hosts.

Heartwater

Also known as Erlichiosis, it is a disease carried by the bont tick. The disease will be noticeable in sheep 7-35 days after infection and 9-29 days in cattle. Goats and game such as buffalo and antelope



Bont tick.

are also affected. Symptoms include foaming at the mouth, listlessness, high fever and loss of appetite. Infected animals start to make constant chewing movements, have difficulty breathing, and exhibit a high-stepping gait. Other symptoms include head pressing, lying down with the head pulled backwards and legs stretched out, and padding movements. Fluid builds up around the chest, belly, in the sac around the heart, the lungs, and windpipe of the infected animal. The disease is often fatal. Heartwater can occur throughout the year. The best treatment is prevention of infestation by ticks.

weakness, dry nose, diarrhoea, dull coat, listlessness, unwillingness to move, abortion and, in advanced cases, jaundice. Asiatic Redwater symptoms occur 9-14 days after infection and include fever and nervous-system symptoms such as convulsion, loss of



Adult female (left) and male (right) pantropical blue tick.

co-ordination, muscle tremors, and coma. Other symptoms include anaemia, listlessness, dry nose, and unwillingness to move, weakness, poor appetite, dull coat, abortion, diarrhoea and, in advanced cases, jaundice. Asiatic Redwater is common across Gauteng. Both African and Asiatic Redwater can lead to abortion or death shortly after birth and can also be fatal in adult animals.

Redwater

Also known as Babesiosis, this is another often fatal disease. There are two types: African and Asiatic. Ticks are infected when feeding on carrier or infected animals. The disease is transmitted from the larval stage to the nymph and adult tick. Redwater is carried by the blue tick and pantropical blue tick. African redwater disease symptoms become noticeable 7-14 days after infection and include fever, anaemia, light- to dark-brown or red urine, poor appetite,

Anaplasmosis

Another common tick-borne ailment, also known as Gallsickness, which occurs most frequently in the warmer months in Gauteng.

Prevention and treatment

For all tick-borne diseases it is prudent to prevent ticks from attaching themselves to your animals. For large herds and flocks the common method of prevention is through immersion in a medicated solution in a dipping tank, or by wetting the animal overall in a spray-race. Such facilities are, however, not warranted for a smaller number of animals, for which injectible vaccines, pour-on and spray-on preventative measures are more cost-effective.

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Sunflowers could be your next meal ticket

Over the years, sunflowers have received the status of an ideal crop to grow in South Africa under conditions of low-input farming and marginal cropping conditions, so smallholders should give the idea of growing sunflowers some consideration. Sunflower is an annual, erect, broadleaf plant with a strong taproot and prolific lateral spread of surface roots. Stems are usually round early in the season, angular and woody later in the season, and normally unbranched. Sunflower leaves are phototropic ~ that means they will follow the sun as it moves across the sky. This property has been shown to increase light interception and, possibly, photosynthesis. In South Africa, sunflower is planted from the beginning of

November to the end of December in the eastern areas and to mid-January in the western areas. In temperate regions, sunflower requires approximately eleven days from planting to emergence. Its total growing period ranges from 125 to 130 days. The rainfall requirement ranges from 500 to 1 000 mm. Sunflower is an inefficient user of water, as measured by the volume of water transpired per gram of plant above-ground dry matter. Nevertheless, it is a crop which, compared to other crops, performs well under drought conditions. This is probably the main reason for the crop's popularity in the marginal areas of



South Africa. Sunflowers' ability to produce relatively consistent yields under adverse weather conditions and their overall characteristic of drought-tolerance makes it an attractive crop. The deep, highly efficient root system is capable of drawing moisture and nutrients from deep in the soil. This has implications for crop rotation. The sunflower head is not a

single flower (as the name implies) but is made up of 1 000 to 2 000 individual flowers joined at a mutual receptacle. Choosing the correct hybrid is one of the key decisions every grower has to take before the beginning of a season. Growers should consider not just the yield, but also yield stability, yield potential and yield probability according to a realistic yield potential for each field. Plantings during November up to mid-December will

Continued on next page

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CASH CROPS

From previous page

benefit yield significantly as opposed to late season plantings in January or even February. They can be planted over a minimum of three months, which means that they're suitable for flexible crop rotation as well as fallow systems.

Moist, loosened, weed-free soil is the best medium for your crop. Use a mouldboard or chisel plough to break the surface. This will:

- Give the newly planted seed the best chance of survival.
- Allow as much rain as possible to enter the soil

instead of running off the surface.

Make it easier for your sunflowers' roots to find that water.

Get rid of weeds. They compete with the sunflowers for water and nutrients. To improve yield, examine the root development of the previous crop through profile pits. In most cases sandy soils that tend to dry out quicker will necessitate deeper planting depth. This can be a solution but it is also a risky practise as one hard rain after planting will cause a thick crust to form and the seedlings will be unlikely to emerge. Avoid poorly drained soils, and acidic soils. Rows should be 90cm to 100cm apart. Sunflower can also be grown successfully in a rotation system, with other



crops such as maize planted in rows 1,5m or even 2,1m apart. If possible, run a

millipede rotary harrow (duisendpoort) over your newly planted crop three to four days after planting, because a hard crust also causes a poor stand.

Plant population should be based on soil type, rainfall and yield potential. Keep to the optimal plant population of 35 000 to 42 000 plants per hectare and maintain a row width of 0,91m.

A good sunflower grower will nurse his fields in the first few weeks as this is the most critical time to guarantee success. Compared to grain crops, sunflower utilises soil nutrients exceptionally well. The main reason for this is the finely branched and extensive

root system. The roots come into contact with nutrients which cannot be utilised by other crops. Any fertilisation programme for sunflower should be based on soil analyses. In most cases South African sunflower is cultivated under dry land during the summer rainfall season. With regards to crop rotation, do not plant the same crop in the same field year after year. A two or three year rotation cycle is necessary to control

Continued on next page

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The diagram shows a network of pipes with multiple coupling points leading to several small trees. Below the diagram, a person's hands are shown connecting two orange plastic fittings.

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The tank is red with a black pump handle on top. It has the brand name 'MAY TARIM' and '60 L' printed on it.



CASH CROPS

From previous page diseases. Your fertiliser programme must always be based on scientific soil analysis. If it is possible, do not apply the full nitrogen requirement in one application. Rather apply half during planting and the other half at 30 to 40 days after emergence. Another vital key to achieving a good yield is weed control, especially in the first 45 days in the life of a seedling. Insect pests are a

major potential yield-reducing factors. These risks require that growers follow integrated pest management practices. The most serious diseases of sunflower are caused by fungi. Diseases include rust, downy mildew, Verticillium wilt, Sclerotinia stalk and head rot, Phoma black stem and leaf spot. Weed and pest problems decrease with crop rotation. Harvesting should commence as soon as 80% of

the sunflower heads are brown in order to minimise losses caused by birds, lodging and shattering. The back of the flower head will be brown and dry, most of the yellow petals will have dried and fallen, the seeds will be plump and the seed coats will be black and white striped. Harvesting is done either manually or mechanically. Manual harvesting is practiced by cutting the crop

with a sickle or knife. Commercially available sunflower headers are useful in decreasing loss of seed as the crop is direct combined. After harvesting all foreign materials, weed seeds, undesired seeds, stones and leaves should be sorted out from the desired seeds. Seeds should be sorted according to their colours and size in order to meet the market standards. ♻️

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Knowing how much grazing is enough

A cold, dry winter will have reduced most smallholding fields to very dry, brown veld. If you have livestock they will probably have been struggling to get any nutrition from it, if indeed you have any grazing left, and you might have been forced to buy in fodder and increase your animals' concentrate ration.

Now, therefore, would be a good time to assess whether we are keeping the right livestock and in the right numbers.

Firstly, it's important to keep breeds that are well adapted to the veld and climatic conditions of your area. It's even more important to stock the right numbers, as very often smallholders keep more animals than their veld can effectively carry.

There are fairly scientific

measures to determine how many head of livestock land can sustain, in other words the stocking rate according to the carrying capacity of the land.

"Stocking rate" generally means the number of animals on a given amount of land over a certain period of time.

"Carrying capacity" or grazing capacity is the number of

animals that your fields will support for a specified length of time or indefinitely. In order to assess the grazing capacity of your fields, you need to know the area of land required to maintain a single animal unit (AU) over an extended number of years, without deterioration of the vegetation or soil. The carrying capacity of a

smallholding will be affected by a number of factors, including soil type, vegetation, rainfall, etc.

Grazing capacity has since the early eighties been based on a large stock unit (LSU) or animal unit, defined as an ox which weighs 450 kg and which grows at 50 g per day on a grazing field which is 55% digestible. For decades it was suggested that the ox theoretically needed 75 megajoules metabolisable energy per day, which is more or less equal to 9kg of dry feed.

However more recent standards have acknowledged that animals do not eat all the grazing. They are selective, even if it is their preferred grazing. So the standard is now based on 11,25kg dry feed per day.



Rotational grazing.

Continued on next page

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From previous page

The more recent recommendation for Gauteng is between four to five and eight to ten ha per LSU, on the understanding that the animal is getting all its feeding requirements from the veld, and that the condition of the veld remains sustainable over time.

All animals can be converted to livestock units or LSU: roughly a cow = 1,10 LSU; a bull = 1,36 LSU; a horse = 1.25 LSU; a ewe = 0,17 LSU and a ram = 0,22 LSU. One LSU is equivalent to six Small Stock Units (SSU), for example 1 cow (LSU) = 6 sheep (SSUs).

When considering stocking rate we should also acknowledge that we are dealing with

animals whose body weight is changing, as some of them are still growing, so the applicable stocking rate varies over a season. Therefore, due recognition should be given to the weight of the animals when they are introduced on to the veld at the start of the grazing season.

Even if you are supplementing the feeding with concentrates and licks, you still need to take care not to overburden your paddocks.

To get the best out of your grazing, you need to know what grasses you have. There are a number of good books on South African grasses, which will help you to identify what you have. An important aspect of pasture

management is to know whether the species growing are "increasers" or "decreasers". Does a particular species tend to push other species out by overwhelming them? Very often the decreaser species are the most palatable, and are therefore grazed in preference to the increasers. Veld management also includes ensuring sufficient plant rest, optimal plant utilisation, working to improve the soil condition, controlling bush encroachment and planning for droughts.

Unfortunately many smallholders have overgrazed their pastures, so that the palatable plant material has been replaced by less palatable and less nutritious material. Not only should this veld be rested, but in some cases it should be reseeded to replace the lost palatable material. The frequency and duration of resting periods

will depend on the nature and condition of the veld and whether the veld is grazed by cattle, horses, goats or sheep. Studies have shown that 66% of South Africa's rangeland is in various stages of degradation, threatening sustainable vegetation, livestock and wildlife production.

Veld management is about balancing the needs of the livestock with the needs of the vegetation.

It also helps to know the grazing habits of the livestock in relation to the change in the pasture quality during different seasons.

To be able to rest some of your veld, you will need to divide the grazing areas into camps, so that the animals can be moved around after spending a certain amount of time in one camp. This is called rotational grazing.

The grazing capacity of veld will vary considerably from

Continued on next page



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GRAZING

From previous page area to area – and on bigger smallholdings it can vary from pasture to pasture. Annual rainfall in Gauteng varies from 560 – 710 mm and this will obviously affect the quality and quantity of grazing. Few smallholders can afford to irrigate their fields. Veld condition depends on plant cover, plant composition and production. Other factors that are considered include species composition, the

vigour of the palatable species, basal cover and soil surface condition.

It also makes sense to keep different species of animals in one camp. Each species differs in the way it grazes and what it prefers to eat, so you can increase forage utilisation. Each species favours certain plants and if you have them together in the same field most of the plants should be evenly grazed. Grazing multiple

species can also decrease undesirable plant populations and mixed grazing even helps in the management of internal parasites. Research has shown that mixed grazing results in earlier weaning and increased lamb performance, as well as increased body weight of ewes. Smallholders keep cows or horses with sheep or goats. Hens wandering amongst livestock help to keep parasites down and you can also consider

keeping ducks with pigs, as the ducks will benefit by titbits found where pigs have been rooting. Regardless of what you keep in a pasture though, be sure that there are only as many animals as the veld can support, unless you are prepared for huge feed bills. 🌱



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With the restrictions on gatherings during the Covid-19 pandemic changing frequently, we have moved our regular Diary section and our list of Farmers' Markets to our website, gautengsmallholder.co.za/diary,

to allow for real-time updates. Some farmer's markets and other events have resumed operations, under certain restrictions. If you intend on visiting a market or attending an event, we recommend contacting the organisers beforehand. You will

find contact details of these regular events on our website. If you have an event you would like listed in our online diary section, please contact us at graphics@gautengsmallholder.co.za.

Trade show updates

- Nampo Harvest Day will take place online on 9-12 September. Visit nampovirtual.co.za for more information;
- Sakeliga Kragdag has been moved to 3-5 December.

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Lockdown criminals (not the ANC...)

At last! *Mirabile dictu* (that's y'r actual Latin for "wond'rous to relate") our President retrieved his testicles from the handbag of their putative keeper, the ponderously monotonous minister of just-about-everything-but-fun Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and has allowed us to booze and smoke once more! Well, it was allowed at the time of going to press...who knows what could happen in between me writing this and whenever you read this.

Oh, happy days!!

To be honest, five months without a legal cigarette to puff doesn't worry me much, because I gave up smoking donkey's years ago. But I feel for those smokers who have been forced to resort to buying the overpriced contents of used teabags from dodgy pavement dealers to assuage their cravings.

But booze? Now that's another matter entirely. For me, a nightly tumbler or two of Scotch and soda is not the indulgence of an unrepentant alcoholic. It's a spiritual and digestive necessity. And, if I'm honest, I am suspicious of teetotal zealots. You can't trust them. Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini were teetotalers, and look where that got Europe. And so are NDZ and The Cat in the Hat Cele. Killjoys, both.

So I was deeply grateful when Cyril grew a pair and told his abolitionists to take a hike and started to normalise South African life, if only to put an end to our state-sponsored criminality. Because, although I have a Boy Scout-like tendency to "be prepared" when it comes to ensuring a stocked booze cupboard, even my stock was starting to become a bit depleted.

I had, for example, resorted to making pineapple beer. In fact I decanted and bottled my second batch the very night that Cyril unbanned booze sales. Oh, well, it was only two pineapples and some sugar that will now go down the drain...

But my interventions to ensuring a good night's sleep were nothing compared to some of the measures others took.

One lady of my acquaintance, a person who in other aspects of life is a model of probity, lives close to a shebeen. Realising that her gin stock was perilously low, she resorted to buying bootlegged hooch from the shebeen owner. At a greatly inflated price, needless to say.

For me, it does help to have adult children who are well-connected with prominent merchants in Johannesburg who kept up a pretty decent supply through the crisis.

But, of course, restaurants and pubs had a particularly difficult

time, and had to become particularly creative.

One waiter at a local Greek eatery, for example, once he had finished taking the food order, asked "would you like to order anything off-menu?" Code for what would you like to drink? Wine duly arrived in large tumblers, along with two empty Coke bottles.

A restaurant I went to on a recent Sunday brought us teapots of red, and white, along with disposable takeaway coffee cups.

Yet another served drink to diners in tin mugs. Very retro.

In all of this I was reminded of the tale of a mariner friend who found himself in a shoreside bar in a Scandinavian port one afternoon.

At the time the country concerned was going through a period of legally-enforced temperance and one could only order drink if one had food with it. So, when my friend ordered a beer, the drink was duly dispensed, and from a shelf behind him the barkeeper reached up and retrieved a side-plate that had an old cheese sandwich on it. Dry, almost

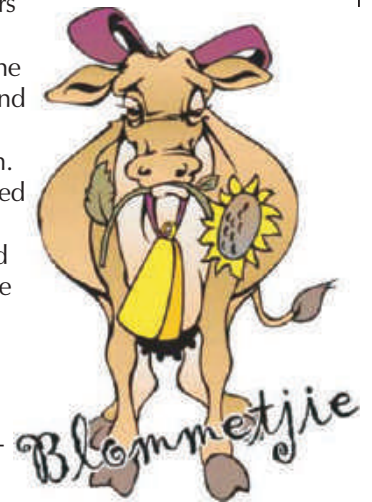
mouldy, and curled up at the edges. This he placed alongside the drink, as the necessary, legally-required "food".

As if any of these ruses would fool a copper... As if the cops themselves weren't on the take throughout...

The local spaza shop, for example, sustained a regular trade in cigarettes, simply upping the price of each packet by a sufficient margin to pay off the fuzz, who visited regularly as buyers themselves.

And if the government's killjoys thought their bans closed the bars and pubs, they were dreaming.

Asking around, it seems there are many more pubs and watering holes on the plots than the obvious ones advertising themselves with bright lights and Castle Lager signs. You just need to know where they are. I phoned an associate one afternoon in the lockdown and from the background noise it was clear that he was in his local. "Are you in the boozier?" I asked. "Sure," he replied, "we've stayed open for most of the lockdown," he added. "We just kept the door closed."



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JOHN DEERE NEW STOCK

RENET FARM STORE



MENS BUSH SHIRT
2 POCKET VENT SAFARI



LADIES BUSH SHIRT
2 POCKET STONE

FINALLY THE WAIT IS OVER
THE EXCITING NEW RANGE IS HERE!



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BACK VENT
OLIVE
from
R495⁰⁰



MENS SHIRT
CAMEL
from
R495⁰⁰

ALL BUTTON
SHIRTS FROM
R495⁰⁰

MENS SHIRT
BACK VENT
OLIVE STONE
from
R495⁰⁰



LADIES SHIRT
2X2 STRIPE
from
R495⁰⁰



LADIES PUFFER
JACKET STONE
from
R965⁰⁰



MENS RAIN JACKET
TWO COLOUR
from
R595⁰⁰



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BUSH JACKET OLIVE
from
R995⁰⁰

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OLIVE
from
R695⁰⁰

DON'T MISS OUT!

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