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FRONT COVER

Old tractor graveyard? Or restoration projects waiting to happen?

COMMENT, by Pete Bower

A good development



There is a chance ~ a chance, not a certainty ~ that the government's thrust to develop a small farmer sector among "previously disadvantaged" communities may actually lead to a better, more stable, and more diverse food sector in South Africa.

This may happen if the small farming sector receives the necessary support in terms of infrastructure and marketing to enable it to produce and sell at a meaningful profit. For, like any new farmers, small farmers face significant obstacles to getting established. There are obvious hurdles such as education and expertise, equipment and infrastructure, input costs such as seed and fertilizer and, in a dry country such as ours, water supply and management.

But the most critical constraint facing small farmers, especially new ones, is the availability of suitable transport to market, and marketing channels that result in profitable sales. Note the last phrase there, because the ability to sell at a profit the produce one offers is not guaranteed by the current market/retailer system. Frankly, the prices currently realised at commercial markets by farmers for their produce is a disgrace when compared with what retailers charge in their shops. So if this issue can be addressed and overcome, we are on the right path to a better future for farmers.

And a thriving small farmer sector will have two other benefits for the lives of consumers. Firstly, there will be greater variety on offer. Today, because farming is controlled by monolithic commercial interests, the stuff one buys in the shops is often the best variety for a quality, disease and pest-resistant consistent crop. It has nothing to do with flavour or texture.

An industry populated by small farmers, however, will allow individuals to grow smaller batches of crops for their flavour and texture, rather than for their uniformity and consistency.

Secondly, large monoculture operations are vulnerable to major disruptions from pests, disease and the weather, which can lead to spikes and troughs in supply. Large monoculture operations also result in "forage deserts" for insects such as bees, one of the reasons for the decline in naturally-occurring swarms worldwide.

Many small farms planted with different varieties and at different times will mean a steady flow of produce to consumers in a more balanced and even way, resulting in fewer surpluses and shortages in supply. Moreover, with their smaller fields surrounded by grass patches, weeds and other vegetation, "forage deserts" are avoided and bee populations will, hopefully recover.

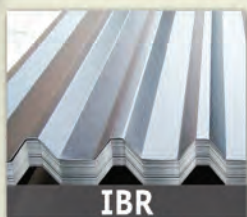
There is another benefit to a thriving small farmer sector and that is financial. There will no doubt be an increase in job opportunities on such small farms, even if only by one or two workers per enterprise. The problem is going to be to persuade today's youth that a low-paying manual job on the land is worthy of pursuit, rather than holding out for a high-tech job in the city (which is unlikely to materialise, given the current government's labour policy).

But before we get excited about the possibilities afforded by a thriving small farmer sector, there is another bug-a-boo creeping in that we as individual growers and consumers need to guard against, and that's moves by corporate agri-interests and governments to discourage or even outlaw the centuries-old practice of seed swapping. Seed-swapping requires growers to harvest their seed at the end of the growing season, and to swap their favourite varieties with others. It's an age-old smallholder practice which enhances variety and ensures genetic diversity.

And corporate agri-interests with their heavy investments in genetic modification and hybrid strain development take a dim view of it. Rather, they would like to develop sterile varieties which would necessitate the farmer buying fresh seed each year.

Lest you think that corporate agri-interests are active only in the First World, be assured that are very active in the Third as well. Farmers in a number of African countries face the prospects of jail terms if they swap seeds and in South Africa corporate agri-interests have cosied up to government sufficiently for the latter to be looking at amendments to the Plant Breeder's Act and the Plant Improvement Act which could possibly make seed swapping a criminal activity.

That's a development which any small grower should be fighting against and, by extension, seed-swapping is a practice which we should be actively encouraging as an deed of civil activism, in the same way that Gauteng residents have successfully seen to it that e-tolls will have to be scrapped because of lack of public buy-in.



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Inexorable spread of bird 'flu

Having been identified originally at poultry farms near Standerton and the Vaal,

more than 24 outbreaks of the H5N8 strain of bird flu have been identified since June, says to the Dept of

Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries. Provinces affected now include Gauteng,

Mpumalanga and the Western Cape.

According to the department, there have been ten outbreaks in commercial chickens, three outbreaks in commercial ostrich, five outbreaks in wild birds, three outbreak in birds that were kept as a hobby and three outbreaks in backyard poultry. All the affected properties were placed under quarantine and 'disease control measures' (a euphemism for culling) have commenced.

Continued on page 6

MAILBAG

Troublesome beehive siting

Sir ~ My neighbour has elected to site some beehives close to our common boundary fence. Trouble is, on my side of the fence there is a bridle path used by children and their ponies going to and fro to the stables etc.

Now we all know that children, ponies and bees are an unhappy combination and I am concerned that we may have a situation that ends in tears ... or worse.

My neighbour being a recalcitrant fellow with a

limited ear for reason, I fear I will have to resort to other tactics than mere words to convince him of his stupidity. Thus, can anybody tell me what the beekeeper's responsibilities and obligations are concerning the safe siting

of his hives, or in relation to siting hives up against a boundary fence, the activities on the other side of which he has no control over.

Mountain Man

(name supplied)

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.

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Ad website takes us to a new level

Astute readers looking for bargains in this edition will notice that there are no longer any classified advertisements. That's because, with effect from September, all classified advertisements submitted, whether by post, fax, email or SMS, have been uploaded to our new website, the SA Small Farmers' Online Exchange, sasfox.co.za. This has two immediate benefits for advertisers. Firstly, ads submitted are uploaded and displayed as soon as they are received, meaning the seller can get rid of the advertised goods faster, without waiting for the magazine to be published and read. And, secondly, the sasfox site draws a national,



rather than province-wide, viewership, meaning many more people will see the advertisement. Readers who have limited access to electronic media may continue to submit classified advertisements by

hand or post, and these will be uploaded to the relevant category on the sasfox site by our staff. Readers who have access to a computer, however, need no longer submit their ads to us for uploading, but can do so themselves, simply by registering as users on the site, and typing in their ads

themselves. This process is quick, confidential, and free of charge. The sasfox site has been designed by ourselves ~ smallholders with less-than-perfect internet access ~ to be everything a rural dweller needs in a website. The site is deliberately spartan and free of bells 'n whistles, so that it is fast to load, easy to use, and as frugal with data usage as it can be.

We expect sasfox to grow into a major information exchange for the rural community countrywide. Apart from the usual classified advertisements section for new and used equipment etc, the classified section incorporates a category where growers of fruit and vegetables can exchange, buy and sell their produce ... a sort of

Continued on page 8

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BIRD FLU

From page 5

"The continued cooperation of the public and the poultry industry in the timeous

reporting of sick and dying birds to State Veterinary Services is vital for the effectiveness of disease control measures instituted. DAFF therefore thanks the public and the poultry industry for their support in this regard." Fearing a shortage of poultry for consumption as a result of the culling and quarantine measures, the poultry industry is seeking to import fertile eggs to re-grow the national flock and measures to make this possible, in safety, are being considered by the department.

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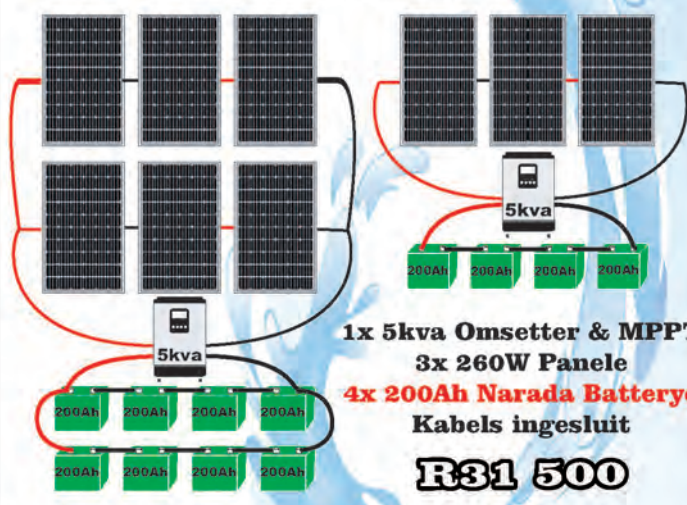
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SUMMER Know (& use) your rainfall

The weather forecasters have told us that there are strong indications that wetter conditions can be expected from late spring and early summer in the summer-rainfall areas of South Africa.

today is recorded against yesterday's date on their database.

But how can we measure rainfall when the rain soaks into the ground or runs off it into drains or streams? When

Continued on page 9

We casually talk about rainfall in millimetres, but in fact we refer to the number of millimetres that have fallen within a specific amount of time. Unless we state that amount of time eg, "we had 10 mm in 15 minutes", it is assumed that it is within 24 hours. The South African Weather Services (SAWS) measure rainfall at 08.00. The rainfall measured between 08:00 yesterday and 08:00



Standard rain gauge



Lining beds with paper or cardboard to maximise moisture usage

SASFOX

From page 6

virtual farmer's market. Physical farmers markets and other events are catered for in a dedicated diary section, as are auctions, also listed in a diary of their own. And, later in the year in time for 2018 we will launch a diary of seminars, training courses and education on offer to small farmers and smallholders countrywide.

Various advertising possibilities exist on sasfox, details of which can be found on the site.

To access the site, type in www.sasfox.co.za in your internet browser, or you can access the site from your smartphone or tablet.

For more information on the site, or for advertising enquiries, contact us on 011 979-5088

From page 8

we talk about millimetres of rainfall we are in fact referring to 1 mm of rain in an area which is enough to evenly cover the ground in that area with a layer of water 1 mm deep. According to SAWS, "what is meant by 1 mm of rainfall is rainfall equivalent to 1 litre of water in a 1 square metre box with no runoff, infiltration or evaporation" which would result, if there was no runoff, soaking in or evaporation, of a layer of water exactly 1mm deep. A square metre box is not practical to leave outside, especially if you have animals on your plot, so a rain gauge is used. The standard instrument for the measurement of rainfall is the 100 mm rain gauge. This is essentially a circular or square UV protected plastic funnel with a diameter of 130 mm which is kept in an open area, so that it collects the rain into a

What is useful is to use "rainfall" measuring when irrigating with a sprinkler system.

graduated and calibrated cylinder. The measuring cylinder can record up to 100mm of rain.

A rain gauge should form part of the garden management equipment of every small-holding, and a simple note of what has fallen, kept on a spreadsheet or as a diary entry, will make your watering programme much more efficient.

You can make your own rain gauge out of any can, but then you will have to use a formula to measure the rainfall: the height of the water in the can is equal to the volume of water in the can divided by the area of the opening. For most of us, life is too short to do these calculations.

What is useful, however, is to

use "rainfall" measuring when irrigating with a sprinkler system. To do so, simply place any square-sided flat container or tray in the path of the sprinkler spray. The depth to which the container or tray fills as the sprinkler deposits droplets into it with each pass can be taken as the number of millimetres of precipitation being delivered to the plants being watered.

The weather people have also assured us that temperatures for the most parts are expected to be higher throughout the country with only the minimum temperatures showing signs of uncertainty during early summer. So we need to take precautions to make the best of the rain that we do get. Examine the soil in your

vegetable patch and, before you plant new plantings, add generous amounts of organic material in the form of compost or kraal manure. If your soil has a high clay content, the rain will not soak in well, unless there is a heavy downpour which will then leave the soil waterlogged. The organic matter will help to break up the heavy soil.

If your soil is sandy, compost will help to prevent the water from quickly sinking right down into the groundwater,

Continued on page 10

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SUMMER

From page 9

which would leave the surface dry too soon.

If you have sandy soil it will also help to line your beds with semi-pervious material such as cardboard below your plants, which traps nutrients and slows drainage. This means less watering and less fertilising. Organic amendments can freely be introduced into your soil at various depths in the bed to create a deep and thorough profile of

great soil.

Another way to trap the rainfall in your soil is by mulching. Mulching is the covering of soil with organic material, such as leaves, chipped twigs or grass cuttings. It is much the same as what naturally occurs in a forest when leaves fall to the ground. Mulch prevents evaporation and allows the topsoil to remain moist so that earthworms and other beneficial creatures can live

there. It also suppresses weeds and becomes fertiliser as the material breaks down. Check your beds for even drainage. After heavy rainfall, look for areas that may be draining poorly. You do not want areas of long standing water in the vegetable garden. This can be bad for plants as it could lead to root rot. If you find areas that drain poorly, create ways to get the water to drain away from the vegetable garden.

Be sure that there is a constant level of nutrients in your soil, as rains may wash them away. A liquid fertiliser, worm tea or compost tea are good options. This will ensure that your plants are strong.

Taller plants need support so that they are not battered by heavy rain. Obviously climbing plants such as tomatoes, peas and beans need some form of trellis to grow up.

Creeping vegetables such as squashes, pumpkins or cucumbers might need to be protected from muddy soil to prevent them from rotting. Dry hay under each gourd works well.

After rain has fallen, check for any exposed roots due to soil erosion. If you find exposed roots, cover them with soil or compost as soon as possible. Do not let the roots dry out, this could be bad for the plant.

QUIRKY

There's a simple explanation as to why Chinese goods are often considered rubbish in the countries in which they are sold. It's because the instruction manuals and safety pamphlets often appear to have been written by a ten-year-old child. A ten-year-old Chinese child, that is, fluent in Chinglish rather than English.

Here are two examples of Chinglish (Chinese English):

❑ On a safety pamphlet for a fluorescent light fitting:

"Pleasure notice user: This product barely use in coordination with conventional ballast." Huh?

❑ "Vegetables cover usage elucidation. 1. Press down a head leftly, the right hand pulls to rise the cordage. 2. Accept to match press by hand and downwards." And by such means will your fly-screen food cover appear magically before you.

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How to calm pets in thunderstorms

Some animals are very frightened by thunderstorms and we are also moving towards various events where people will be letting off fireworks, so smallholders should consider the various options to keep pets calm.

Pets have different ways of showing their fear. Some hide, while others try to climb on to their owner's lap. Other symptoms are cowering and trembling, urinating and/or defecating, panting, pacing and circling, digging or jumping in an attempt to escape, passing gas, barking and whining. They also have individual ways of responding to your attempts to help them, so it might take trial and error before you find what works for your individual animal.

Sometimes, your dog just needs to know that you are

... and the same principles apply when your idiot neighbours let off fireworks ...

there and in control of the situation. During a storm, a hand on his back might be all he needs to help him feel secure and safe. Talking in a soothing voice helps, too. However, you are more likely to need to do more, so perhaps a massage will help. If your pet wears a collar, it helps to pull up the collar to as close to the ears as you can. Then start to massage, using quite firm rotating movements, on the large cheek muscles of the animal's face. Then move up to the forehead, on towards the big neck muscles and down to the shoulder muscles. It is good for you to maintain eye contact and talk soothingly to your pet.

You can even pretend to be sleepy so that your pet will also become relaxed.

As owners of fearful pets we must make sure that we don't do anything that will make the situation worse. Obviously we should not punish the poor creature, but also do not fuss over the animal to comfort and reassure it, as this will reward the fearful behaviour. Try to "jolly" the animal along, ignoring the negative symptoms.

You might think about how to distract the pet – it is difficult for a dog to be afraid when he is enjoying his favourite game of fetch, for example. Or you might want to introduce a little obedience training at times when the dog

is not afraid and then, when a fearful situation arises, you can use some of the training exercises as a distraction.

Practicing her sit/stay/shake is a great way to distract your dog from the storm and remind her that you've got this under control. You can then shower the dog with lots of affection and attention, but for obeying a simple command of sit-shake hands, instead of for being afraid.

Continued on page 13

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From page 11

Some pets respond well to the use of lavender oil. Humans find it has a sedative effect and so might your animals, but it needs to be used with caution. These oils are extremely concentrated and need to be heavily diluted to be safe for your animal. Add 15 drops to a small spray bottle filled with water. This can then be sprayed on your dog's skin.

It often has the added benefit of helping with flea and tick control and skin healing. Other calming herbs include lemon balm, rosemary, stinging nettle, comfrey and borage.

Because pets can't tell you if a remedy is working, you need to watch carefully to see the reaction. Excessive scratching, sniffing, nervousness or whining are all signs to watch for. What is good for a large dog is not good for a small dog. Size matters, and less is definitely more when working with oils, for animals or humans. Sick, frail, older, or pregnant pets have special considerations, so do not administer the same dose to them as you would to a healthy animal of the same size.

Putting on a quite tight fitting garment or jacket helps some animals, or even elastic bandage wrapping. There is a garment called the ThunderShirt - a sturdy, stretchy vest that hugs the

torso, which is available for dogs and for cats. It is rather expensive though.

There are also special calming collars on the market, which might prove to be a better remedy.

The collar is impregnated with a synthetic copy of a pheromone that is produced by sebaceous glands found between the mammary glands of lactating queens and bitches. This is the pheromone that the mother cat or dog produces to calm and reassure her young. Dogs and cats recognise these pheromones throughout life. The advantage of these collars is that the animal wears it all

the time and the calming effect will also help with separation anxiety, travelling stress or being left in kennels while owners are on holiday. The collar can also be used as an adjunct to behaviour modification therapy.

There are also homeopathic remedies for calming pets. Rescue Remedy is a blend of plant extracts, that have been found to be safe for animals. The Rescue tablets can be crushed into the pet's food or the Rescue drops can be added to the pet's drinking water. People have also applied drops to the pet's feet so that the pet will lick it off. Another product is PetCalm, a

natural remedy apparently with no risk of side effects or addiction and can be safely used by animals of all ages and sizes.



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HORSEMANSHIP

Horse talk: How horses communicate

In the 1920s, author Hugh Lofting wrote a series of charming children's books about Doctor Doolittle, whose pet parrot, Polynesia, taught him how to speak to animals in their own language. As a horse owner, you may sometimes wish you had your own Polynesia to teach you the equine language.

... and your horse often tries to talk to YOU, too...

However, the best way of improving the lines of communication is by taking the time to watch how horses communicate with each other. By opening our minds to their language and adopting their methods, we

create stronger bonds with our horses, and communication becomes far more effective.

Communication signals among horses can be visual, acoustic (using sound), touch as well as reacting to and

giving off chemicals which can be smelt. Often a combination of signals will be used.

We can learn much from simply observing the face of the horse. Snapping, opening and shutting the mouth, sometimes making teeth contact is used a lot by foals to show submission to the mare. Aggression is made clear by showing an intention to bite, with jaws and teeth held open, teeth fully exposed and stiff lips. The Flehmen response is when the top lip is curled up and the head raised high - characteristic of stallions smelling mare's genitals and urine or mares smelling other mare's urine. Nostrils can be wrinkled showing disgust or flared in excitement or fear. A horse will show that it is in a completely relaxed state when its lower lip hangs slack and loose. This is often accompanied by one of its rear hooves being rested with only the toe of the hoof making contact with the ground, the leg being bent forward.

The eyes can be used to interpret the horse's state, too. Eyes are closed in pain or when exhausted, open wide in fear, showing the whites when angry or terrified or half closed in peaceful relaxation or submission.

The whole head gives different messages when it is shaken, bobbing, wobbled, thrust and lunged, nudged, weaving or circling.

Continued on page 15



Curled upper lip: Flehmen response



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From page 14

Horses have particularly expressive ears. They are pricked when alert, but drooped when dozy or in pain and drooped backwards to show submission. "Aero-plane ears" which are held out to the side with openings downwards show that the horse is psychologically low or has lost interest. Twitching and flicking ears are a sign of a stressed or confused horse, while flattened back ears show aggression.

When your horse is swishing its tail first sideways then up and down, it is ill at ease, anxious or confused. However increased power of side flick shows real rage and flicked high in air and slapped down hard is warning that kicking will follow. Different emotions are also expressed by the tail when it is held high, low or straight out. Horses tell us much through different sounds too: they will snort, squeal and snicker in greeting, courtship or



Flicking of the tail is a means of communication.

maternally. They neigh and whinny, blow, grunt or groan, stamp their hooves or pass wind. Watch out for the roar of intense rage of a fighting stallion.

Touch signals are a very common means of communication. They are seen when horses meet - nose to nose, mares use nudges and foals use them to warn the mare they are going to look for the udder. Aggression is communicated through pushing and biting.

Of course, touch is used by

riders to direct the horse and by handlers, along with the voice, to warn a horse of where they are.

Chemical communication refers to horses smelling each

other in great detail. Mares use smell to identify their foals, as well as visual signs. It is obvious to anybody who has worked with horses that they recognise humans visually and by smell, and will express their pleasure at recognition by whinnying or stamping their feet. Sometimes they will take a nip out of their human friend and this is often misinterpreted as an aggressive or "naughty" act. In fact, it is nothing more than the equivalent of a human "love-bite" and needs a response of reward and affection, rather than punishment, even if it was painful.

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It's not a straightforward thing

When driving round the plots in Gauteng one occasionally notices that some smallholders have game, rather than livestock, on their land. However, there are a number of factors to be considered before one invests

Grazing type, space and animal behavioural characteristics all play a role in game-farming ... and make it unlikely that it is possible to farm game legally on a smallholding

in wildlife on a smallholding. Game animals are farmed for the purposes of meat, skin and horn off-take (trophies) and tourist viewing. They can also be kept for breeding purposes. Every species has specific requirements regarding the provision of refuge, feeding and social activities by the specific habitat. So the question of whether to keep game should be accompanied by a question as to the nature of your terrain: have you got dense bush, or savanna woodland,

sweet or less sweet grass, rocky outcrops and undulating terrain, plains, marshlands and drainage lines, or open surface water? Each species prefers its combination of these habitats. And, is your forage both adequate in terms of the quality and quantity and vegetation species and is your forage sustainable? The proportion of browse and grass taken by each animal species is to be distinguished, quantified and treated separately with regard to the forage potential of the habitat. The social structure of the species that you want to keep will also influence whether you are able to keep them

optimally, with some species being loners and others preferring groups of varying numbers.

The nagging question is the size of your smallholding. The Gauteng Provincial Guidelines for the Keeping of Game advises that for intensive breeding a maximum area

Continued on page 19



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size of the breeding camps should be 50 ha and should not be smaller than 10 ha. The game industry, in contrast to pure conservation, works on the agriculturally defined Large Stock Unit (LSU) as a benchmark to determine carrying capacities and game

stocking rates to optimize financial returns. Important parameters which affect the carrying capacities of game are a) Minimum hectare per Animal Unit (ha/animal) of optimal habitat needed to fulfil the varied requirements of dietary fodder needed year round; b)

Minimum Habitat Area (ha) per animal or associated animal groups (family) needed to fulfil the social and spatial needs of the species; and c) Browser Equivalent Unit for browser animals, where one browser unit equals a 140 kg kudu, feeding on 1500

composition. So a farm of a certain size may be able to carry 600 cattle, yet only 333 kudu.

The Gauteng guidelines state, "It is essential to recognize that the role of game ranches is not merely as sites where game is bred, but also as a contribution to the conservation of biodiversity in the broader context."

Few smallholdings are big enough to conserve biodiversity while carrying game.



Some species require indigenous trees of a certain height as part of their diet.

shrubs with a canopy height of between 0,6 to 2,0 m and which retain more than 35% of their foliage year round (Furstenburg).

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#SAFoodCrisis

How the food industry screws you, and the farmers

Free market principles have resulted in corporate interests maximising their profits at the expense of primary producers and end consumers ~ and neither can afford what's happening: Another in our series on the crisis in South Africa's food industry, by Smallholder publisher Pete Bower

If you take a small tortoise and squeeze hard enough on its carapace its innards will emerge in a gooey mess from its front end and from its rear, and it will die. I know this to be true because that's exactly what my sister did to her pet tortoise when she was a child, and she was deeply surprised and saddened by its death. This gruesome analogy is not totally unlike what is happening in the food industry in South Africa today: At the one end, farmers are being squeezed out of profitability by the low prices they are able to achieve for their produce, while at the other end, consumers are being charged prices that they simply cannot afford for the food they need for their families' health and wellbeing. In the dark days of Nationalist rule, agriculture and food production were overseen and managed by government-appointed control boards. These powerful organisations used a raft of measures to ensure stability of prices to consumers and reasonable

profits for farmers who, admittedly were largely the voting bloc that kept the Nats in power. Some of these control measures included floor pricing for off-farm produce, ceiling prices for finished product and quotas and subsidies for certain categories of food stuffs. By these measures, farmers were assured of receiving a price for their production ~ of maize, wheat, milk etc ~ that enabled them to farm profitably. At the consumer end, price controls for basic foodstuffs such as maize meal and bread ensured that they were affordable to the masses. Now, one of the problems with a dynamic set-up such as an agricultural economy is that the moment you fiddle with one factor, such as setting the off-farm price of maize or imposing a quota on milk production, the law of unintended consequences sets in. An artificially-set price of maize, for example, may make it profitable to plough up marginal land for maize plantings, to the detriment of the sheep industry. Or,

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setting a quota on milk production may have the effect of causing a shortage of butter or other dairy products.

Nevertheless, there was (and is) sound reasoning behind why such measures were not all to the detriment of the country and her citizens at the time. And it's not as if South Africa was unique in applying control measures to its agricultural sector. Fact is, most countries do, to some extent or another.

But the new government post-1994 took a dim view of agricultural controls, particularly as it was clear that the beneficiaries were, in the main, white (Afrikaans) farmers, and in probably the most decisive bit of legislative enactment in the history of the "new" South Africa, the control boards were disbanded, while some were re-constituted in different roles

With the closure of the Agricultural Control Boards, SA entered an era of free competition in agriculture, something almost unheard of in the western world, where subsidies and controls are the norm rather than the exception

and with different powers. And thus, from the late 1990s South Africa's agricultural sector entered a period of unbridled free-marketism, unfettered by controls, subsidies, quotas and the like. And this mightily pleased the ANC, which felt it had dealt a timeous hammer-blow to a constituency it didn't have much time for, namely white (Afrikaans) farmers. And it mightily pleased another sector, too, namely the food production sector: the processors, packers, distributors and retailers of food, who have gradually increased their control over the sector and, consequently, their profits. The result has been concerning, to say the least. At the

production end, traditional commercial farmers have left the business in their thousands (not only because the business is no longer profitable, it should be said, but also because of crime, uncertainty about the future (land tenure), and climate change), while at the consumption end, the price one is required to pay for food in the supermarkets is plain for all to see. Shop-bought food is not affordable for most South Africans.

Let's look at some numbers:

□ In 1997 there were some 50 000 dairy farmers in South Africa. Today there are 1 600, with a herd of only 1,6 million animals. No wonder there is a butter shortage at

the moment.

□ In 1990 there were upwards of 66 000 commercial crop farmers. Today there are fewer than half that number.

To some extent this picture is being changed by the thrust of the government to establish small "previously disadvantaged" farmers on the land. If this strategy works it could go a long way to ensuring the re-emergence of a vibrant farming sector, with the benefits of greater diversity of food varieties etc. But it will only work if farmers are able to sell their

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crops for a profit, and have marketing and distribution channels that enable them to do to so.

And if you think that food is not overly expensive, or if you are naïve enough to believe the retailers when they exclaim, in all wide-eyed innocence, that they "only make 2-2,5% markup," try these numbers:

□ Maize is currently selling on Safex (the grains exchange used by most traders) for around R1 820 per ton. This is lower than last year and is a result largely of the bumper harvest achieved last season.

COMMENT: The markups being applied by food processors, distributors, wholesalers and retailers are, frankly, obscene, and South Africans should force their politicians to do something about it

But if you buy a 10kg bag of lwiza maize meal, a staple product for the majority of South Africans, you will pay R87-99.

Which equates to R8 799 per ton, a markup of 280% on the off farm price.

Now two observations are necessary. Firstly, there are obvious costs involved in bringing maize off the farm, milling it, packaging and selling it as mealie meal in a supermarket. Secondly, there is a lag between the price off farm and the price in-store, for the reason that what is in store today was actually from last-year's harvest when the off-farm price was much, much higher, not the most recent one. So one can expect the consumer price of

maize meal to actually drop substantially over the next twelve months as this season's lower-priced crop comes up for sale in the shops.

But some crops are much more immediate ... there is no appreciable lag between the off farm transaction and the retail sale.

Take spinach, for example. On the Johannesburg Market recently, the stuff was selling for R1-09 per bunch of 4kg. At roughly the same time, in an East Rand Pick n Pay 500g of fresh spinach was retailing for more than R11-00.

Or tomatoes: 1kg packet at

the market, average price R6,05. Pick n Pay on the East Rand, the same 1kg bag – R11-99.

And the market price, it should be pointed out, already includes the food-mile-cost of transporting the commodity from, say, Zebediela to Johannesburg, as well as washing and packaging.

Fact is, the food processing and retailing sector can say what it likes. Its profits are obscene.

As evidenced by the Whitey Basson saga. Now-retired mogul of Shoprite-Checkers, Basson, in a career spanning four decades, has done more for South African retailing, probably, than any other individual, Raymond Ackerman included.

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BEEKEEPING

The arithmetic of a small-time Gauteng beekeeping operation

An article in our regular series on bees and beekeeping by Peter Clark, veteran beekeeper and chairman of the Eastern Highveld Beekeepers Association

Beekeeping is a way of farming similar to any other farming venture: it is governed by the weather, good management and continual hard work. The bees are your work force, your employees and need to be cared for and kept up to a good working strength.

Therefore you are the boss in a partnership with millions of workers. But unlike unionised human workers, they are always eager to work from early light to dark every day of the year. There are no public holidays and no demands for increases in pay every six months. And, in a good nectar flow season they will even work overtime, deep into the bright moonlight. There are three types of beekeeping:

- ☐ The pure hobbyist who keeps up to five hives in his back yard and enjoys an abundance of honey for his family and his friends,
- ☐ The beekeeper who keeps up to 100 hives. This will constitute a good paying hobby. He enjoys good pocket money, does not count his costs and keep going in a merry way.
- ☐ There is the commercial beekeeper, with 500 hives plus. He has to specialise to keep the boat afloat and practice good management skills. He will employ trained semi-skilled assistant staff. And he will have the headaches and heartaches of any other farmer. Commercial beekeeping is not a quick-fix-get-rich venture. It entails hard work for which one needs to be fit,

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#SAFoodCrisis

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And he has been most handsomely rewarded for his efforts. Before he retired recently his salary was R100 million a year. And when he retired, his fellow directors thought it a fine idea to vote him a small retirement present. Of R1,7 BILLION. Not surprisingly the largest institutional investor in the Shoprite-Checkers group, Allan Gray, took a dim view of this.

But the point is that if those are the sorts of number being

banded about the boardrooms of the big food retailers, something is mightily wrong, and South Africans in the street can be sure in the knowledge that they are being royally screwed food price-wise.

This is one of a series of articles and comments by Pete Bower, publisher, on the state of South Africa's food industry as it affects farmers and consumers. Other articles in this series appeared in the July, August and September editions.

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strong, and healthy. There are no passengers. The success of keeping bees is largely dependant on the following aspects.

- ☐ Good management strategies,
- ☐ Good foraging sites.
- ☐ Honest, reliable, trained staff,
- ☐ Good record keeping,
- ☐ A knowledge of crops and the indigenous flora flowering times,

We illustrate the operating finances of a beekeeper of 200 hives in various situations, non-migratory (ie not offering agricultural pollination services) and migratory, as well as an outline of the capital costs involved at the outset

- ☐ Maintenance of hives,
- ☐ Maintenance of the swarms to optimum strength at all times,
- ☐ Regular swarm replacement programmes,
- ☐ Well constructed apiary

sites or good secure sites,

- ☐ A good relationship with farmers,
- ☐ A consistent market outlet for the honey sales,
- ☐ Friendship with other beekeepers by joining a local beekeeper's association.

Here is an idea of the numbers involved, and the potential for income, of an operation totalling 200 hives. Labour will comprise the beekeeper plus a part time, paid assistant.

Let us assume that the beekeeper chooses a non-migratory operation, housing his hives on a site that yields two crops annually. The calculations are set out in Table 1.

This illustrates that one should sell in bottles only. (Commercial bottlers are importing honey at R17.00/kg plus radiation costs, and will only pay R32/kg for local honey.)

Table 2 illustrates the calculations for a non-migratory keeper of 200 hives on one annual cropping.

Table 3 illustrates the calculation for a migratory keeper of 200 hives yielding one cropping annually.

This illustrates that at a level
Continued on page 29

Table 1. A non-migratory beekeeping operation, housing the hives on a site that yields two crops annually.

Expected honey yield: 200 hives at 25kg/hive = 5 000kg = 10 000 bottles @ R40/bottle	
Therefore total revenue	R 400 000
Anticipated costs:	
20% of turnover on petrol and transport	R80 000
10% on casual wages	R40 000
16% on bottles: 10 000 @ R6.00	R60 000
Other	R10 000
Total costs = 46% of turnover	R190 000
Therefore total net income	R210 000
* Should the beekeeper elect to sell his honey in bulk: 5 000kg sold at R32 per/kg:	
Total revenue only	R160 000



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of 200 hives it does not pay to migrate one's hives. Rather, find good sites that yield two crops during the year.

Additionally, here are some of the problems one would encounter attempting to migrate 200 hives,

□ One needs a truck that can load at least 40 hives in one load, which means that to move 200 hives involves five trips to deliver the bees and five trips to move the bees to the second site and a further five trips to return the bees to home base to over-winter.

□ As this truck is too large and costly to run, one also needs a smaller bakkie to

super up the hives where a second super is required on the first site. This involves five trips to service all the sites. At the end of the first flow, one will need ten trips to crop off all 400 supers before moving to the second site.

The 200 hives, all fitted with one super, will be loaded and moved to the second site that will only yield one super of honey per hive. One will have five trips to crop off this last super of honey for the year before returning to home base to rest the bees over winter.

Total up all the kilometres travelling @R3.00 per km for the bakkie and R4.00 for the bigger truck, and then total

Table 3. A migratory beekeeper of 200 hives on sites that yield one crop, migrating with 1/3 of his hives.

Expected honey yield: 130 hives @15kg/hive = 3 200 kg. plus 70 hives @ 40kg/hive = 2 800kg, therefore total intake of honey = 6 000kg

Total revenue from 12 000 bottles @ R40 **R480 000**
Anticipated costs @ 60% of turnover **R288 000**
Therefore Total net income **R192 000**

the overtime labour costs when moving the bees at night, through the night in some cases.

The conclusion is that this small time migrating will be too costly and must be left to the large beekeepers, who move 400 to 500 hives in brood chambers only in one trip, and follow up with adding 1 000 supers (two per hive) at one trip.

The capital investment relating solely to the 200-hive beekeeping venture will be as follows:

200 hives @ R1 200 = R240 000

Motor vehicle = R120 000

Honey house equipment =

R15 000

Sundry tools = R1 000

Total capital outlay = R376 000

Article by Peter Clark, tel 011 362-2904, Chairman of Eastern Highveld Beekeeper's Association, which meets on the third Saturday of each month at 186 Uys Street, Rynfield A/H, Benoni.

Table 2. A non-migratory beekeeper of 200 hives on a one crop site:

Expected honey yield: 200 @ 15kg/hive = 3 000kg = 6000 bottles @ R40/bottle

Therefore total revenue **R240 000**
Anticipated Total costs = 40% of turnover **R96 000**
Therefore total net income **R144 000**

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12	0	12	60	3.6	R270 000
12	6	18	24	3.6	R164 160
12	6	18	36	3.6	R239 760

Closed Sheds					
Width (m)	Extension (m)	Width total (m)	Length (m)	Height (m)	Cost
12	0	12	24	3.6	R207 360
12	0	12	36	3.6	R302 400
12	0	12	60	3.6	R446 400
12	6	18	24	3.6	R280 800
12	6	18	36	3.6	R421 200

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BEEKEEPING

The laws pertaining to beekeeping and honey labelling

To be a beekeeper means that one is in control (of the housing at least) of a potentially lethal animal or animals, however small they may be, at the same time as selling a product which is a foodstuff for human consumption. Small wonder, therefore, that beekeeping is covered by various laws and regulations that affect the keeping of bees and production of honey products.

Anyone wishing to keep bees is governed by the Control Measure GN R858 of 15 November 2013, Control Measure relating to Honeybees promulgated in terms of the Agricultural Pests Act. This makes it obligatory for all beekeepers to register through the Dept of Agriculture on an annual basis, to keep proper records of their beekeeping activities, to mark their beehives and to manage their colonies in a responsible manner to prevent and control bee diseases.

In some of the larger metropolises, municipalities have promulgated separate by-laws with regard to beekeeping, while in other cases the by-laws are included in the health by-laws. These mostly refer to where the beehive may be placed and give details about the permit that is required to keep bees. Refer to the by-laws governing the area where you keep your beehives.

Smallholders collecting honey from their hives also need to be aware of the regulations relating to the grading, packing and marking of

honey or mixture of bee products.

The sale of honey and mixtures of bee products is regulated in terms of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act No. 119 of 1990), Regulation No R835. The regulation prescribes that honey and mixtures of bee products shall comply with the key elements which include, among others, grading, packing and marking requirements.

Producers, packers and importers of honey and mixtures of bee products are advised to comply with the local market requirements stated in the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act No. 119 of 1990) and its regulations, in order to produce good quality honey and mixtures of bee products that can compete in the formal markets.

Food safety and quality measures should be a priority in all honey and mixtures of bee products and producers/packers and importers.

In terms of Regulation R146 dated the 1 March 2010 under the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants

Continued on page 31



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BEEKEEPING

From page 30

Act, 1972 (Act 54 of 1972), Regulations Relating to the Labelling & Advertising of Foodstuffs, statutory requirements have been prescribed in respect of labelling and marketing of foods, including honey. Honey may be subjected to laboratory tests to determine

the composition, quality and ripeness. If the honey does not comply with any one of these selected tests, then it shall be deemed as not complying with standards for grades of honey. The Directorate: Plant Health & Quality of the Dept of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (Daff) is responsible

for laying down specific phyto-sanitary requirements for certain products, which includes imported honey which needs to be irradiated to prevent the dissemination of the pathogen *Bacillus* larvae, which causes American Foul Brood. Smallholders who want to know more can contact the

are also affected by the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act and the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, (NEMBA) 2004, particularly the Alien Invasive Species Regulations 2014, with reference to various alien gum trees so beloved by bees. However, smallholders must guard against unscrupulous contractors who claim that all gums must be removed. This is not true and the often unnecessary removal of gums can be avoided.

Directorate: Food Import & Export Standards on 012 319-6118. Beekeepers, who must ensure forage for their bees,

Left: EXAMPLE of a correct label for honey in South Africa.

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The basics of preparing for planting

If you have just bought a small tractor and a plough with which to prepare your plot for planting, chances are you are going to be disappointed in your first efforts as a newbie ploughman. And the reason, almost inevitably, is that you will be asking too much of your tractor and plough: asking too much because you will be attempting to plough too deep, thereby causing your plough to hook up in the heavy soil, and your tractor to dig in as a result.

For what beginner ploughmen fail to appreciate is that the art of ploughing is not to attempt to excavate the earth to a great depth, but merely to turn over the top few centimetres of soil, in order to turn existing vegetation upside-down, burying the

How to set up, and use, a small plough ~ arguably the most difficult implement to master

exposed leaves and stems and exposing the roots to sunlight so that the plants die. Nothing more.

For, digging around at great depth to loosen compacted subsoil is not the job of the plough. Rather, that should be left to a single-tine (for a small tractor) ripper or subsoiler. Of all the ground-engaging implements you can use to prepare your soil, the plough is the one that requires the most skill, both in set up and in use.

But first, let's choose the right plough for your soil conditions. If you soil is light and sandy a disc plough ("skottelploeg"), will do a

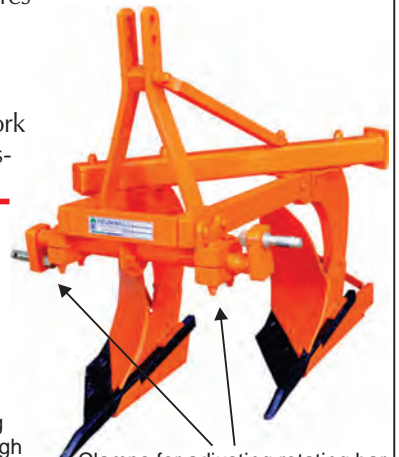
grand job. If, however, your soil is heavy or clayey a disc plough will merely bounce along the surface. For such soils you need a share plough, where the points of the shares will dig into the soil to achieve the desired effect. With a single-share plough much of the adjustment work described below is unneces-

sary. However, with a lightweight two-share plough and some adjustment you will be able to achieve all you need for most smallholding work. If it comes with a depth-adjustable levelling wheel so much the better. If not, it's going to test your skill

Continued on page 35



Alternative method of adjusting hitch pins to swing rear of plough



Clamps for adjusting rotating bar to swing rear of plough

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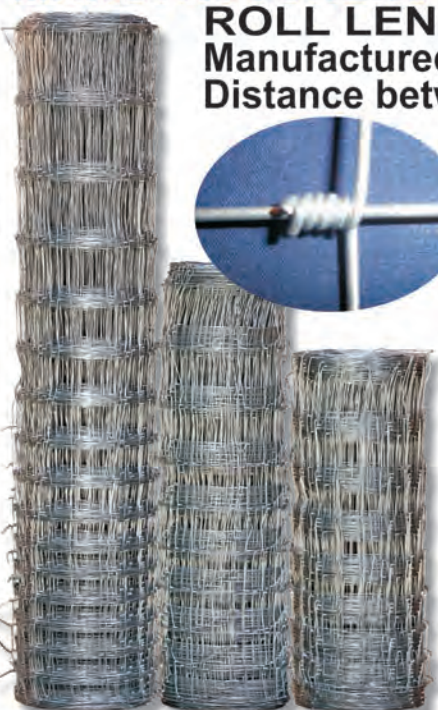
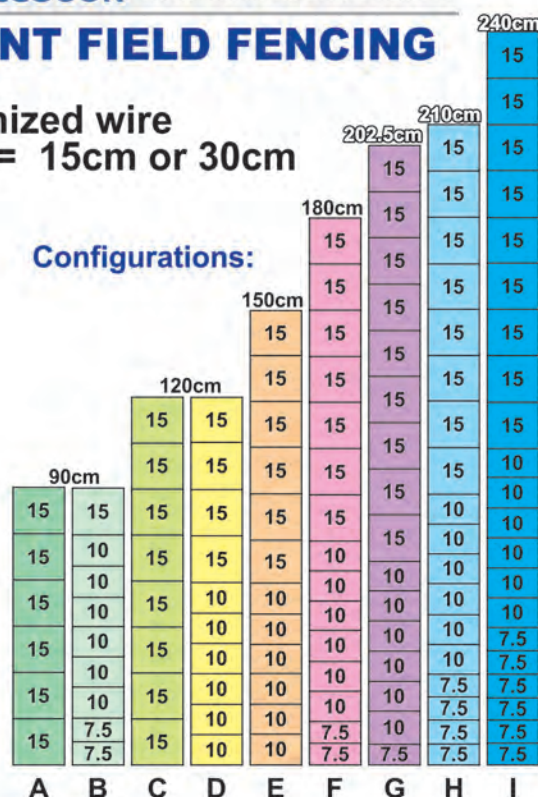


CHART REF	ROLL WIDTH (in cm)	NUMBER OF HORIZONTAL STRANDS
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C	120	9
D	120	11
E	150	13
F	180	16
G	202.5	17
H	210	19
I	240	22

Configurations:



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100 x 20	3.15
	4
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IN THE FIELD

From page 33

as a tractor driver and the hydraulics of your tractor to set ~ and keep ~ the correct depth.

Before you set off into the lands to plough, there are three vital adjustments you need to make to your two- or

three-share plough to ensure the best effort with minimum wastage.

First is to ensure that the shares follow one another exactly, with no overlap of their furrows, meaning that they are ploughing less of a width than maximum, and

with no little "middelmannetjie" between the furrows, meaning that they are not turning all the soil in the field. This adjustment is achieved by moving the position of the hitch pins (the round smooth bolt-like bits that attach the plough to your hydraulics.) On some ploughs this is done by moving the hitch pins back and forward between the sets of holes drilled for their positioning in the plough. On others it is achieved by undoing two substantial friction clamps or U-bolts and rotating the round bar on which the hitch pins are eccentrically attached.

The effect of this adjustment, given that the tractor is fixed, is to swing the rear-most share in relation to the front one.

To see if you have achieved the desired effect, stand directly behind the plough and tractor, If you can see a gap between the shares when

looking towards the tractor, they are too far apart and will result in a middelmannetjie.

The second adjustment is to ensure that the plough shares achieve the maximum "throw" of the ploughed sods, ie that the soil cut away by the plough is upended and not merely cut and redeposited into the furrow that has just been cut.

This is achieved by changing the angle of the plough in relation to the surface of the soil. Generally, the more acute the angle, the better the throw, (and the more

Continued on page 37



2-share plough set to cut two adjacent furrows with no "middelmannetjie" and no overlap. Note depth-adjustable wheel to left ... great for use with a tractor with floppy hydraulics.



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Mesh: Galvanised After Welding Sold in 30m rolls or p/m

Block Size	Wire dia.	915mm	1220mm	1830mm
6.4mm x 6.4mm	0.7mm	✓	✓	—
9.6mm x 9.6mm	0.9mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 13mm	1.0mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 13mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	1.0mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	1.25mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	1.5mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
13mm x 25mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	1.0mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	1.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 25mm	3.0mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	1.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓



Mesh: Galvanised Before Welding Sold in 30m rolls or p/m

Block Size	Wire dia.	915mm	1220mm	1830mm
25mm x 25mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm x 50mm	3.0mm	—	✓	✓
50mm x 50mm	1.6mm	✓	✓	✓
50mm x 50mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓
50mm x 50mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
50mm x 50mm	3.0mm	—	✓	✓
50mm x 100mm	2.0mm	✓	✓	✓
50mm x 100mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓
100mm x 100mm	2.0mm	—	✓	✓
100mm x 100mm	2.5mm	✓	✓	✓

Hexagonal Mesh (Oogies draad) 50m rolls/p/m

Hole Size	Wire dia.	915mm	1220mm	1830mm
13mm hole	0.7mm	✓	✓	✓
25mm hole	0.9mm	✓	✓	✓
75mm hole	1.8mm	✓	✓	✓
90mm hole	1.8mm	✓	✓	✓

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9.5cm
12.5cm
15.0cm



7.5cm
9.5cm
12.5cm
15.0cm



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IN THE FIELD

From page 35

difficult the ploughing operation). This angle is adjusted by shortening or lengthening the levelling box that constitutes part of the right-hand arm of your tractor's hydraulics.

The third adjustment is to

the bottle screw that forms the centre linkage of your hydraulic set-up. Conversely, if the rear share touches first, raise the rear of the plough by shortening the bottle screw. With these adjustments done, set off for the field. Note that fixed share ploughs throw

the throw of each pass falling into the furrow of the previous pass.

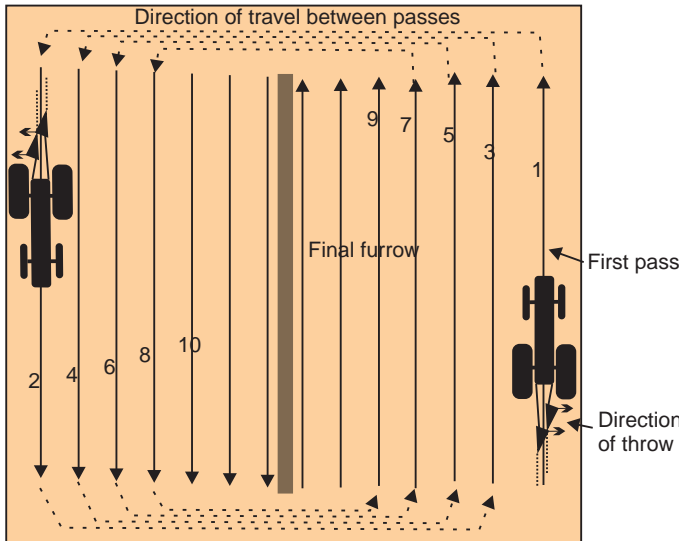
This means, of course, considerable "unproductive" travelling between the right and left-hand sides of the field, but is unavoidable with a fixed-direction plough.

The solution, of course, is to spend much more money on a reversible plough ("omslaanploeg"), which is in effect two plough-sets in one, the one set throwing to the right and the other to the left, with only one set engaging

While a reversible plough is a very nice implement to have and cuts the time taken in getting the job done, the extra expense is hardly warranted on a smallholding and, in any case, such implements are often too big and heavy for small, older tractors to handle without strain.

Once the plough has been correctly set up the skill of the ploughman becomes evident in the evenness of the result of his labours.

Continued on page 39



Ploughing with a one-direction plough to ensure proper throw

ensure that the two shares plough to the same depth. To do this, position the plough and tractor on level ground and, while gently lowering the plough, note which share touches the ground first. If it's the front one, lower the rear of the plough by lengthening

their soil to the right, so you are limited in your direction of travel if you are to throw the upended soil into the furrows of the previous pass, ie, you will always need to plough immediately to the left of the previous pass.

Assuming your field is square or rectangular, the easiest and least wasteful way to achieve this is to start on the right-hand edge of the field for your first pass, then turn left and travel to the other edge of the field for your second pass. Each successive pass thereafter will bring you closer to the centreline, with

with the soil at a time. Thus, with a reversible plough one starts conventionally on the right hand side of the field, but one's next pass is directly adjacent to the first pass, with the left-hand-throw set of shares engaged.



Reversible plough ("omslaan ploeg")

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IN THE FIELD



To break up clods of earth, smooth the field and cut up the ploughed vegetation: Two-row offset disc harrow

From page 37

What he is setting out to do is to throw the top 10-15cm (no more) of soil, upside down, into the previous furrow, in a long, continuous, even stream, and in a straight line. This is achieved by

controlling the depth of the plough which, with a plough without an adjustable depth wheel means a fine understanding of the capabilities of the hydraulics of

one's tractor, for the natural tendency of the toe of the plough will be to dig itself ever deeper into the soil, a tendency which must be resisted by the hydraulics holding the whole implement at the desired depth. At the same time sufficient forward motion must be maintained for there to be momentum to throw the soil over, but not so much as to render the exercise dangerous. Finally, the tractor needs sufficient grip to pull the plough along, without slipping and digging itself in, something that lightweight mini-tractors are well-known to do. Ploughing does not result in a smooth, fine tilth and it

therefore depends on what you wish to plant as to what further ground preparation is necessary.

For example, if you wish merely to hand-plant a large-seed crop such as mealies or pumpkin no further preparation may be necessary. In fact, a Zimbabwean technique is to plant directly into the furrows created by ploughing, using the furrows to maximise the delivery of rain water to the emerging seedlings. This technique can only be successful with a hand-planter, as a mechanical planter requires more even soil to deliver the seed to the desired depth. Further cultivation after ploughing should be done with

circumspection, for two reasons.

Firstly, consider the time taken and fuel used in the cost of preparing the land, and secondly, each pass of the tractor compacts the soil again, negating whatever soil-loosening efforts you took previously with a ripper or a plough.

In heavy soils, however, it may be necessary to break up large clods of ploughed earth using a disc harrow. These are found in two configurations.

Continued on page 41



Old-type harrow: Single row offset disc

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FARMERS' MARKETS

Make the most of your market stall

Farmers' markets are becoming increasingly popular because people want to support local farmers and artisans, they feel that eating fresh, healthy food is important, they want to reduce the carbon footprint of their consumerism and they enjoy the community atmosphere of the market. As a smallholder you might feel that such a market is the best place to sell your produce. But how do you make a success of your stall? You need to create an attractive and colourful display to grab the attention of passers-by. Stand in front of your stall to check how oncoming potential customers see you. Choose a name that tells people what you are promoting and have an eye-



catching and clearly visible sign or banner, so that they can see immediately what you are offering. Pretty tablecloths should reach the ground in front of your table or counter, so that you can store goods underneath them. Add a dash of whimsy to your display, with unique items, such as chalkboard signs or a rustic piece of art. If electricity is available, a string of lights creates a fun, party-like feel.

Display the best examples of your produce and lay them out tidily and in such a way that they are easy to pick up. Less than perfect produce can be processed, eg, use it to make jams or chutneys, which you can also sell. Think about your appearance – crisp overalls or colourful aprons look smart and professional. In warmer weather you can wear a t-shirt that has the name of your stand printed or

embroidered on it. Temperature will vary throughout the market day, so start with layers you can easily take off as things warm up. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes, because you need to be standing at your stall at all times, preferably in front of the stand. Smile and be welcoming. You need to be approachable and certainly not sitting looking at your phone. Eat a solid meal before the market, and drink plenty of water throughout the day. Make a plan about how and when you are going to eat if you are there for the whole day. Get someone to relieve you for a while, so that you can have some lunch and go to the toilet. Even though your stall might be all about food, it can be a turnoff for customers to watch a vendor eat. Engage your customers in conversation. When customers feel as if they've made a

Continued on page 42

IN THE FIELD

From page 39

The most common is two rows of disks, one behind the other, with each row set at an angle to the other (hence the name "offset disc harrow"). The effect therefore is that the first row chops up the clods (and roots and plants) and throws the resulting material a little to the left, while the second row chops the same material again and throws it back to the right.

The second type has a single row of discs divided into two halves set at an acute angle to each other. The effect, therefore, is that the worked soil and material is thrown outwards from the centre-line on both sides. The most effective way to use such an implement is to travel out-and-back, each pass working only half of the previous track. Thus, the soil is thrown first to the right and then, on the second pass, returned to its

original position. Another important adjustment with such a harrow is to ensure that the disks are level, ie that the rear-most disks in the centre are not lower than the disks to the left and right. Finally, if the field is to be used for a broadseed planting such as grass or lucerne it will need to be raked and levelled to a fine tilth. Or, if it is to be used for vegetable plantings a ridger may be necessary.

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FARMERS' MARKETS

From page 41

personal connection with you, they'll be more likely to return. However try not to talk to one customer for too long if others are waiting. Have a brochure, price list or other reading matter that they can look at while they are waiting.

Find characteristics about your product that make it superior to that of other vendors, ie, find your unique selling point (USP). Are your wares genuinely organic? Is your jam recipe different from the usual? Is your handmade soap made of finer ingredients? Are you catering for special dietary requirements, ie, is your produce gluten-free or suitable for diabetics, etc? Don't undervalue your products, but don't charge unrealistically high prices. Do your market research beforehand and find out what the going rate is for your type of produce. Make sure your pricing is clear. Decide whether it is cost-effective to print coloured labels.



Packaging can make the difference between perceived high-quality and average-quality. For instance, bars of homemade soap with a pretty wrapper, tied with raffia, look like they've had more care than bars of soap just piled in a bin. Pick colours and a design that play on the local aspect of your product.

Providing printed cards with your favourite recipes encourages purchases, especially if you focus on recipes for some of your more unusual items that don't sell as well.

Plan your harvest and product lines so you have a consistent supply of produce.

If it is possible, have samples of your produce for people to taste.

Think of a way to engage

children at your stall.

Try to identify and remember your key weekly customers by name. Ask them how they used your products and if they were satisfied with them or if they have any suggestions to make.

Keep the weekly process of packing for market stress-free with a permanent checklist of everything you need, from change in the cash box to your business cards. It's easiest to have one permanent bin with all your key supply essentials for the season.

You have to persevere - consider success at the farmers' market an on-going journey of learning. Keep experimenting and trying different approaches and, whenever possible in your travels, visit other markets and bring new perspectives back home to your neighbourhood.

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— IN THE GARDEN

How to transplant

a tree **It's getting late in the season, but if you must, here's how...**

Many smallholders greatly value the trees that grow on their plots, so if there's a tree in the way of their extension, driveway or proposed swimming pool, they are not likely to pull out the chainsaw. Rather they will look at the option of transplanting it, as long as it is in good health and shape, it won't need serious hauling to be lifted out, and it's not an alien invasive species.

Some say that winter is the ideal time to move a tree, but spring is not too late for a deciduous tree, before it begins to leaf out, but after the threat of frost. Late summer is usually a good time to move evergreens.

A suitable spot to receive the transplant will preferably have soil of a similar type, with similar drainage and sun exposure for the tree to thrive.

Dig the hole to receive the transplant first. Make the hole square, which will encourage the roots to spread into the surrounding soil. Estimate how large the root system will be when you dig it out. Allow for the root system to go into the ground to the same depth it was originally at. If the soil is extremely hard or compacted, you will want to dig the hole much larger to loosen the soil around the perimeter to make it easier for the roots to spread when they begin to grow outward.

Place a generous amount of compost at the bottom of the hole to ensure that the tree receives good nourishment during its re-establishment phase. Most trees also need proper drainage and soil pH between 5.5 and 6.5 in order to thrive, so test the soil before planting and amend as needed.

Mark the tree trunk with a dab of paint on the north side, so that you will place it in its new spot facing the same way that it was originally. This minimises the stress on the tree while it is settling into its new position.

Now excavate a trench around the tree, cutting the roots as you work. Leave as much soil and root mass intact that you feel you can manage to move, as this will help the tree to settle quicker. Depending on the size and species of the tree, the trench around it should be about 50 cm deep before you begin to excavate under the bowl of root mass.

When you can no longer reach under the tree, by which time it should be wobbly, fasten a rope around the trunk at about a metre height or higher, depending on the sturdiness of the trunk. If you use a chain, wrap a cloth around it to prevent it from damaging the bark. Make sure that the rope is long enough so that, when it is attached to whatever vehicle you are using to tow the tree, it won't topple onto the vehicle. Attach the rope to the vehicle and pull the tree over slowly. As it bends chop away the remaining roots.

Place skids, eg, two or three gum poles, under the bowl of earth and root and slide the root mass up the poles out of the hole and onto a sheet of corrugated iron. Attach the rope to the corrugated iron and use it as a sled to move the tree to its new location. Position the bowl of roots as close as possible to the new hole, in such a way that you can push it into the hole and raise the tree, taking care to have the paint mark facing north.

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DIARY



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

NOTE: FARMERS' & CRAFT MARKETS. For a listing of REGULARLY HELD markets and fairs please see the separate section on page 47. Only markets that are held infrequently are now listed in this calendar section.

Every Sunday
Cattle drive with City Slickers breakfast,

Diamond X Cowboy Ranch, near Cullinan. Call Rudan on 082 410-3180 horses@diamondxrancho.co.za, www.diamondx.co.za., R500 per person.

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

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

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

2017

October

1: Country Fair at Uncle Tim's Centre, High Road, Brentwood, Benoni. Call 010 590-8003

5: Full moon
7: Crafts in the Park Food & Craft Market, Bokkie Park, Southvale Road, Parkdene, Boksburg. 09:00 to 14:30. Free entrance. Up to 80 craft and food stalls, live music. Call 072 713-3332 or info@craftsinthepark.co.za

8: Antiques & Craft Fair at Uncle Tim's Centre, High Road, Brentwood, Benoni. Call 010 590-8003

9-13: Meat Processing Course (4 days), ARC Animal Production, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-9153 or Thabisho Phasha, PhashaT@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-7273
10: 14 hours of daylight in Gauteng (required by chickens to lay). Ends 12 March.

16 - 20: Veld Management Course, Africa Land-Use Training, Pretoria Botanical Gardens, Email courses@alut.co.za.

16-20: Introductory Course in Poultry Production (5 days), ARC Animal Production, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-9153 or Thabisho Phasha, PhashaT@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-7273

19: New moon
21-22: Eastern Highveld Beekeepers Association annual honey show, Hecker's Nursery, 1 Northrand Road, Boksburg. Daily from 09h00 to 15h30. Honey will be on sale and a display of beekeeper's equipment and other items of interest will be on show. Entrance free. Call 011 362-2904 for details.

November

4: Full moon
4: Crafts in the Park Food & Craft Market,

Bokkie Park, Southvale Road, Parkdene, Boksburg. 09:00 to 14:30. Free entrance. Up to 80 craft and food stalls, live music. Call 072 713-3332 or info@craftsinthepark.co.za
7-10: Introductory Course in Pig Production (4 days), ARC Animal Production, Irene. R2 680. Call Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-9153 or Thabisho Phasha, PhashaT@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-7273
18: New moon
22-23: Introductory Course to Veld/Rangeland Management (2 days), ARC Animal Production, Irene. Call Annetjie Loubser, aloubser@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-9153 or Thabisho Phasha, PhashaT@arc.agric.za, tel 012 672-7273

December

2: Crafts in the Park Food & Craft Market, Bokkie Park, Southvale Road, Parkdene, Boksburg. 09:00 to 14:30. Free entrance. Up to 80 craft and food stalls, live music. Call 072 713-3332 or info@craftsinthepark.co.za
3: Full moon
16: Day of Reconciliation
16: Christmas Crafts in the Park Food & Craft Market, Bokkie Park, Southvale Road, Parkdene, Boksburg. 09:00 to 14:30. Free entrance. Up to 80 craft and food stalls, live music. Call 072 713-3332 or info@craftsinthepark.co.za
18: New moon
21: Solstice
24: Christmas Eve
25: Christmas Day
26: Day of Goodwill

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Regular Gauteng Farmers' Food Markets

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

DAY	WHAT	WHEN	WHERE	WHO TO CONTACT	WHAT TO EXPECT
Thursday					
Every Thursday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 to 15:00	Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston.	Konrad or Glenda 011 706-3671 or glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce
Friday					
1st Friday	The Shed Night Market	18:00 to 22:00	109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal	Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456	Food & craft market.
Saturday					
Every Saturday	Tuinhekkie Farmers Market	08:00 - 14:00	cor Lazar Ave & Merwe Road Boothia Plots, Randfontein	Amanda Hefer 073 565-8905	Handmade products, numerous food stalls, flowers live entertainment most Saturdays, farmyard for the kids
Every Saturday	Verster Park Tuin Mark	09:00 - 15:00	Plot 21, Lang St, Verster Park Bronkhorstspuit	Maggie van Rheede 061 887-4149	Hand crafted goods, art, naturally-grown produce Community market to promote local business
Every Saturday	Wholefood Country Market	09:00 - 14:00	Sawasdee Exotic Nursery, cor Main & Zinnia Roads, Kyalami	Robyn 083 311-4768 wholefoodmarket@gmail.com	Variety of organic & homemade foods
Every Saturday	The Shed Food & Craft Market	08:00 to 15:00	109 Malcolm Road, Randvaal	Felicity 073 232-0017 or 081 011-9456	Food & craft market.
Every Saturday	Pretoria Boeremark	05:30 to 09:30	Pioneer Open Air Museum, Silverton.	012 804-8031 or 082 416-3900 blinsga@lantic.net	Fresh produce and traditional bazaar treats like jaffles, kaalings with pap and boerewors rolls.
Every Saturday	Bryanston Organic & Natural Market	09:00 to 15:00	Culross Road (off Main Road), Bryanston	Konrad or Glenda on 011 706-3671 glenda@bryanstonorganicmarket.co.za	Quality hand crafted goods, unique art and fresh organic and naturally grown produce
Every Saturday	The Hazel Food Market	08:00 to 14:00	Greenlyn Village Centre, cor Thomas Edison & Mackenzie Sts, Menlo Park, Pta	Rietha 083 554-5636. www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za	Fresh produce straight from the producer. Coffee, eats on sale
Every Saturday	Walkerville Farmers Market	09:00 to 15:00	R112 Main Road, Walkerville	079 076-7680 info@wfmarket.co.za	Fresh produce, arts & crafts, food court and kids play area
Every Saturday	Walkerville Country Market	09:00 to 15:00	Walkerville Showgrounds on the R82	Noorunisha 074 141-8485 market@walkervillesa.co.za	Fresh produce, crafter's market, food court, craft ber.. Kid's play area and pet friendly
Every Saturday	Bosheuvel Fresh Produce	09:00 to 15:00	54 Glory Road, Muldersdrift	Milch 082 553-2846	Meats and vegetables, delicacies, honey, cheese, brewery, crafter's market and children's entertainment.
Every Saturday	Market @84	09:00 to 14:00	84 On Main, Walkerville	Ariel 078 223-9238	Fresh organically grown produce and crafters market
Every Saturday	The Fresh Produce Co-op Weekly Farmers Market	07:00 to 11:00	49 Olifantsfontein rd, Glen Austin	Stall inquiries: fpcstalls@gmail.com Co-op: info.freshhproducecoop@gmail.com	Fresh produce, pickles, preserves and home industry and craft, food etc.
1st Saturday	Jozi Real Food VEGAN Market	09:00 to 15:00	Pirates Sports Club, Braeside Avenue, Greenside	083 532 2992 whitespace@mweb.co.za	Arts & crafts, live music, vegan cuisine, organic vegetables & coffee
1st Saturday	The Green Market	09:00 to 12:00	Pretoria Botanical Gardens 2 Cussonia Avenue, Brummeria, Pretoria	Melissa 083 562-5249	Products ranging from solar equipment to organic food
1st Saturday	Victus Christi Arts & Crafts Market	08:00 to 14:00	24b Miles Sharp Street, Rynfield, Benoni (north side of Bunny Park)	Schalk 082 561-9409 info@victuschristi.org.za	Arts & crafts, fine art, food, fresh meat & produce and home industry
2nd Saturday	Brakpan Boeremark	09:00 to 14:00	cnr van der Walt and Dirk van der Hoff Brakpan	Marius 011 744-2322 082 904-8852	Over 50 stalls. Food, arts, crafts, etc.
Last Saturday	Fresh2U Farmers Market	08:00 to 14:00	Corner Main Street and High Street Modderfontein (behind 33 High Street)	Jane 083 376 5567 Chantelle 082 338 7818 wardek@iafrica.com	Over 50 stalls. Fresh produce, home made goods, plants, food and more.
Last Saturday	Fresh Produce Market	08:00 to 13:00	Lakeside Mall Boathouse	Alma 079 940-0201 realfood4realpeople@gmail.com	Local fresh produce direct to the public
Last Saturday	Windpomp Market	08:00 to 14:00	Broodblik & Koffiepit on the R51 between Petit & Bapsfontein	adelekoffiepit@gmail.com 083 445-1608	Homemade crafts & food stalls bakery & coffee shop and entertainment
Sunday					
Every Sunday	Fourways Farmers Market	10:00 to 15:00	Corner Montecasino Boulevard and William Nicol Drive, Fourways	011 465 0827 www.fmarket.co.za	Get your groceries...In the garden!
Last Sunday	Aloe Valley Food, Arts & Craft Market	10:00 to 14:00	48, R511 Doornrandjies	012 669-3043 info@serendipitycafe.co.za www.serendipitycafe.co.za	Community market to promote local business

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Santie and the steakhouse

Santie was a lissome blonde with limpid green eyes. A second year student at Tuks, she was the same age as me but I, having spent a gap year abroad, was a bit more worldly-wise, or so I thought.

Our "romance" in the heady Pretoria summer of 1971 was more given to meaningful staring deep into each other's eyes, fumbling hand-holding and chaste good-night kisses than it was to athletic bed-sports. In fact, looking back through the cynical mist of time I come to realise that perhaps Santie's apparent interest in me had more to do with improving her (Western Transvaal farmer's daughter's) English than it did with romantic plucking at her heartstrings.

And eating. Being a second year student she was perpetually short of money, and always hungry, and I, though hardly wealthy at the time, was her meal-ticket.

And thus was I introduced to a Pretoria institution: a steakhouse in Arcadia named the Taras Bulba.

Newly opened then, the Taras Bulba was the very pinnacle of chic for young people. Its premises were a pre-war house in Hamilton Street and its stained-glass front door opened into a central passage, off which, to left and right, were creaky wooden-floored rooms filled with tables and chairs.

Efficient waiters stomped about in the smoke-filled, crimson-lit interior, ferrying large plates of steak and chips and rounds of drinks to the diners. Steaming slabs of succulent rump and fillet smothered in monkey-gland sauce on plates piled with chips, alongside of which came a small square wooden bowl filled with salad. And the dressing, a mixture of mayonnaise and vinegar, was provided in a little plastic container which presented a hazard as one attempted to prise off the lid without spilling the contents into one's lap, while still maintaining meaningful eye-contact with the object of one's desires seated across the small red-checked table.

'Twas at Taras Bulba that Santie introduced me to a cloyingly-sweet white wine named Delheim Spatzendreck (literally "little sparrow's shit"), named at a drunken Sunday revelry on the Delheim estate by a German guest who, upon tasting the beverage, exclaimed to the winemaker, "Spatz" Sperling, "Spatz, now this really is dreck." Sperling, (whose name means sparrow in German) being a man of some humour, decided to name the wine Spatzendreck and drove the point home by commissioning a label which depicted a sparrow with its bum in the air crapping into a wine barrel.

After the "Summer of '71" Santie and I parted ways and I never revisited Taras Bulba, although I always noted, on my regular trips through Pretoria, that the restaurant was still there, its exterior painted an uninviting avocado green and its front stoep invariably, in latter years at least, occupied by groups of swarthy gentlemen from afar who peddle mind-bending substances and who increasingly make up the residents of Arcadia's flatlands.

By earlier this year, the presence of Nigerian drug-lords having presumably become too much, Taras Bulba shut up shop in Hamilton Street and decamped to leafy Brooklyn, into another purpose-renovated old house.

And for "oulaas" my beloved-of-many-summers and I decided to dine there, joined by one of our children, a young lad who has chosen Pretoria as his home and workplace.

The "new" Taras Bulba is the same as the old ~ yet different, and not in a good way. Billing itself as a Portuguese Steakhouse its quite limited menu features a handful of Porra dishes amid a few old staples such as grilled steak, soles, calamari etc.

A reminder of how the world, but not the restaurant, has changed since 1971 was to be seen in the menu. It is commonplace today to have the menu in any "foreign" restaurant in the language of the restaurant. Thus, in a French establishment for example, snails on the menu would be described as "l'escargots". Not at Taras Bulba: it sticks to the old-fashioned binary of English and Afrikaans!

The food itself wasn't bad, but there's better to be had half a mile up the road in Hazelwood. My steak was competently cooked and the salad ingredients, while fresh, hadn't changed much in the ensuing 46 years (iceberg lettuce, tomato slices and onion rings), although gone are the little wooden bowls and plastic dressing bakkies. The dressing now comes in a squeeze bottle reminiscent of a Second Class SAR&H dining car of old.

I can't say dining at the "new" Taras Bulba was a perfect trip down Memory Lane. Rather, it was a reminder that some things, like old romances, are often better left unrevisited.



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