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FRONT COVER

The Publisher and Staff take this opportunity to wish all our readers and advertisers a peaceful and pleasant holiday season. May we all enjoy a very much better 2021, than 2020!

COMMENT, by Pete Bower Wanna farm? Just star

few weeks ago I received a call from a lady reader who said, "I have a passion for farming. I have a patch of land. Where can I get a certificate?"

A certificate for what? I asked. "I need training," she replied.

If we lived in a perfect world people such as her, with passion and drive, would easily access education and support to help them on their way to realising their dreams. The problem is that we don't live in a perfect world.

Our basic education system is, to put it mildly, broken, churning out people, year after year, who are equipped with no discernable useful skill or ability at all. And our tertiary education system lacks capacity and is expensive.

Our support system in just about any field is creaky, to say the least. If they are very lucky, or know people in high places, such people may be given access, in some form, to a patch of land, and even helped on their way by mentors who in addition to advice provide equipment, seed, and basic inputs. Oh, that such assistance should be available to all of us!

But for many, indeed most of us, the path to success in our desired field is a gritty odyssey of trial and error, maybe with a modicum of formal education along the way, but often no more than a daily grind in the school of hard knocks, hopefully sprinkled with a little bit of luck.

This I tried to impart to my lady caller. "Just start," I urged her. "Buy three chickens. Plant a row of vegetables. Do whatever it is you have a passion for, on a small scale, and work it out from there.

"Once you are hands-on in the mud, and you find you really enjoy it? That's when you enrol for a course that will give you the necessary theoretical and scientific framework to upscale your enterprise to something sustainable and, hopefully, profitable and noteworthy.

"Just do it!" I urged.

One doesn't need to be an economist to know that the problem in South Africa is poverty and inequality, on a scale that is quite unimaginably great.

While the government has talked itself into believing, presumably, that it can alleviate inequality and by extension poverty by dishing out parcels of land to individuals who say they want to work it, we all know that this isn't working optimally, or adequately. In short, the vast majority of South Africans can't rely on the state for support in any other than the smallest number of circumstances.

And, sometimes "clever" recipients of aid quickly come to grift the system. A perfect example was the Dept of Agriculture's Covid relief handouts given to qualifying small farmers under financial strain because of the lockdown. Given vouchers up to the value of R50 000, rather than cash, with which to buy inputs such as feed, seed, and fertilizer, some such recipients quickly took their vouchers to the nearest registered vendor, bought a small amount of qualifying product. And asked for the balance of the voucher to be paid out in cash. You would be extremely naïve if you believed that the cash thus received was going to be spent on the items for which it was intended.

An extension of the problem, also, is that South African society has developed a curious and unhelpful penchant for entitlement. As an individual, you come to expect the state to provide. As a citizen you should be given education, healthcare, housing, land or whatever else it is that you think you want. By some stretch of social logic such handouts are your right.

That, of course, is not how life works. My late father used to say "nothing for nothing and damn little for sixpence."

Thus, in seeking to get started doing whatever it is that you think you will enjoy doing, the way to go about it is to set goals and priorities. Saying "I have a passion for farming" and then waiting for somebody to provide you with training, and then waiting for somebody to provide you with land and somebody to provide you with basic resources and so on is to put the cart before the horse.

Start. Start small. But start. And then look for training, mentorship, assistance and support. You will find it will all fall into place, and people will be much more willing to help you and advise you if they can see that you have made an effort, however cackhanded, to begin. This, after all, is how most of us smallholders started off.

And as you do your initial research you can peruse the myriad courses and programmes offered by agricultural colleges and non-profits in and around Gauteng, a good selection of which we have highlighted for you in this edition. Merry Christmas.



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NEWS

AHS vaccine, and other measures

t's African Horse Sickness (AHS) season. AHS is caused by a virus carried by the Culicoides midge which likes wet, warm places, and comes out in the cooler parts of the day.

Therefore, keep your stable yard dry and clean. Keep your horses in their stables

through the first few hours of the day and bring them in earlier than you might otherwise do in the afternoon. Use fly control

measures in your stables. Because of the preference of the midges for wetness, it makes sense if you have Continued on next page

MAILRAG

ur speeding motorised crow of the rooster

IR ~ Our plot lies alongside a busy road in Ekurhuleni. Every morning, at exactly 6.05, we are woken, not by the crowing of cocks in our area, but by a motorcyclist who chooses that unholy hour to announce his inadequate

manhood to all and sundry by roaring up from his home in Marister and off to work on his high-powered steed. It is not as if we're all up-andabout at that hour, feeding animals or chivvying children into their school clothes. Some of us are retired and, after a lifetime of early morning starts, would like the gentle pleasure of a more

leisurely start to our day. Or at least to be awakened by birdsong, or the crowing of a rooster, rather than the screaming engine of a highpowered motorbike being pushed to its limits by its inconsiderate rider. If only Ekurhuleni's Finest could be up and about at that hour, manning a speed trap or roadblock in the area,

because this twerp breaks the speed limit every morning of the week. But that would probably be too much to ask

Travis McGowan Bredell AH



The Editor welcomes your letters, comments and opinions, but reserves the right to edit and shorten as necessary.

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NEWS

La Niña means good news for Gauteng rains

its rainy season, is enjoying better than average rains this year, the happy result of the development of a mild La Niña effect

auteng, at the start of over the central Pacific Ocean.

> A La Niña effect occurs as a result of changes in the average surface temperature of the ocean. In the case of

the La Niña, this results in wetter than average conditions in the southern hemisphere, and drier than average in the north. The converse is an El Niño

effect which results in drier than average conditions in the south and a wetter than ~ average northern hemisphere.

Continued on next page

storage and administration of the vaccine, rather than its diminished efficacy.

From previous page undulating ground with wet, boggy lowland, to try to confine your horses in the summer months to higher ground. By now you should have at least started to inoculate your horses, using the two-part vaccine available at any leading horse feed shop or co-op. Just make sure you keep it refrigerated before

use. The efficacy of the

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vaccine is short-lived, so you must do it every year. This also means that if you start your vaccination programme too early, it may have lost its effect before the end of the season.

You need to inject the horse twice, about a week or ten days apart. The second injection is not a booster of the first. Each injection contains a limited number of strains of the disease, so to cover the full spectrum of strains both injections are necessary.

There are two types of AHS, colloquially called "dikkop" and "dunkop" according to the symptoms shown by the horse. One strain is fatal, the other marginally less so. All equines, ie donkeys and mules, too, are susceptible. In recent years some equestrian have become disenchanted with the efficacy of the vaccine, manufactured by Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) of Pretoria North, claiming that OBP has become disorganised and badly run.

As a result, equestrian people are often found touting alternatives to the vaccine which may be herbal in nature, rather than vaccine based.

Vets investigating AHS deaths however, often find a possible cause of infection and death related to incorrect handling,



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LIVESTOCK

Biggest bird is an asset on a plot

he advantage of keeping ostriches on a smallholding is that they do not require a great deal of land. They are hardy and able to adapt to most environments.



From previous page

Traditionally South African ostrich farming is centred in the Western and Eastern Cape. However, drought is placing huge pressure on ostrich farmers there. There are a few ostrich farms in Gauteng and smallholders might consider keeping some of the big birds.

The world's largest living bird, an adult ostrich male stands 2,4m tall and can weigh well over 100kg. Their strong legs allow them to run up to 70km per hour when necessary, with strides of up to 8m.

Neck and thigh muscles are well developed and unfeathered.
Being diurnal, ostriches are on their feet for most of the daylight hours, except when dust-bathing, resting or nesting.

Continued on next page



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RAINFALL

The two effects appear to occur cyclically, but oceanographers are still working out if there is a predictable



pattern to that cycle, and secondly to the magnitude within that cycle of the effect in any particular year. Clearly, certainty in this regard would be the Holy Grail of long-range weather forecasters, agricultural economists and farmers alike.

The El Niño (Spanish for "little boy") and La Niña ("little girl") effects are separate from global warming trends caused by climate change, although, again, oceanographers are unclear in what ways and to what extent, if so, global warming will affect the two weather patterns.



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From previous page

They invariably sit down at dusk and remain virtually inactive throughout the night. The domesticated ostrich is sexually mature at two to three years, with the female maturing slightly earlier than the male. Male ostriches attain the black-and-white plumage when mature. Females and immature birds have a much duller colouring, with greyish-brown plumage. Flocks of ostriches are organised along similar principles to that of chickens. There is a dominant male, who has a harem of females. Amongst the females there is a dominant matriarch. All the

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females lay their eggs in one nest and these are incubated by the dominant male and the dominant hen. About 20 eggs can be accommodated and if there are more the excess ones are pushed out of the nest.

However, the major hen makes very sure that her own eggs are protected. Researchers have discovered that ostrich hens are able to recognise their own eggs. In experiments, they have numbered eggs so that they know which egg belonged to which female. Even if they shuffled the eggs around and put her eggs on the outside of



Ostriches on a plot.

the clutch, the sitting hen would immediately bring hers back to the centre. The eggs have pores that allow oxygen through the shell, which is vital for the embryos. Ostriches are seasonal breeders, breeding only during particular seasons of the year. On average, the breeding/mating season lasts from six to eight months every year, although the timing and duration of breeding can vary. There are various breeding

options for a smallholder to consider:

LIVESTOC

☐ Breeding pair ~ where one male and one female are put into an enclosure of about 0,25 ha. The pair is allowed to lay and hatch their own eggs and rear their own until three months of age;

☐ Breeding pair plus an incubator ~ where certain pairs are allowed to raise their own young while eggs of other pairs are incubated. The

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INDIGENOUS TREE NURSERY

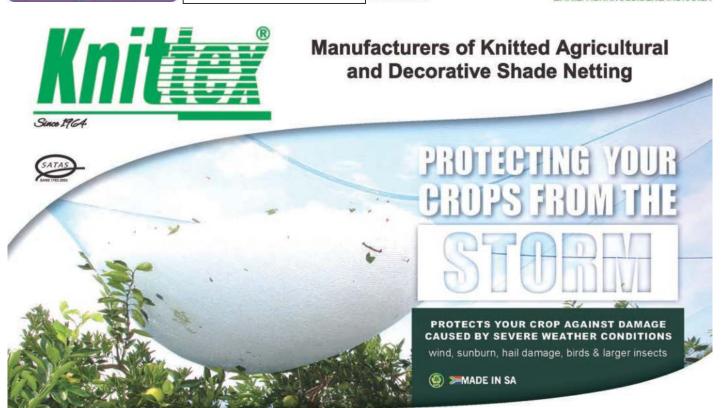


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From previous page incubated hatchlings are then put with the chicks of the breeding pairs;

- ☐ Artificial hatching ~ the eggs are collected and incubated, and the hatchlings are either sold as two-dayolds or reared artificially up to three months;
- ☐ Artificial rearing ~ where you buy chicks and rear them for three months, six months or slaughtering age.

Breeding ostriches compares very favourably with breeding cattle: where a cow produces a calf that reaches marketing weight after 654 days from conception, yielding 250kg of meat, an ostrich should produce not less than 40 chicks annually that reach marketing age after only 407 days from conception (42 days incubation + 365 days of age) and yield 1 800kg of meat, 50m² of leather and 36kg of feathers each year. Ostrich meat is highly thought of by people seeking a low-fat, low cholesterol alternative to red meat. There are very strict phytosanitary requirements if you want to export ostrich meat, but ~ Covid notwithstanding ~ it is worth investigating. On the other hand, you might just want to keep a few ostriches for your

It is not difficult to raise ostriches successfully. As with most farm animals, the critical time is the first period of the ostrich's life. An ostrich chick requires good care, a balanced diet containing all essential nutrients in optimal quantities, and the right temperature must be maintained during brooding

private purposes.



up to the age of four months. In terms of feeding, when the chicks are born their first feed will be pre-starter ration, fed from one day old to eight weeks, when they should weigh about 12kg. The ration has very high energy content and 23% protein. You then move on to starter ration, combining about 50% grains with 20% protein. Roughage such as lucerne and bran is included up to about 20%. Once the chicks reach 35kg they move on to grower ration, to help them attain a weight of about 58kg at six months.

Next is a finishing ration up to 90kg at ten months, whereupon the growth rate decreases and they require fewer nutrients, so a slaughter ration can be used. By 14 months the slaughter weight of 110kg is reached. Over the years, the ostrich industry has been hit very hard by avian flu, so biosecurity and disease monitoring in particular are important. Ostriches should only be bought or received onto a plot from sources that have previously tested negative for avian influenza.

It is essential that all ostrich

VESTOCK holdings in the country, irrespective of size and whether the ostriches are kept for the export of meat, are registered by the provincial veterinary services, as well as the SA Ostrich Business Chamber (SAOBC) which maintains a central database for the industry.

To facilitate good record keeping, each ostrich has to be identified, using a tag under the wing or in the neck, or an identification mark on the leg.

There are also very strict protocols governing the movement of ostriches.

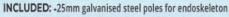


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TRAINING 2021

'Grow for good' extends to training too

here are a number of organisations that offer training in farming and agro-processing to at-risk youth, members of cooperatives, adult basic education groups and unemployed community members.

Here is a selection of some commercial and non-profit training providers in the agricultural and related spheres in and around Gauteng.

In addition to such institutions, courses in various related fields, such as horticulture, animal husbandry, veterinary science and technology are offered by academic institutions such as Tvet colleges (formerly technikons) and universities.

Food & Trees for Africa is an AgriSeta-registered training provider, fully accredited for Mixed Farming Systems and offers training to unskilled adults, which includes formal qualifications, social cohesion workshops, business training

and practical sessions.

- ☐ Buhle Farmers' Academy is a non-profit organisation near Delmas, that partners with a number of funders to offer training at considerably subsidised rates.
- ☐ The Manger Care Centre (MCC) in Ekurhuleni provides skills development as part of a programme to enable destitute and vulnerable people to rise out of poverty in a meaningful and practical way. They specialise in providing accredited agricultural training to rural communities.

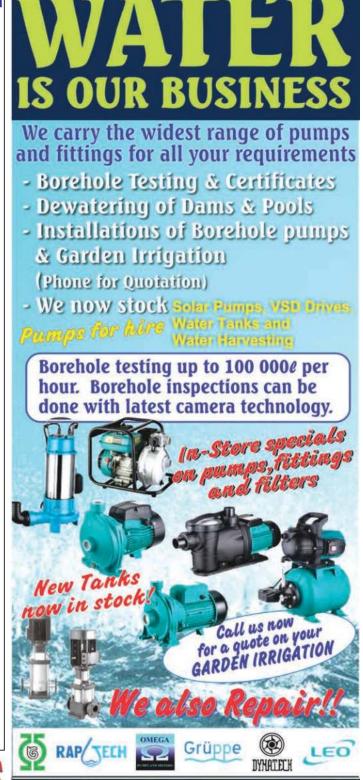
There are short courses which last for five to 14 days, short skills programmes and full learnerships, resulting in learners achieving a National Certificate in Animal or Plant Production up to NQF level 4. The learnerships take from six months to a year to complete.

Training also includes soft skills such as human resource management principles, marketing and financial management.

MCC is an accredited training provider with AgriSETA and they offer training to smallholders and farmers who are able to pay the full fees. Sometimes they train on farms, at other times they train on their own farms on

Continued on next page









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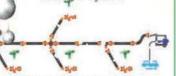


Afriq Water wishes all our customers a peaceful and joyful festive season, May your season be as meaningful to you as your continued patronage is to us.

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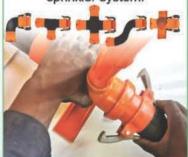
We welcome your feedback, it helps us to improve!





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The pipes, couplings and sprinkler heads are durable and easy to build your sprinkler system.



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Filters can extend the life of and lower the maintenance of your sprinkler system;

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Double Plastic Filters, Single Plastic Filters and Y-Type Filters with Screen or Disc cartridges.

Y-Type Filters (Smaller Filters)



Single Plastic Filters



Double Plastic Filters



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For Drip and Sprinkler Irrigation

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TRAINING 2021

What is a Seta? And other jargon

ome of the agricultural courses are described as "AgriSETA accredited", while some qualifications are based on "unit standards".

They sound impressive, but what do they mean? In South Africa in 1998 the Skills Development Act defined, amongst other things, a new Sector Training & Education Authority (SETA) system. To fund the system larger companies are required to make contributions to the

development of workplace skills, aiming to increase productivity levels and competitiveness, which they Continued on next page

From previous page

the East Rand, including the one on Benoni Agricultural Holdings, where they run 20 tunnels. They use the tunnels to provide seedlings on a commercial basis. In this way they are able to crosssubsidise skills development for underprivileged candidates. In other cases the

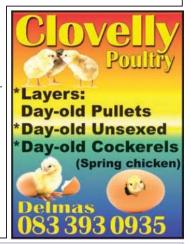


training is funded by the likes of AgriSETA, the National Development Agency and Lotto. Corporate funders also provide support.

In some cases the funders will specify who should receive the training, according to gender, age, physical abilities and economic circumstances. The training is theoretical and practical. Formal assessments take place and learners are required to develop a portfolio of evidence (POE). Once they have been found competent, the POE will be moderated, the results are submitted to the Seta and eventually a certificate will be

issued. In some cases the learners live at home and attend classes daily. Eden is a home at their Benoni premises that accommodates abused woman and children, orphans, recovering addicts, parolees, the unemployed and physically challenged people and some of them will receive the agricultural training. MCC also assists their graduates in establishing cooperatives. Training coordinator Naidene Andersson recently told the Smallholder, "Even as we speak, some of our recent graduates are planting eight hectares of spinach on a farm that we helped them to acquire."

All these NPOs will gratefully accept donations in order to be able to continue the impressive work that they are doing. \$\\$





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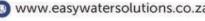


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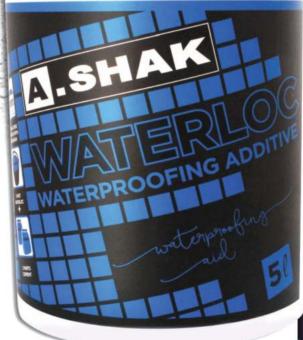
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- Allow sealing coats to dry completely.

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From previous page

do alongside their monthly SARS Paye and UIF deduc-

The SETAs operate within the **National Qualifications** Framework (NQF), which defines different levels of education and training, starting within the school system.

The matric qualification, for example, is at NOF level 4, while a bachelor's degree is at NOF level 7.

There are SETAs for every form of economic and commercial activity conceivable.

Some are very broad in their coverage, for example the CathsSETA, which is responsible for the fields of culture, the arts, tourism, hospitality, and sports sectors, while others are quite specific, such as the Agricultural SETA (AgriSETA), which sees itself as being "responsible for the skills development of the agricultural workforce, employed and unemployed."

The scope of AgriSETA covers the agricultural sector from input services to the farm, activities on the farm and the first level processing activities from the farm.

The AgriSETA does not carry out any training itself, but appoints service providers who implement learning through learnerships, skills programmes, adult education and training, and tertiary studies or in-service training. It also supports

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apprentices, interns and mentorships.

In the SETA system many certificates and diplomas were developed by subject matter experts, including some in the agricultural sector.

There are a surprising number of qualifications in different aspects of agriculture, as well as agricultural processing. It is the level of the qualification that determines at what NQF level it will fall. A

qualification itself is made up of unit standards. A unit standard is the smallest unit that can be credited to a student and it sets out a particular skill and knowledge area can be covered and assessed.

It is possible to accumulate unit standards over time, gradually building up to the achievement of an NQF qualification.

A short skills course will be

made up of a small number of unit standards.

FRAINING 2021

A certificate offered by a college will probably take a year to complete and will be made up of unit standards, with a focus on practical skills. Diplomas can be achieved after two or three years of study with an accredited service provider, while bachelor's degrees are offered by universities and usually involve four years of study.





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TRAINING 2021

Courses available in 2021

Disclaimer: While every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, we make no claim as to how complete the list is, and the information herein. We suggest you contact the institution you are interested in to check dates, costs, duration etc and to book. Further details and descriptions of course content are available under the Resources tab on our website, gautengsmallholder.co.za/documents.

African Snakebite Institute

Cradle Moon Lakeside Lodge, Muldersdrift. Call 073 186 9176. Email admin@asiorg.co.za.

COURSE	DURATION	COST	STARTING DATES Courses run throughout the year.
Snake Awareness, First Aid for Snakebite and Venomous Snake Handling	1 day	R1 650	29 Jan, 27 Feb
Snake Handling Bootcamp	1 day	R1 400	30 Jan

Agri Skills Transfer

K112 Farm, Klipfontein View, Cullinan. Call 012 460 9585. Email admin@agriskills.net.

COURSE	DURATION	COST	STARTING DATES
National Diploma: Animal Production. NQF Level 5	2 years	R84 600 (payment options available)	Feb 2021/Jul 2021
National Diploma: Plant Production. NQF Level 5	2 years	R84 600 (payment options available)	Feb 2021/Jul 2021
Distance learning, National Diploma: Animal Production. NQF Level 5	2 years	R84 600 (payment options available)	Feb 2021/Jul 2021
Distance learning, National Diploma: Plant Production. NQF Level 5	2 years	R84 600 (payment options available)	Feb 2021/Jul 2021
Short course: Basic Pig Husbandry Skills	3 days	R4 500	Feb 2021
Short course: Management of Broilers & Layers	3 days	R4 500	Feb 2021
Short course: Plant Production	3 days	R4 500	Feb 2021
Short course: Beef Cattle Production	5 days	R5 500	Feb 2021

Agricultural Research Council (ARC)

ARC Irene, Olifantsfontein Rd, Pretoria. Call 012 672 9153. Email makhanyam@arc.agric.za.

COURSE	DURATION	COST	STARTING DATES All courses are repeated throughout the year
Beef Cattle Management	5 days	R3 200	23 - 27 Mar
Small Stock Management	5 days	R3 200	15 - 19 Mar
Poultry Production	5 days	R3 200	8 - 12 Feb
Pig Production	4 days	R3 000	23 - 26 Feb
Dairy Processing: Cheese/Yoghurt	4 days	R5 000	16 - 19 Feb

TRAINING 2021

Buhle Farmers' Academy

Plot IR 205, Delmas. Call/WhatsApp 063 287 2732. Email applications@buhle.org.za.

Online course: https://learn.buhle.org.za/learn

COURSE	DURATION	COST	STARTING DATES
Livestock Production	2 ^{1/2} months	R3 750	11 Jan - 19 Mar 12 Jul - 17 Sept
Vegetable Production	3 ^{1/2} months	R3 850	8 Feb - 9 Apr 9 Aug - 8 Oct
Poultry Production	2 months	R3 250	22 Mar - 21 May 20 Sept - 19Nov
Grain Crop Production		R2 000 for a single crop production module. R5 050 for all four modules.	Module 1: 30 Nov - 18 Dec 2020. Module 2: 11 - 29 Jan 2021 Module 3: 22 Mar - 9 Apr Module 4: 24 May - 11 Jun
Tractor Operation & Maintenance	5 days	R1 500	12 - 16 Apr 11 - 15 Oct
Introduction to Layer House Management	5 days	R1 500	24 - 28 May 26 - 30 Jul
Introduction to Broiler Production	5 days	R1 500	3 - 7 May 2 - 6 Aug
Introduction to Piggery Management	5 days	R1 500	28 Jun - 2 Jul 22 - 26 Nov
Hydroponics	5 days	R1 500	5 - 9 Jul 29 Nov - 3 Dec
Seedling Production	5 days	R1 500	12 - 16 Jul 18 - 22 Oct
Intro to Basic Vegetable Production	5 days	R1 500	26 - 30 Apr 1 - 5 Nov

Honeybadger

Plot765 Wewer and Kameeldrift Road, Kameeldrift, Pretoria. Call 083 738 6202.

COURSE	DURATION	COST	STARTING DATES
Beekeeping	2 days	R1 300	Contact for dates



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Email info@ekurhuleni-agri-college.co.za.

COURSE	DURATION	COST	STARTING DATES
National Certificate: Plant Production Level 1 - 4	1 year per level	Apply per course	2 Feb
National Certificate: Animal Production Level 1 - 4	1 year per level	Apply per course	2 Feb
National Certificate: Mixed Farming System Level 1 - 2	1 year per level	Apply per course	2 Feb
National Diploma: Plant Production	3 years	Apply per course	2 Feb
National Diploma: Animal Production	3 years	Apply per course	2 Feb
National Certificate: Agriculture Equipment Services & Repair Level 2	1 year	Apply per course	2 Feb
General Education and Training Certificate: Horticulture Level 1	1 year	Apply per course	2 Feb
Short Course: Plant production	5 - 21 days	R6 000	2 Feb
Short Course: Animal production	5 - 21 days	R6 000	2 Feb
Short Course: Agri-business	5 - 21 days	R6 000	2 Feb





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TRAINING 2021

Farmers' Academy

Cradle Farms, Plot 26, R563, Zwartkranz. Call 010 444 0252. Email info@farmers.academy

COURSE	DURATION	COST	DATES
Animal Husbandry	4 days	R4 020	Contact for dates
Poultry Production	4 days	R4 020	Contact for dates
Operate a tractor	4 days	R4 020	Contact for dates
Hydroponics	4 days	R4 020	Contact for dates
Online course: Broiler Production	In your own time	R250	Contact for dates
Online course: Successful Hydroponic Farming	In your own time	R350	Contact for dates

Hygro Training College
Plot no. 23, Road no. 6, Eloff. Call 071 354 9535/076 814 0478. Email chantelle@hygro.co.za or nico@hygro.co.za.

COURSE	DURATION	COST	STARTING DATES
Plant production NQF Level 1	12 months	R24 000 excluding vat	25 Jan
Tractor Driving	1 week	R2 500 excluding vat	22 Feb
Nature Conservation and Sustainable Farming NQF Level 1-4	6 weeks	R5 750 incl vat	15 Feb
Animal Handling and Animal Health NQF Level 1-4	2 months	R9 500 incl vat	23 Mar
Poultry Production NQF Level 1-2	5 weeks	R5 250 incl vat	5 Apr
Hydroponic Production NQF Level 1,2 & 4	3 weeks	R3 000 incl vat	10 May



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TRAINING 2021

Distance learning, contact learning ~ what works?

n line with the trend towards the internet, and not only because of the Covid lockdown, there has been an increase in online courses and distance learning in the agricultural sector, but given the practical nature of farming it is difficult to imagine how effective this is. We asked Lizette Brazendale, managing director of Agri Skills Transfer, if they had noticed an increase in interest in online courses during lockdown. "We noticed a spike of interest in our short

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courses during that time, but after about a month it slowed down again.

What people find more effective is blended learning, where some of the theory can be covered through distance learning, but then the practical skills will be achieved through contact training."

Agri Skills Transfer's courses are all offered in English, but as most of the candidates do not have English as their mother tongue, the face-toface classes are more

Some of the practical work can be done on the company's small farm outside Cullinan. However, learners are encouraged do their practical work on farms near to where they live, particularly larger commercial farms, where they gain wider experience. The course facilita-

tor will visit them on their farms, in order to sign off their logbooks.

The logbook is supplied as part of the course materials and is drawn up to cover the specific outcomes and assessment criteria of the various unit standards that are being covered.

Short courses are more popular, says Brazendale, particularly the animal production courses. They are practical by nature and last for three to five days. Learners are assessed during the training and, when found competent, will be accredited with the credits for that unit standard. "Once a student has

attended one short course, they invariably come back to undertake further courses," she adds.

Where learners are already working on a farm, some of their fees are paid for by their employers, but many of the learners take advantage of a payment plan offered by Agri Skills Transfer, or take bank loans to cover their fees. There are some bursaries available.





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IN THE GARDEN

Using intercropping for your vegetables

et Mother Nature show you how to make the most of your resources. Since nature consistently integrates her plants and animals into a diverse landscape, a major tenet of sustainable agriculture is to create and maintain diversity. Nature is also efficient. There are no waste products in nature. Outputs from one

organism become inputs for another. One organism dies and becomes food for other organisms.

This natural order of things is, of course, directly contrary to modern agricultural practice, where everything that could conceivably compete with the desired crop is removed, in a practice called monoculture.

But there are alternatives, at all levels and scales of agricultural activity. One of the ways commercial farmers can achieve (at least some) diversity in their lands is through intercropping. The same principles can be

applied at smallholding levels where more suitable terms for the practice would be companion planting and

polyculture ~ both terms for planting different plants or vegetables together in the same space at the same time. There are various advantages to using this form of cultiva-

- ☐ Better use is made of your growing area;
- ☐ There is increased disease resistance;
- ☐ There is greater suppression of weeds;
- ☐ There is greater resistance to insects;
- Insect predators are attracted;
- Better soil management should result;
- ☐ There is increased soil micro-organism activity;
- ☐ Physical spatial interactions can result;
- Plant diversity creates overall plant health. At the larger end of the scale, in terms of spatial arrangement, there are at least four basic possibilities in intercropping. Most practical systems are variations of
- Row intercropping ~ growing two or more crops at the same time with at least one crop planted in rows.

these:

- Strip intercropping ~ growing two or more crops together in strips wide enough to permit separate crop production but close enough for the crops to interact.
- Mixed intercropping ~ growing two or more crops together in no distinct row arrangement.
- Relay intercropping ~ planting a second crop into a Continued on next page



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Incl

From previous page

standing crop at a time when the standing crop is at its reproductive stage but before harvesting.

In the case of mixed intercropping, to optimize plant density, the seeding rate of each crop in the mixture should be adjusted below its full rate. By reducing the seeding rates of each species in the mix, the crops have a chance to yield well within the mixture.

Another option is to plan seeding so that the plants mature at different times. Planting intercrops that feature staggered maturity dates takes advantage of variations in peak resource demands for nutrients, water, and sunlight. Having one crop mature before its companion crop lessens the competition between the two crops. This is especially helpful when you are growing for your family and household as it will ensure a steady

supply of varied vegetables for your plate ~ you won't be stuck eating beetroot for six days in a row because they've all ripened at the same time.

Because we like to grow maize on our highveld plots, the Central American traditional "holy trinity" planting system is a classic example of intercropping: mealies are planted in their usual rows; runner beans are planted next to the mealies, so that when they grow they climb up the mealie stalks; squash, pumpkin and gourd seeds are also planted between the mealies in the rows. Apart from providing a crop for the table, the beans, being excellent fixers of nitrogen, provide nutrition for the mealies. And the pumpkins, squash and gourds, with their large leaves and rampant growing habit, inhibit the emergence of weeds between the rows by blocking out sunlight, and by covering the





Row intercropping.

soil, help to keep it cool and retain moisture.

And, planting all three species in the same row enables, when everything is still small, mechanical cultivation of weeds between the rows. In Native American culture, these three plants are used together in a dish called the Three Sisters soup.

Another form of intercropping is the so-called "Square Foot Garden" which, while it was designed as a practical method of planning a home vegetable garden in a very small space, can be scaled up for use in larger spaces simply by duplicating the beds as required.

In this method, instead of planting your vegetables in rows, rather work in squares. Choose a spot which gets good sunlight, ideally east or north-east facing, and measure 120cm x 120cm. You can create a box effect by placing untreated wood, stone, cinder blocks or bricks around the edge of your square. Prepare the soil for planting by digging it over and adding compost and well rotted kraal manure. (Manure should be black, crumbly and earth-smelling, otherwise it will burn the plants.) You can also use peat-moss or vermiculite.

Continued on next page



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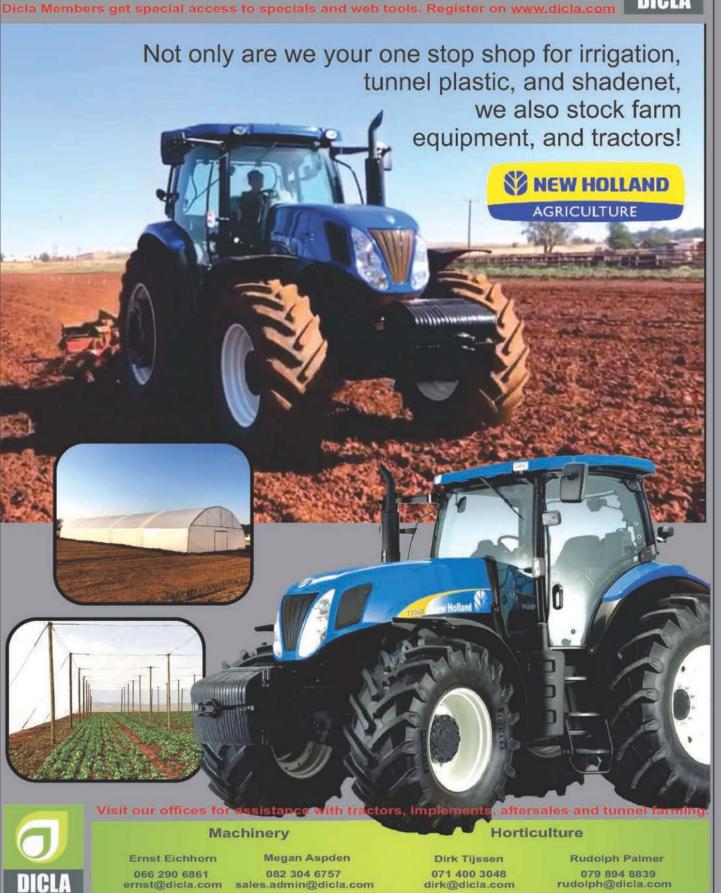
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From previous page

Then mark off 30 cm squares within your large square, creating a grid. Plant a different flower, vegetable, or herb crop in each square, using one, four, nine, or 16 plants per square, depending on how big they will become when mature. In most smallholder gardens, having enough space is not a problem, but the advantage of working in these squares is that your plants are all easy to reach.

Ensure that you have walkways of a metre wide and move on to create the next square. In some squares you will need to erect a trellis



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Using a trellis in your intercropping

for climbing plants such as beans, peas and tomatoes. Some plants are used solely in intercropping for their soil improving qualities. Comfrey, yarrow, tansy and nettle are to be encouraged as they are known to be dynamic accumulators. These are plants good at mining nutrients out of the soil, often because they have taproots which reach deeper than normal roots, or because the plants team up with bacteria to fix nitrogen out of the air. Permaculturalists harvest the leaves of dynamic accumulators and use them as mulch

INTERCROPPI or to make compost or liquid fertilisers to feed their gardens. Diversity in fields can be increased by providing more habitats for beneficial organisms, habitats such as borders, windbreaks, and special plantings for natural

enemies or pests. Some plants are used in intercropping because of their effect on insects. It is well known that marigolds and garlic chives are very good insect repellents. Lucerne is one of the best crops for attracting and retaining beneficial insects and it can then be used as

Factors you need to take into consideration when planning: ☐ Is the plant a single harvest plant (such as mealies) or a multiple harvest plant such as green peppers. This will dictate the location you plant items within your garden for ease of harvest.

Is the species large (eg cabbage) or small (radish or carrots) which will dictate the amount of space it needs. ☐ Is the plant tall or short? Which will dictate the position relative to north for sunlight.

☐ Is the plant quick-growing or slow? **





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IN THE GARDEN

Common veg: How to grow and use them

nce you've planned your vegetable garden (see article in November Smallholder), you're in a position to buy

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seeds and seedlings, assuming you haven't saved seeds from last season.

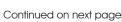
For species that don't require many plants and which can be planted from seedling rather than direct as seed, consider buying trays of seedlings rather than packets of seed. Seedlings are more expensive, but they will give you a harvest at least six weeks ahead of what you will achieve if you sow seed first. The only downside of planting seedlings is that you are limited to what your nursery will supply, which will tend to be modern commercial hybrids, unless you have a season so you are assured of contact with a specialist seedsman of more unusual varieties.

The following is a brief list of common plants in Gauteng vegetable gardens and their requirements.

Artichoke (globe) ~ To ensure sufficient hearts to make a salad you will need 20 to 30 bushes growing simultaneously. The bushes are semiperennial in that they last for about three seasons ~ if you can protect the plants from frost and the tap-roots from moles. On the plus side, the plants bear throughout the

a constant supply over a relatively long period. They can be bottled effectively. Beans ~ They come in a choice of varietals, they are easy to grow in summer, and the pods can be eaten raw or boiled, and preserved by being frozen, dried or pickled. With a relatively long (a few weeks, at least) harvesting season, beans are among the most economical vegetables to grow and a good runner bean plant will yield 40-50 pods over the season, so no more than three or four plants will be enough for the average family. But, beans grow quickly in summer so succession planting is recommended to ensure a constant supply. Beans are also ideally suited to small spaces.

Beetroot ∼ Easy to grow and has a long season, so can be succession-planted to ensure a constant supply of salad leaves and, later, roots. If you want to pickle beetroot you will need four or five roots per one litre Consol jar. Brinjals/aubergine/eggplant ~ You are unlikely to use more than one brinjal fruit per meal and a single plant will produce four or five fruits over a season, which will give you an idea of how many plants to grow,





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IN THE GARDEN

From previous page

Better used fresh, brinjal is also delicious when bottled. It can be frozen in chunks. *Broccoli* ∼ The florets can be cooked from fresh, used in stews and soups and frozen for later use. The plants can be harvested two or three times during their growing season. Five or six plants, succession planted over a season, will see you serving broccoli at least once a week, and doing a little freezing on

Brussels Sprouts ~ They can be repeatedly harvested and freeze well. Five or six plants

will suffice and you should be able to harvest a dozen at a time per plant. However, they are not as easy to grow successfully.

Cabbage ~ The plant is harvested in its entirety and even a medium cabbage is more than a family can eat in one sitting and while it can be pickled, it cannot be frozen, so it is quite wasteful. On the plus side, it is easy to grow. Carrots ~ Can be eaten raw or cooked, and can be frozen. but there's no need for this as they grow year round, if sensibly succession-planted every fortnight.

Cauliflower ~ Can be eaten raw or cooked, or it can be pickled and can be frozen. You have to harvest the whole plant and so to make the most of it will have to freeze, pickle or liquidise what you don't use.

Celery ~ You can sow celery seeds in trays throughout the year, then plant them out into bags. Once they are well

established plant them out in well composted, sunny beds. This way you can plant a few plants every two to four months. Chillis ~ There are lots of

varietals available. With 20 or 30 pods per plant you will need no more than one or two plants per season, as the pods can be pickled or dried for winter

Cucumber ~ Useful for cold soup, salads and garnish, can also be pickled, but not frozen. One good plant should give you six or so fruits over a short season.

Gem Squash ~ You should be able to harvest five or six per plant. They can be frozen: parboil, discard the seeds and scoop the flesh into freezer bags. The flesh is watery when defrosted, but after draining can be done up with a good dollop of butter, salt and pepper.

Leeks ~ Mildly onionflavoured, leeks are mostly



used in soups and stews. They grow compactly and while they can be frozen there's no need as one can leave them in the ground and harvest as required. *Lettuce* ~ They prefer cool moist conditions and need to be protected from frost in winter. With careful succession planting, you

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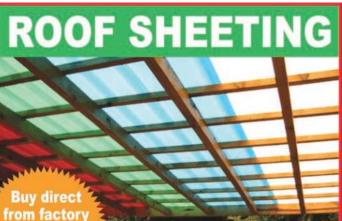
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Francois



From previous page

succession planting, you should be able to have fresh lettuce almost year round. *Marrow/courgettes* ~ They grow to just about any size. They can be frozen. Mealies ~ One good mealie plant will yield four good cobs. If you want fresh mealies for summer, you should not plant anything later than December or the cobs will not be ready before winter. They can be frozen and also fed to poultry. Onions ~ You need to grow 350-odd medium-to-large onions in your vegetable garden for the year. That will be achieved with between 24 and 35 linear metres of onion plantings. No need to preserve them: the hardskinned varieties such as Australian Brown can be stored throughout the dormant season so anybody with an extensive garden can easily grow a full year-round supply.

Peas ~ Grow on bushes with four to eight peas per pod and they can be harvested over a few weeks as required. You could also grow mangetout and avoid having to shell them. The excess harvest can also be easily and successfully frozen.

Peppers ~ They are grown on bushes, with a good bush producing five to eight over a season. They can be pickled and frozen.

Potato ~ Great care must be taken to prepare soil rich in organic matter, but do not allow the potato to come into contact with fertiliser granules or fresh manure. You might also be competing with cut worms and songololos.



Onions can be stored easily.

IN THE GARDEN

Pumpkin, butternut ~ Extensive growers not suited to small gardens, these plants can be prepared in many ways. Providing sufficient for a year-round supply is easy as they are simply stored whole in a dry place, and are ready to use when required. Spinach ~ Along with Swiss chard, spinach cooks away to nothing, so what looks like a mountain of fresh leaves becomes a little pot full on the stove. Although it can be cooked and frozen, spinach and chard grows just about year-round so can be harvested as required. Simply pick leaves off the plant as required, do not pull up the

Sweet potato ~ A warm season crop, one needs lots of space for rows of sweet potatoes. They can be left in the ground and lifted as needed, as long as you don't have the problem of moles and the sweet potato weevil.

entire plant.



Radishes ~ They come up soon after the seeds are planted. To ensure continuity sow seeds every two to three weeks.

Tomato ~ One full sized tomato plant will yield roughly eight to ten fruit over the season. Plant seedlings with a few weeks in between each to avoid them all ripening at once. Large tomatoes can be chopped or pureed and frozen, while the small ones need to have the seeds squeezed out before they are frozen whole. This sounds like a hassle but the flavour of summer when you eat them in winter is worth it. They can also be bottled and pickled. 🗱







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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 noncommercial 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 39. Only markets that are held infrequently are now listed in this calendar

Every Sunday

SA Lipizzaners weekly display at 11h00. SA Lipizzaner Centre, Dahlia Rd, Kyalami. Go to www.lipizzaners.co.za / email stallion@lipizzaners.co.za to book.

Cattle drive with City Slickers breakfast, Diamond X Cowboy Ranch, near Rayton. Call Rudan on 082 410 3180 / visit http://www.diamondxranch.co.za, R500 per person.

Mnandi Methodist Church, 09:00, Mnandi Centre, cnr Tulip and Short Streets, Jen 083 709 3235 or 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, NG Kerk, 8 Canadair Ave, Impala Park, Boksburg, call Warren 082 335 0049 or Tony 082 443 4425. 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.

2020

December

3-5: Sakeliga KragDag Ekspo 2020. Besoekers: +- 21 000. Ultstallers: +- 450. Aangebied te Diamantvallei Landgoed, 20km Oos van Pretoria. Grootste alternatiewe energie en selfstandigheidekspo in Suid-Afrika. Vanaf 2019 ook met 'n eie landbou afdeling. Kontak Sone 087 231 1644 of sone@kragdag.co.za.

5: Country Market, Larsen's Road, Muldersdrift. 08h00 – 14h00. Local sellers bringing you the freshest crops, food and crafts. Contact Heidi for more

info on 071 566 5940.

13: Tree Owl Community Market at Brandmuller's Garden Pavilion, 5 Dave Nourse St, Unitas Park, Vereeniging. GPS: -26.627823, 27.927976, 09h00 - 14h30. Stalls with hand-crafted goods, home-bakes, olives, honey, food stalls, cash bar, tea garden, live music from 12h00. The market supports the feeding scheme at Laerskool Unitas, members of the public are asked to donate canned food towards this project. Follow us on Facebook: Acorns Coffee Shoppe. Enquiries: Michele 083 378 0715

- 14: New moon
- 16: Day of Reconciliation
- 21: Summer Solstice
- 25: Christmas Day
- 26: Day of Goodwill (Boxing Day)
- 30: Full moon



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Regular Gauteng

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.

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.

Only FOOD markets are included.

If you know of markets in this list that have CLOSED please inform us so that we can delete incorrect or outdated information.

We invite you to tell us of your experiences when visiting these markets so that we can better inform our readers. Were they as advertised?

Was the produce on sale plentiful, well-priced, well-presented and fresh? Email your comments to gautengsmallholder@gmail.com

SPECIAL NOTE: Due to regulations related to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, some of these markets may have restrictions on numbers of

visitors.

DAY	WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	CONTACT	WHAT TO EXPECT	
Thursday						
Every Thursday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09h00 – 15h00	40 Culross Road, Bryanston (off Main Road)	011 706 3671 enquiries@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce.	
			Saturday			
Every Saturday	Pretoria Boeremark	04h30 - 09h30	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.	
	The Hazel Food Market	08h00 – 14h00	Greenlyn Village Centre, Cnr Thomas Edison & Mackenzie St, Menlo Park, Pretoria	078 593 7716	Fresh produce straight from the producer, coffee, eats on sale.	
	Waenhuiskrans Plaas / Farmers	08h00 - 13h00	Cnr of Veda & Enkeldoorn Ave Market opposite Montana Traders and next to Kollonade Centre	Marius 084 505 3393 or office 012 567 6076 to book a stall	Stalls: Food, arts and crafts, fresh produce, eggs, chicken, meat, fruit & veg, kiosk, Maders pies, coffee.	
	Glenfresh Farmers Market Midrand	08h00 – 12h30	30 Olifantsfontein Rd (opposite RMM Builders), Glen Austin (Cor Allan & Olifantsfontein Rds)	Stefan: 082 829 0185 market@glenfresh.co.za	Local naturally grown produce, hand crafted goods, home baked treats, raw honey, biltong.	
	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09h00 – 15h00	40 Culross Road, Bryanston (off Main Road)	011 706 3671 enquiries@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce.	
	Niche Community Market	09h00 – 14h00	Walkerville Showgrounds	071 521 6547	Fresh produce, crafter's market, food court, craft beer, play area, pet friendly.	
	Midrand Circles Market	09h00 – 14h00	118 Allan Road, Glen Austin	Margaret 079 394 5054	Freshly locally grown produce, raw honey, indigenous flowers & trees, food stalls, fresh meat stalls, cheese, eggs, coffee, books, gallery, and paint your own ceramics.	
	Pretoria Noord Boeremark	08h00 - 14h00	Hillside Golf Club, Rachel de Beer Street, Nina Park.	Githea: 081 304 2070	Baked goods, traditional pap & kaaings, vetkoek, pancakes, jewelry, plants, fresh meat, cheese, woodwork, art, live music.	
	Fourways Farmers Market (New venue)	08h00 – 16h00	Taroko Farm, Modderfontein Reserve, Norfolk Lane.	010 534 6622 (Mon-Fri) www.ffmarket.co.za	Farm fresh produce, organic produce, food stalls, baked goods, live music.	
	Sunday					
Every Sunday	Waterfall Estate Farmers Market (Will open when more than 50 visitors are allowed)	09h00 – 15h00	Waterfall Estate, Midrand	064 759 6154	Fresh produce, pickles, preserves and home industry & craft, food, etc. Enquire about stall prices.	
	Fourways Farmers Market (New venue)	08h00 – 16h00	Taroko Farm, Modderfontein Reserve, Norfolk Lane.	010 534 6622 (Mon-Fri) www.ffmarket.co.za	Farm fresh produce, organic produce, food stalls, baked goods, live music.	
	Vaalbank Country Market	10h00 - 15h00	Kakiebos on the R515 near Rayton	081 271 2300	Wide variety of community stalls and even art classes!	





Olyf, perske, kaal perskes, pruim, amandel, appelkoos, okkerneut, pruimedant, granaat, druiwe, pekanneut, appel, kersie, peer, vy, kweper, moerbei en suurlemoen.

Skadubome Vereeniging Douw 084 506 5125





THE BACK PAGE

Santa's Takealot Christmas

gly old bat, thought Santa Claus as he saw the warty face of Mrs Claus break into another disapproving scowl. "Wear your mask, you silly old fool," said Mrs Claus with just a hint of malice mixed with venom in her voice. To be truthful, the Claus marriage was in difficulty. The Covid pandemic hadn't left the North Pole unscathed and the Claus family, and the elves, had been in lockdown for months. Self-isolation, and having to wear masks and constantly wash their hands was taking its toll. The normally chatty elves had long ago stopped "hey ho-ing" off to work, and had taken to grumbling about poor pay, and threatening to unionise. Their usually happy banter as they went about the task of packing presents had become replaced with the odd shouting match and throwing of things. The other day, Santa had spied one elf hitting another over the head with a cricket bat.

Even the reindeer had sensed the mood and it had become a constant chore to repair the holes they were kicking every night in their stables.

And, of course, there was the weather. Climate change had turned the usually pristine snow outside to slush, and Santa was worried about how the sled would fare. Would it be able to take off?

And Santa had another worry. The old sleigh was falling apart. He had ordered some spares but the only supplier of sleigh spares was in China, and getting stuff out of that country this year was proving to be a nightmare, with this Covid situation. Still, the elves had done the best they could, but Santa was worried that the sleigh would break down. The question was where? Some countries were better than others, he knew. "If it breaks down in South Africa," he told the elves, "we're gonners. Because the hordes will appear from out of the dark and make off with everything. Possibly even the sleigh."

He was even worried about the reindeer ~ somewhere he'd read something about animals being shot for their horns in South Africa. "Would they want reindeer horn?" he wondered. Not to mention the Greta Thunberg lobbyists who kept on at him about the emissions of greenhouse gases from the reindeer. It was all becoming too much. He reached into the voluminous folds of his red coat, pulled out a small flask, twisted off the stopper and took a long gulp. "Aaah, at least the aquavit is still good," he thought, as the strong clear spirit coursed warmly down his throat and a melancholy glow settled over him. The rickety sleigh, disgruntled elves and a harridan Mrs Claus aside, Santa knew the big issue this year was the mask. He

certainly didn't want to be accused of being a superspreader of the virus and was resigned to wearing a mask.

The problem with a mask and the need for social distancing, he realised, was that he'd not be able this year to cop a quick feel and a smooch under the mistletoe of the simpering young mothers trying to control their over-excited children while their husbands were pouring him his customary "loopdop." And the children! They were all becoming dreadful. Rude,

unruly, and pasty-faced from too much time in front of the television. And the current trend in their presents was horrible, too.

Previously, he'd enjoyed building models with the odd Lego or Meccano set in his off-time, or playing bat and ball with the elves, before packing up the gifts for the kids. But now it was all X-Boxes and cellphones and Alexa, none of which was much use to him, and no fun to play with, what with the atrocious Wifi at the North Pole.



The security systems, at some homes, were also a problem. "Why don't people switch their alarms off when they know we're coming?" Not to mention that fewer and fewer houses had working chimneys any more.

And then the dogs. Last year he'd lashed out with his boot at an unruly mutt that was intent on ripping the ermine from his coat bottom while walking from house to house in a suburban street in Cape Town. The dog gave a yelp as it leapt away, and the whole incident caused loud howls of "Shame! Dis animal-cruelty," from the drunken residents lining their balconies to watch him go by. That incident made the local newspapers, and he was tempted to give Cape Town a miss as a result. "I'm getting too old for this," he thought. "Surely there's an easier way? How about I do the whole thing remotely, from the comfort of my home, over Zoom, or something? I can fire the elves, burn the sleigh and shoot the reindeer, and have all the presents delivered by Takealot."

He reached for the flask again. It was empty. "Merry bloody Christmas," he muttered.



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