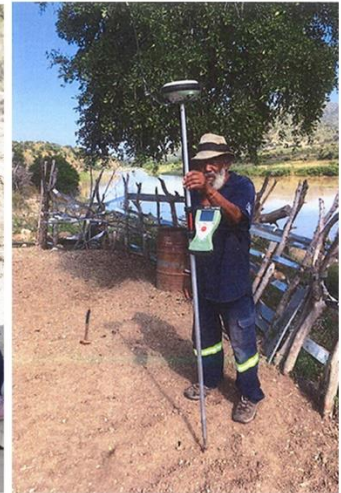




MDUKATSHANI
RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Annual Report 2020





Staff and fieldworkers on duty wearing their *izifonya* – muzzles.

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Built by hand with buckets and wheelbarrows -the Mathintha dam in 1980.



The dam today 40 years later

The Mathintha dam

How do you measure success in agriculture? The question was debated by a group of academics from the Africa Institute who visited Mdukatshani soon after the project started work at Msinga in the 1970's. The academic eventually settled on a definition. *Success is still being there ten years later.* The Mathintha Dam hasn't needed a definition to proclaim its success, but it is worth noting that today, 40 years after it was built by hand, it is still there, providing water for the community. It was always a remarkable achievement. Started as one of Mdukatshani's work-for-food projects during the drought years of 1979-1980, it was built entirely by hand by 249 people (92 of them children) who used 11 picks, 15 worn spades, 39 basins, and three wheelbarrows to dig and carry the earth to the dam wall. The cartage contractors included little boys who worked with "machines" of their own design - mini-tins threaded with wire and pulled on sticks, and racy sledges made of forked branches, old cardboard, and torn plastic. In return for their work the dam-builders were paid in mealie meal, and when donations of meal ran out, they worked for nothing. Those were hard years, and Mathintha was not the only community that built dams in return for food. The other dams were taken over and enlarged by government as part of a "betterment" programme which moved the local people to a closer settlement area, leaving their dams to water stock.

(For a description of Mdukatshani's work-for-food projects read Newsletter November 1980 - *Love is a Four Letter Word* on our website)

Mdukatshani's Vision

To find and promote options for farmers in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal, that improve their lives, their livelihoods, and their productivity, while using locally available resources wisely for long-term sustainability.

Mdukatshani's Projects

Increasing women and youth involvement in livestock and value-adding activities through prioritizing women-owned livestock and income-generating activities in order to create wealth for the poorest. Improving livestock productivity of farmers in Msinga by intervening in livestock health systems supporting local youth in enhancing value chains leading to commercialisation of local herds. Promoting animal health and knowledge transfer between parents and school children through school clubs. Using beads, metal wire and grass to create jewellery and art for the local and international market.

THE GOAT AGRIBUSINESS PROJECT (GAP)

Mdukatshani's work with goats is part of GAP, a five-year programme run as a partnership between Mdukatshani, Heifer Project South Africa, National Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, and the KwaZulu Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. GAP targets farmers in five district municipalities in Natal and Zululand and aims at improving food security and rural livelihoods. More detailed reports on GAP appear regularly on our website www.gapkzn.co.za.



Namibia, September 2019. Ovihimba women herd indigenous goats in the Kaokoveld.



Nepal, October 2019. Cashmere goats are adapted to the snowy Himalayas.



Northern Cape, August 2019. A feral goat round-up in the Tankwa Karoo

BEFORE COVID VISITS TO FARAWAY PLACES

The contrasts were extraordinary. Desert, Karoo and the Himalayas – three extreme environments where little survived except the local breed of goats. It was hard to see what they lived on. “Seemingly pebbles,” said GG Alcock, a Mdukatshani trustee who was astonished by the goats he saw in northern Namibia on a motorcycle trip in September. There were thousands of goats in the wide desert spaces, herded by the Ovahimba people. “They dig deep holes in the riverbed, passing buckets of water hand-to-hand up a chain three people deep, before pouring the water into hollowed logs for the goats to drink,” he marvelled.

Although the Tankwa Karoo in the Northern Cape offers little sustenance too, for the past 80 years it has been home to a population of feral goats which run wild on the rocky landscape. “The goats are like large shaggy wild animals,” reported the Mdukatshani team who went to have a look at them in August. “They jump and start every time humans approach and mill in circles... running hard until they can no longer hear or see the human throng. They are truly wild and beautiful things.” Isolation has made the Tankwa goats unique, although only recently have they drawn the attention of researchers. Originally farm escapees, the goats lived unnoticed for decades until 1986 when their territory became part of the Tankwa Karoo National Park. Because domestic animals have no place in a national park – even if they are wild – in 2007 the Park authorities put out a tender for their extermination, and but for the intervention of Thinus Jonker, a far sighted official in the Department of Agriculture, that would have been the end of the goats. Instead, recognizing their genetic potential, Jonker had the goats moved to the Carnarvon Research Station where they are kept isolated from human beings – apart from an annual round-up which now attracts a huge team of scientists, volunteers and helpers.



The Carnarvon Research Station, home of the Tankwa feral goats.



Because they eluded traps, the goats had to be darted from helicopters when they were moved from the Tankwa Karoo National Park to the Carnarvon Research Station.



Gugu Mbatha, Mdukatsani's Project Director, helps to weigh a goat kid at the annual Tankwa round up.

It's a two-day event where goats are captured for blood and DNA samples, and are weighed, measured, and photographed, following protocols set by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Gugu and Rauri were glad to be there with GAP colleague Marisia Geraci from Heifer Project South Africa – and glad to see the goats run free when they were released.

Because the Karoo is reported to be the heart of goat farming in South Africa, the visit to the Tankwa goat project was just part of a longer trip to the Northern Cape to find out more about commercial goat operations. "But where are the goats?" lamented Gugu, our Project Director, as they drove hour after hour through empty country, Karoo slowly yielding to Kalahari. They had occasional glimpses of scattered herds of Boer goats, but when they did see animals, they were mostly sheep which were being kept alive on lucerne and supplements because of years of ongoing drought.

The trip to Nepal was another eye-opener, if for different reasons. It's a small country with 92 languages where goats provide the meat needs for more than 26 million people. As most Nepalese are Hindu, cattle are sacred and used only for milk, going to government-funded shelters to die of old age. Although Nepal is primarily a rice-producing country, 51% of Nepal's households keep goats, which are tied up at home, fed cut fodder, then slaughtered and sold on the street for meat.



Everywhere you go in Nepal you see people selling handcut fodder.

The big homes on Nepal's rice farms house more than one generation.



The conference ended just before Diwali, the Festival of Lights, and street sellers were busy stringing garlands of flowers.

It's a very different system from South Africa, and there was much talk and many comparisons when Rauri and Marisia represented GAP at an International Conference on Asian Goats held at Chitwan, Nepal in October. They had been invited by Beth Miller, the President of the International Goat Association who had visited Mdukatshani in 2017 and thought the GAP experience could contribute to the theme *Goats for food, nutrition and economic security in the developing world*. *

The trip had many surprises, among them the discovery that South Africa's Boer goats had not only reached Nepal (via Australia) but were an important topic for Asian researchers trying to produce meatier animals for local consumption. Although Nepal has between 6 and 11 million goats (both figures come from the government) the country has to import about 300 000 goats from India annually, and because of the need to cut down on imports, research is heavily funded towards improving local production. This is one thing the South Africans shared with their Nepalese colleagues at the conference – the need to improve homestead herds through increased productivity. But while the GAP team talked in numbers of 300 animals to a herd, households in Nepal have only six to ten goats, and are limited by the need to cut fodder. Despite the problems there is no shortage of funds for goat work in Nepal, with one NGO spending R 600 million on a goat improvement project, while the World Bank has budgeted R 1,7 billion for a goat programme. Accustomed as they are to a struggle to get any funds at all, the GAP team returned home very thoughtful. (For a longer report on the visit to Nepal see our website www.mdukatshani.com/news)

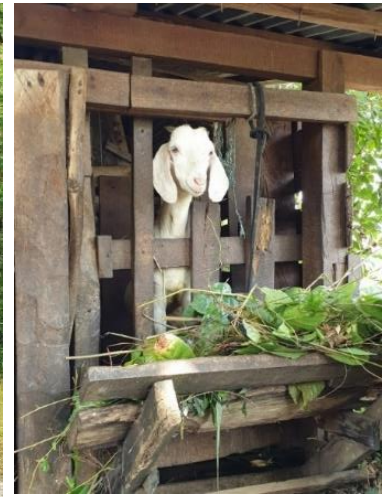
* Rauri and Marisia contributed to the 118 papers delivered at the conference with a paper on *"Goat Commercialization through increasing productivity of homestead herds in South Africa"*.



A street dog adorned with a garland for Diwali.



Taking the homestead goats for a walk.



A goat kid in its home stall, feeding.



Rauri Alcock, the Mdukatshani Director, trying to photograph a goat against the Himalayas.



The need to keep goats stalled and fed cut fodder limits the size of homestead herds in Nepal.



When the farm was surveyed in 1892, the only access between the river lands and the high ground was this steep path up the Ngongolo ridge, an area historically important to both the Mthembu and Mchunu tribes for more than 150 years.

It was a compromise – not a resolution
Mdukatshani would hold the land in trust as a buffer between the tribes.

THE DISPUTED TERRITORY

The surveyor left home in the dark to be sure he arrived on time. It was two days to the Covid 19 lockdown so the survey would have to be rushed. Not that it was a big job. Siggie Lauterbach had come to Mdukatshani to do a sub-division. A section of the farm Loraine was being ceded to the Mthembu people, and the area needed to be beaconed off. That was all. There was nothing to indicate the historic importance of the occasion, unless you considered the observers sitting in the shade, waiting with a sense of expectation. They knew what the day entailed. A truce? It had been a long time coming.

Ever since the farm was first surveyed in 1892 there had been trouble. On a map it looked all right. Straight lines. Empty space. No homesteads. The reality would always be different. Whatever its status as a white farm, Loraine had a tribal identity. But was it Mthembu, Mchunu – or both? This was of little concern to the surveyor who rode in on horseback in 1892 to measure off a block of 2000 acres (809 hectares) on the Weenen-Msinga boundary. He didn't have many options. There was a narrow strip of land along the Thukela River, and behind it the Ngongolo ridge. The ridge ran five kilometres along the skyline and effectively cut the farm in two. It wasn't ideal but it couldn't be helped. There would be a Top Farm, and a Bottom Farm, stony terrain that would be difficult to farm – if farming was ever the intention.



The survey party on the way to the clifftop above the Thukela River to examine the point at which a beacon will be erected to mark the boundary of the area which Mdukatshani is ceding to the Mthembus. This area has never been contested.



The observers, from the left: Mfanunjani Mchunu, the Ncunjane induna, Mdidyeli Mbatha (Mthembu), Mvezelwa Mchunu and Mhambiseni Mncube (Mchunu), and Dhayimani Dladla, an Mthembu elder who was born in the contested territory.



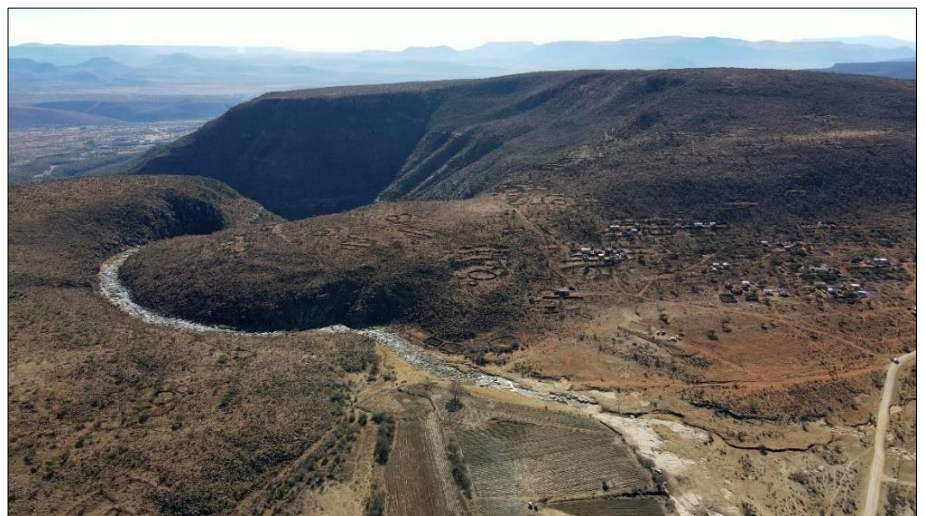
“The only trouble spot was Ngongolo”. This is a view of Mchunu homesteads on the Msinga section of the ridge, an area known as Mathintha. An arrow indicates the contested area, part of Loraine, an old labour farm, now owned by Mdukatshani. The blue hills in the background are Mthembu territory.

In 1911 Loraine was put on the market, a cheap farm with a single resource – the labour of the families living on the land. Years passed without a nibble of interest. Should the farm perhaps be added to the location next door? Government considered the question. It had promised to enlarge the African Reserves, but there was the problem of white farmers’ interests. They relied on the labour they extracted in lieu of rent from the Africans resident in the thornveld. In 1928 the Mthembu *Nkosi*, Kufakezwe, made an offer to buy Loraine – something impossible under the 1913 Land Act – but a move that signalled intent to the Mchunus, igniting old claim and animosities.

The trouble had started in the early days of the Natal Colony when the Mthembus were living in the Thukela River valley, and the Mchunus on higher ground. Tribes were small, the land was sparsely settled, and boundaries were undefined. But it was arid country, and some time in the 1860s, when “ successive droughts in the Tugela Valley were impoverishing the people” several Mthembu kraals moved to higher ground, settling on the Ngongolo ridge with the consent of the Mchunu *Nkosi*, Pakade. On that much the tribes agreed. The Mthembus had been allowed to settle as a favour. A favour that could be revoked? The question would be argued over the next 55 years and was at the heart of evidence presented to a Board of Inquiry appointed to settle the Mthembu-Mchunu boundary in March 1919*. Three white magistrates sat on the Board, and after listening to each tribe present its case, spent three days on horseback and on foot inspecting the boundary with two *amakhosi* and about 200 men. “It was exceptionally rough and broken country ‘the Board reported, but there was less discord than they expected. There was only one trouble spot - the overlapping kraals on the Ngongolo ridge. The solution was obvious. Seven Mthembu kraals would have to move. The verdict was announced to the tribes in February 1920. Government had approved a boundary that ran along the top of the hills. High land for the Mchunus. Low land for the Mthembus. It was a boundary “which apart from being in every way equitable, is so clearly defined and understood that only a great upheaval of nature can change it,” the Board reported. If the hills moved, the boundary would change.



The advertisement for Loraine when it was put on the market in 1911.

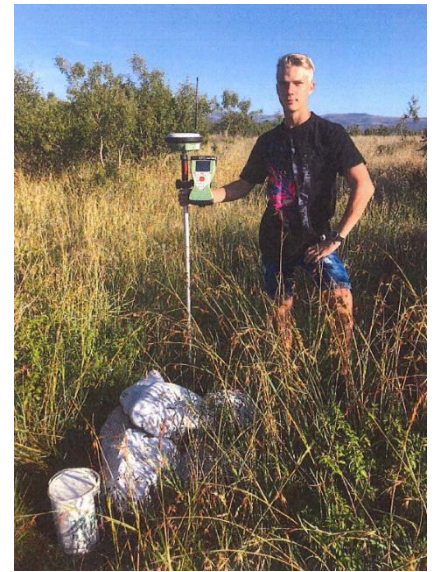


There has been no trouble over the Msinga section of the Mchunu-Mthembu boundary which runs along the top of the hills, giving the high land to the Mchunus, and the low land to the Mthembus. The boundary is clearly visible here where the Mhlangane stream runs through Mchunu high ground to fall into the Thukela valley. The boundary was originally defined by a Board of Inquiry in 1919 and was resurveyed and gazetted in 1968.



The survey party follow cattle paths through the bush on the contested area of Ngongolo.

Beacon C. The surveyor's grandson, Michael Lauterbach, marks the corner of a subdivision that will separate the Mthembu area from the contested territory which will remain part of Mdukatshani.

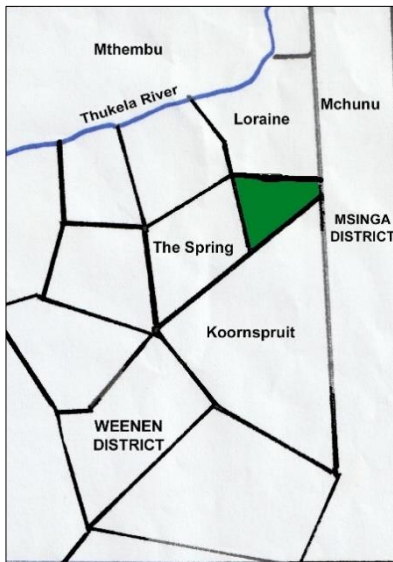


The Mthembus on high ground had two years to move. Back down into the valley - or onto the white farms next door? Farms like Loraine, Koornspruit and The Spring which would one day be known as Mdukatshani. The farms were a useful overflow area for Msinga, where tribal law did not apply, and you could juggle the rules of identity. This suited men like Zwangedwa Mbatha, an Mthembu living in the Mchunu area who decided to move onto Loraine. This made him a squatter with all kinds of obligations, but it legitimized his right to the plateau of Ngongolo, which was part of the Top Farm of Loraine.

The Mbatha family had been living on the farm for 37 years when Heinrich Meyer bought Loraine, Koornspruit and The Spring in 1929. It was the first time the farms had been sold as a block, despite being separate tribal territories. Although Meyer wanted labour for his wattle plantations, he was soon ready to sell. "I have been very careful right from the start not to do something that might cause trouble among the 2 tribes," he wrote to the Weenen magistrate in 1933. "I have now given it up trying to sell to the chiefs direct as I think it may cause trouble and I think it is a better plan if the Native Affairs Dept. buys the farms. Then it will belong to Govt. and they can arrange it to avoid trouble". The Minister of Native Affairs turned down the proposal, and the farms were still on the market in September 1944 when the two tribes clashed on the boundary in what has been described as "the greatest single battle fought since the Anglo-Zulu War". More than 6 000 men took part, 69 were killed, and a Special Court sentenced 279 men and 10 indunas to various terms of imprisonment. On the farms homesteads were burnt and livestock raided, but little changed. The Mthembus were soon back on high ground rebuilding, and they were still there in 1969 when government abolished the labour tenant system, and more than 20 000 people were forcibly "cleared" off Weenen's farms.



Petrus Majozi addressing one of the interminable meetings trying to get agreement on the tribal boundaries on Mdukatshani. Majozi was one of those who took part in the 1944 Battle of Ngongolo, fought close to this patch of bush on the Weenen-Msinga boundary. He later worked hard for tribal reconciliation, both in his position as Mchunu Chief Induna and an Mdukatshani Trustee. When he died in 2002 there was still no resolution.



Sketch map showing the position of the farms on the Weenen-Msinga boundary, and the disputed area of Loraine.

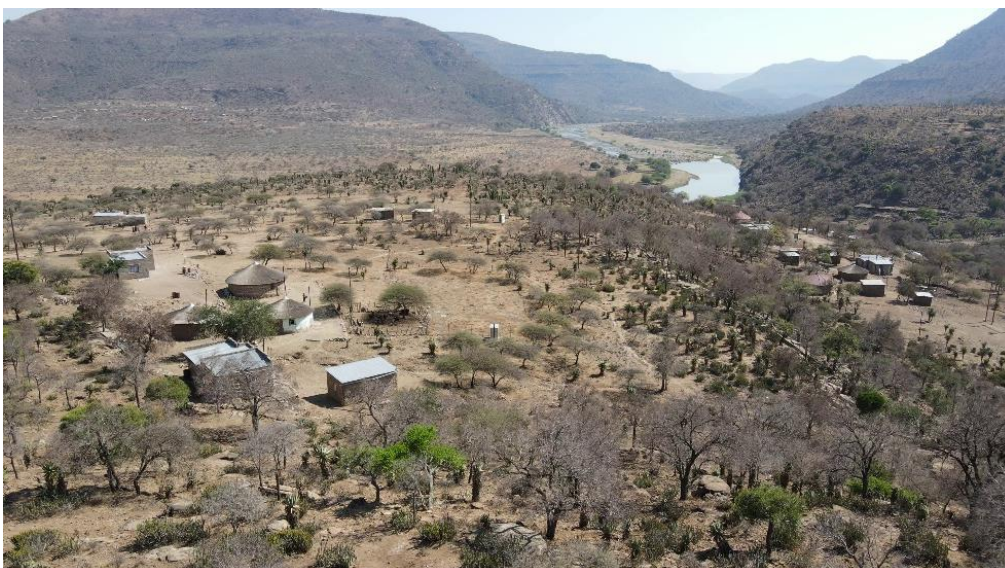


The Skehleng River gorge cuts through the western end of Ngongolo which lies on the farm Koornspruit. In 2017 this area became Mchunu territory when title was transferred from Mdukatshani to the Bambanani Machunu Community Property Trust

Loraine, Koornspruit and The Spring were lying empty when they were bought for Church Agricultural Projects (CAP) in 1975, 2 534 hectares that were going to be known as Mdukatshani (now the name of the project). It didn't take long to discover the farms were contested territory, and in the years ahead CAP worked hard to ease tribal tensions, developing the project through a combined Mthembu-Mchunu committee, with representatives of both tribes sitting on our Board of Trustees. From the start questions of restitution were a critical part of CAP's work, and long before democracy made land reform possible the project was discussing the future of its farms with the many local families who had claims to the land. Koornspruit and The Spring were accepted as Mchunu territory, and in 2017, after years of government inertia, the farms were transferred to the Bambanani Machunu Community Property Trust. The ownership of Loraine was the problem. Despite interminable meetings on the boundary of the farm nobody could agree on Loraine's Top Farm and the plateau of Ngongolo. The river land was not in doubt. It had always been Mthembu territory, and when Mdukatshani opened the area to settlement in 2004 the building sites were allocated, according to custom, by the local Mthembu induna, Khonzowahe Mvelase, who was also a Mdukatshani Trustee.

Mvelase should have been part of the survey party that watched Siggie Lauterbach sub-divide Loraine, but he had died tragically the month before. Instead Mdidyeli Mbatha tramped the high ground of Ngongolo. This was where his great grandfather, Zwangedwa, had settled in 1892, so perhaps it was appropriate that he would sign the beacon certificate as a beneficiary on behalf of Loraine's farm dwellers. Sifiso Khumalo was there to sign for the Department of Agriculture and Land Reform, and Rauri Alcock signed for Mdukatshani. The sub-division will allow 400 hectares to go to the Mthembus, while the project will hold the remainder – 166 hectares on the Bottom Farm, and 243 hectares on the contested high ground of Ngongolo. Many legalities lie ahead before the land can be transferred to the Mthembus, but the sub-division is a first step towards formality. (The story of Loraine is told in greater detail in *No Ordinary Farm*, Mdukatshani newsletter, December 1984. See www.mdukatshani.com.)

*KZN Provincial Archives Depot CNC 1556/1913



The river lands on Loraine have always been Mthembu, and as soon as it became legally possible, this area of the farm was opened to Mthembu settlement, with sites being allocated by the local induna, Khonzowakhe Mvelase, following the rules of a tribal area.



Beacon A. Mla Magasela holds a marker for the surveyor's first beacon on the river land of Loraine, an uncontested area.



Getting vaccinations started again. Gugu Mbatha signs out chicken vaccines to staff members Zamani Madonsela and Thokozaan Xulu. Although homestead chicken consumption increased during lockdown, in the absence of vaccination outbreaks of Newcastle disease became a threat.

WORKING DURING THE COVID LOCKDOWNS “This life is difficult to everyone”

- Life is stand still. Nothing is happening. Workers just stay at home. They can't be paid. Life is difficult.
- Too bad to live life. Lot of our work just stopped.
- This life is difficult to everyone. We are very scared as we heard that people are dying in other areas.
- It's too bad. You can't even go where you want to. Even government try to explain it's difficult to get used to it.
- People are complaining about staying at home. They can't even go to the fields to graze their livestock.
- The problem is that the police are not clear about their job because they stop us if we go to water our crops.
- It is very difficult to everyone to live this life and farmers are complaining because they can't even get vaccination.

Farmers responses to a GAP questionnaire on the Covid lockdown.

Work did not stop during the Covid 19 lockdowns. It diversified into WhatsApp activities, with staff using their mobiles to stay in touch with farmers across the province checking on dip tanks, experiments, and the Agrivet shops. They also interviewed people from 129 dip tank communities for a questionnaire on the effects of the lockdown in rural areas, with general agreement that “It is very difficult to everyone to live this life”. During the first month of lockdown staff worked at home catching up on paperwork, while also making face masks, sending in pictures of their efforts for comment. (Some were definitely better than others!) At the beginning of May it was back to fieldwork, and both staff and CAHWs (Community Animal Health Workers) returned to their projects armed with sanitizer, disinfectant spray, a government screening questionnaire on Covid symptoms, and an essential services lockdown permit. They were also issued with contactless temperature gauges to screen people coming to meetings, with an agreement nobody over 55 would attend, all meetings would take place outside, and social distancing would be enforced. In addition, the temperatures of all attendees had to be documented, while staff sent their own temperatures daily to the project's WhatsApp group.

Staff were greeted with relief when they returned to the project's 135 chicken groups. Unable to access vaccination during the five-week period of lockdown farmers had seen chickens start to die of Newcastle disease, a virulent killer that can decimate home flocks. At present the project vaccinates 40 500 chickens a month (486 000 vaccinations every year), an invaluable service for rural families dependent on their chickens for food.



Vaccination meetings are now spaced out affairs. Farmers wait patiently for the monthly delivery that will keep their fowls free of Newcastle disease, which started killing flocks during lockdown.

The CAHWS were also given a welcome when they appeared with their vet kits to catch up on livestock inoculations. During level 5 of lockdown they had been advised not to go to farmers' yards, even in their own time, but when lockdown moved to level 4 they were soon back at work, visiting farmers, doing vaccinations, and trying to get sales going again. For the lockdown restrictions over Easter had meant a huge loss of income for goat farmers. Easter is the second busiest month of the year and based on sales data GAP has been collecting for more than five years, the project estimated rural goat owners lost R 250 million in revenue in KZN alone.

In an attempt to get sales going again GAP staff linked speculators directly to communities, and when sales became possible under level 4 in May, 300 goats were sold for R356 000 in the project's five districts. Unfortunately, due to official confusion on regulations, some speculators were stopped and fined for transporting animals during lockdown. GAP is currently lobbying decision makers to instruct officials that livestock sales are specifically mentioned as a legal activity in terms of lockdown regulations, and no permits are required.

Different kinds of training have started up again, both for dip tank communities and the 71 new CAHWS, whose training had to be suspended with the first lockdown in March. GAP is keen to get them out into the field, but lockdown rules on travel, catering and accommodation have made it difficult to find venues, while restrictions on group size, and the number of people who can share a vehicle or room has greatly increased the costs of training.



Dip tank training before and after the lockdown. Staff have to speak louder and find bigger trees for everyone to fit in.



The grounds of Jozini's Department of Health provided a venue for the first CAHW training when lockdown restrictions eased. Initially training was restricted to a group of 10.



Finding a venue was easier than finding accommodation and meals, and with lockdown rules on the numbers allowed in vehicles and room sharing, training costs increased.



Working in masks has made the CAHW's work more difficult, whether out in the field, or indoors checking vet kits.

GOAT AGRIBUSINESS PROJECT



PRAISE IN PARLIAMENT – ARREARS ON THE GROUND
THE MONEY SAGA

It should have been an honour – having the GAP project singled out in Parliament as a success story. Delivering the policy and budget speech of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in February Deputy Minister Sidumo Dlamini made special mention of GAP, and although he claimed credit for government's involvement, he made it clear the project was a partnership between Mdukatshani, Heifer Project SA, and his department. "We are assisting five out of ten districts in KZN so far," he told Parliament, and by the end of next year "would have attained the goal of reaching and including around 7 000 rural subsistence households in improved goat production and marketing".

GAP's money troubles were not part of his presentation, and to be fair - although Dlamini's department, DALRRD is behindhand with its payments to the project, it is not backing out, unlike the troubled KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). The titles are confusing, but despite their similarity, the two departments are quite distinct. DALRRD is national. DARD is provincial – and it is the provincial department that is now more than R5 million in arrears of its signed agreement with GAP. It's not that DARD is short of money. In March, the department made headlines - once again – when it was slammed for maladministration by the KZN Finance Portfolio Committee.

Among the issues raised by the chairman, Siphso Nkosi, was the department's underspending on its budget. In the 2018 financial year, he said, the department had underspent its budget by about R254 million and returned conditional grants of R 75 million. "These are funds that should be spent to deliver services to the people of KwaZulu Natal. They do this often. Identify projects but never implement them, which results in the money being given back to Treasury," Nkosi said.

GAP's share of the department's 2018-2019 budget was R 3,2 million, not much measured against the total sent back, but a huge amount for the project which had relied on DARD to fund auctions, training, publications and vet kits. By September 2020, the total outstanding was R5 379 120 – and despite innumerable meetings with top officials, there is still no sign of resolution. One of the problems has been the high turnover of Heads of Department (HODs), and Acting HODs. In March GAP directors met the newest HOD, Siza Sibanda, and although he promised a response in seven days, in July he admitted Covid had redefined "our hierarchy of priorities". "I am working on a team that will undertake to establish the full-scale background to the project and the extent of the obligations of the department," he said, but GAP has heard nothing more in the months since.

But while the provincial department dithers, the national department is talking of extending the GAP project to 9 other provinces and has asked GAP to lead the piloting of this expansion.



Deputy Minister
Sidumo Dlamini



The many faces at a goat auction. A buyer, a staff member and chairmen of the Livestock Associations.

GOAT AGRIBUSINESS PROJECT A MASTER PLAN FOR CABINET

There are no shortage of plans. They come in all shapes and sizes, every day of the week, piling up unread in government offices. Would a Goat Master Plan be any different? And what was a Master Plan anyway? The simple answer is: It's a document that provides the basis for government policy which leads to the release of funds. And as there has been little or no government interest in goats until recently, a policy has been long overdue. The request for a Master Plan came from the National Agricultural Marketing Council last November, and in January a weighty 44-page document was ready to go. Put together by Rauri Alcock of Mdukatshani and Marisia Geraci of Heifer Project SA, it describes the history and current status of the goat industry in South Africa, drawing together the viewpoints of both commercial goat farmers (who own 1,8 million goats) and subsistence households (which own 6,03 million). It also pays tribute to the lone researchers who have been trying to draw attention to goats over the past 25 years, many of them now retired. One of the problems of estimating the value of the goat industry are the questionable statistics. Nobody is doing a real count, so there is a difference of more than a million goats between the totals of StatsSA and the Department of Agriculture, something that was highlighted in a data analysis which the NAMC commissioned in support of the Master Plan. Stressing the need for a livestock survey task team to obtain accurate figures of the country's livestock industry, the analysis used existing data to conclude 514 000 households keep goats, 87,9% own less than 20 animals, and a household with goats earns an estimated R 500 a month from sales. These figures more than justified recommendations that government replicate many of GAP's interventions at a national level. The recommendations were put before cabinet in July when the Chief Economist of the NAMC, Dr. Sifiso Ntombela, submitted the Goat Master Plan as part of the national Red Meat Industry Strategy. It wasn't a good time to get the cabinet's attention, but the invisible goat industry was at last on the map.

The full title of the document is: Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan, Goat Value Chain Analysis, African Goat Farming in South Africa, Framework Document, January 2020.



In January members of the National Agricultural Marketing Council visited a GAP goat project at Ncunjane, part of a collaboration that led to a Goat Master Plan being included in the National Red Meat Industry Strategy presented to the cabinet in July. Members of the provincial and national agricultural departments joined the discussions in the shade of Nyoni Mchunu's Tamboti trees.



GOING MAINSTREAM?

Nobody can accuse DARD'S planners of lack of imagination when identifying the best crops to "improve food security and boost local economies" in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Crocodiles are a recommended crop for both the North Coast and the South Coast, while blueberries are top of the list for the Central Bushveld area, which includes Msinga. Launching plans for a new, commodity-based approach to agriculture in November 2019, MEC Bongiwe Sithole-Moloi explained that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development would use this approach as a guide to determining which agricultural projects should be supported going forward. This "effective, natural science-based arrangement" identified crops that "will thrive with less or no extra cost of inputs, due to favourable climatic conditions". Apart from blueberries, DARD's planners recommend chillis, pecan nuts, sorghum and game as crops for the Central Bushveld. Goats are not mentioned as a potential crop for any region in the province.

"CATASTROPHIC" BAN ON AUCTIONS

GAP had completed goat auctions in four districts when a Limpopo outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease led to a national ban on livestock sales in early December 2019. Although the ban was lifted six weeks later, the timing would be described as "catastrophic" as both cattle and goat owners depend on lucrative sales at Christmas. With the Covid lockdown only two months later the loss of income continued. Private sales are now possible, and GAP has been working hard to link farmers with speculators, an exciting evolution into self-sustaining commercialization.





A difficult portfolio. Bongiwe Sithole-Moloi, the new KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development



Lemons rot on the ground at Sun Valley, one of eight land reform farms held by the Silindokuhle Community Trust, which has been “riddled with social dynamics”.

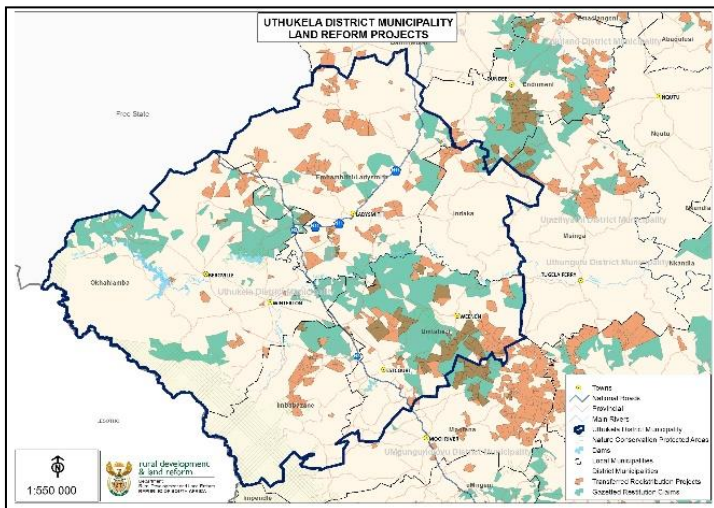
LAND REFORM FAILURE – AND POSSIBILITIES?

Bongiwe Sithole-Moloi has worked hard since she became KZN’s MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development in August last year. She was the seventh – or was it the eighth? – MEC to take on the thankless portfolio, which has seen her predecessors last in office an average 24 months. The department has been in the headlines for all the wrong reasons in recent years, and the MEC was frank about past failures when she tabled the department’s budget at the KZN legislature in June. According to an assessment undertaken by the department, she said, more than half of the 1283 farms bought for beneficiaries of the state’s land reform programme in the province had collapsed, and although it had cost R 7 billion to purchase and develop the farms, a further R 5,5 billion was urgently needed to prop them up.

Her comments produced front page headlines in *The Witness*. “R5 Bln more for farm flops. Hundreds of land reform farms to be rescued”, it reported. Although Sithole-Moloi did not go into detail on the causes of failure, she admitted “The assessment has confirmed that a significant number of the farms are facing serious operational challenges and are riddled with social dynamics which have rendered them dysfunctional. The report reveals that there are symptoms of regression in the agrarian transformation agenda owing to leasing back of these farms by beneficiaries to white farming corporations”. Because of the Covid 19 threat to food security the department had no option but to ensure the farms were revived as a matter of urgency. “Government will work with all stakeholders within the sector and financial institutions to develop a suitable financing mechanism to put these farms back into production in the medium term”.

Just how the money will be spent she did not say. On grants? Stock? Tractors? Seed? Fertilizer? Fencing? Five and a half billion sounds a lot, but there are 705 failed farms, and few, if any extension officers trained to implement land reform plans on the ground. The crucial need to build government capacity was one of the points raised in a study on employment-intensive land reform in South Africa commissioned by National Treasury last year. Despite the many failures of land reform, Treasury was less interested in what went wrong, than the future possibilities of creating sustained livelihoods for small-scale farmers on redistributed land. How many jobs could land reform generate in South Africa? At what cost? Where? And with what kind of support? These were some of the questions addressed by the study which was funded by the European Union, and led by Professor Ben Cousins of PLAAS, the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, with a team of eight researchers which included Rauri Alcock, Mdukatshani’s Director.

Fieldwork started in October last year when Ben joined Rauri and Marisia Geraci, of HPSA, on a tour of the Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality, talking to black and white farmers, members of 12 Livestock Associations, and officials from the Veterinary and Land Reform departments. Mdukatshani is part of the Inkosi Langalibalele, one of four municipalities included in the study, each from a different province, and each with different agro-ecological conditions. If land was redistributed to small scale farmers in these municipalities, the study found, it could generate 23 691 jobs at a cost of R 14.6 billion. But... and there were a lot of buts. According to the National Development Plan of 2012 the agriculture sector could create a million jobs in South Africa if the area under irrigation was expanded by a third. But, as the study reported, the bulk of the land surface of South Africa is only suitable for extensive livestock production, which is likely to be the dominant form of land use on farms redistributed to small-scale farmers. This is particularly true of Nkosi Langalibalele where despite hopes for the development of irrigation in the district, the Thukela and Bushman’s Rivers are already oversubscribed, and with farmers regularly suffering water shortages, government has stopped issuing water extraction permits.



Map of land reform projects in uThukela District Municipality. Gazetted restitution claims are coloured blue, transferred redistribution projects are brown. Nkosi Langelibalele falls into Uthukela. Mdukatshani lies on the boundary of the district, coloured blue instead of brown.



The Bushman's (Mtshezi) River reduced to a trickle in midsummer near Mdukatshani. Despite hopes for the expansion of irrigation, government has stopped issuing water extraction permits for both the Thukela and the Bushman's Rivers which are already over-subscribed, leaving farmers competing for water when furrows run dry.

This means the main farming system for future land reform beneficiaries will be extensive livestock production, with a small area under vegetables. "These have the potential to generate 2222 jobs at an overall cost of R 325 425 per job," the study reported. "It must be noted that farmers are not necessarily full-time farmers, and agriculture is not necessarily their only source of income. Multiple livelihood strategies are pursued by many." Although the study recommends that farmers who want to commercialize should be grouped on land reform farms, finding the land could be a problem. At present 74% of Nkosi Langelibalele is claimed, or belongs to government or traditional authorities, which means there are not many options left.

Providing support is another problem. Currently the nine provincial governments spends R4 billion a year on extension which reaches just 11% of smallholder and subsistence households. This has to change. "Extension services are widely regarded as poorly structured and ineffective," says the study, pointing out R1 billion of the extension budget was spent on the failed Fetsa Tlala programme. To build capacity it recommends government undertake a two year "crash programme" which will include revising its curricula and training 40 to 50 land reform extension officers specifically to work with small-scale farmers in land redistribution areas. In addition, "government officials can benefit by working closely with NGO's, commodity associations and other non-state actors with relevant knowledge and experience". Questions of finance, farm size, land tenure, climate change and administration are all covered in detail in the 1136 pages of the final report which would have been launched in March had it not been for the Covid lockdown. The full report can be found at www.cbpep.org/landreform. With summaries available at www.cbpep.org/landreform-resources.



Left: Mr Mashikashika Nzimande is a land reform beneficiary on the farm Espethweni in the Mngwenya area near Weenen. His beautiful traditional homestead is a regular venue for GAP meetings and trainings. He farms cattle and goats in the surrounding dry thornveld. He was one of the farmers Ben Cousins questioned on his October visit to KZN.

Below: Ben talking to vegetable producers from the government plots at Tugela Ferry – an area that counts as success story.





The drought is over, but the dry years have continued. Cattle in the Ndlela area of Msinga.



Sprigs of greenery prevent splash. Donkeys carrying water from the Sampofu stream in the Mabaso area of Msinga.



Everybody in the home helps to carry water from the river. Children at Nomoya, Weenen district.



Protesters demanding water deliveries block the main road near Estcourt.

DROUGHT

How good are climatologists at predicting drought? And when will the next drought occur? In ten years? Seven? Five? Although drought is a recurring phenomenon in South Africa it has had surprisingly little attention from research scientists, something that is gradually being rectified, first with a Drought Ecology Workshop held at the Wits Rural Facility in Limpopo in 2017, and then with a special issue on the subject in the *African Journal of Range and Forage Science* in 2019. Mdukatshani has been reporting on drought for 40 years, but although the project has contributed to workshops and discussions, its mounds of information had never been collated and analysed until Professor Susanne Vetter took on the task in May last year. An Associate Professor at the Department of Botany at Rhodes, Susi has extensive experience in communal areas, so needed no background when she sat down with Rauri Alcock, Mdukatshani's Director, to work on a paper on the effect of drought on communal livestock farmers in KwaZulu-Natal*. Analysing data from 3000 households in the Msinga area they found cattle farmers lost 43% of their herds during the 2015-2016 drought, compared to goat losses of 29% - losses that are likely to increase if climatologists are right and droughts are going to increase in frequency due to global warming. For the thousands of families who struggle to access water in areas like at Msinga, there is little difference between a drought and a dry year. As rainfall has been below average since 2014, the landscape has had no chance of recovery, and springs and streams remain dry.

*Effect of drought on communal livestock farmers in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, by S Vetter, VL Goodall and R Alcock, *African Journal of Range and Forage Science* 37:1



Private tankers filling up at the Mooi River near Keates Drift, Msinga



Professor Susanne Vetter



In the field on dipping day. Dr. Tim Gibbs with Bongabuhle Mweli, chairman of the Ncunjane Dip Committee, and Hlengiwe Ndlela, a Mdukatshani staff member, who is translating.



Tim questions Mweli on his work as *umdiphu*, organizing the dip for about 90 surrounding livestock owners. Tim calls KZN's Livestock Associations "remarkable organs of civil society."

A QUIET, LARGELY UNNOTICED SUCCESS STORY

It was an odd subject to draw the interest of an historian: Community organized livestock dipping tanks. But although Dr Tim Gibbs is a lecturer in African History at University College London, he has worked extensively in the rural areas of South Africa, and in many provinces seen livelihoods collapse after livestock dipping fell apart in the years of democratic transition. KwaZulu-Natal was different. Why? Tim was no stranger to Mdukatshani when he visited the project in August to do fieldwork for a study of dipping in KZN, published in June as a PLAAS Working Paper titled *Collapse, conflict or social cohesion? Learning from livestock dipping associations in KwaZulu-Natal*.^{*} There are about 1600 dip tanks in the province, each crucial to the wellbeing of an estimated 1 500 000 cattle owned by 168 000 African households. Although 95% of black cattle-owners have fewer than ten animals, the combined value of their herds is R12 billion, an investment sustained by a system of dipping which is organized on the ground through elected Livestock Associations. "Remarkable organs of civil society," Tim calls them, "which might be collectively collecting R 450 million in membership fees each year". The LA's meet monthly, and have direct contact with government, which builds the dips and provides free insecticide, a collaboration Tim describes as "a quiet, largely unnoticed success story".

* www.plaas.org.za/learning-from-livestock-dipping-associations-in-kwazulu-natal/



Cattle swim through a dip immersed in a mixture that kills the parasites that cause disease.



Boys are in charge of collecting and driving the cattle to the dip, but although they know each animal, and notice if it's sick, get little recognition for their knowledge and skill. These boys are among the many local children who had no facilities for online learning so stopped schooling during the Covid 19 lockdown.



Madwaleni Dip, Zululand. GAP has a web page for each dip where it is working.



Dipping cattle is man's work. Dip Day at Nodada in Msinga. GAP is working with 140 dip tank communities in five districts in KwaZulu-Natal.



Qhudeni Mountain is one of the highest, most isolated parts of KZN, with a goat dip built on a shoulder of the mountain with a view of deep valleys far below. The dip was built at the request of the Nkosi Stefan Sithole for the Nsunguza community.



The 2019 launch of a demonstration goat dip built for training at the Owen Sithole College of Agriculture. It was a new experience for the goats which refused to jump and had to be manhandled in and out of the water.

GOAT AGRIBUSINESS PROJECT

A GROWING DEMAND FOR GOAT DIPS

Nkosi Stefan Sithole was persistent. Please, please, please could GAP build a goat dip for his people at Qhudeni? It was going to be a difficult request. Qhudeni is far from anywhere, a mist-shrouded mountain, high above the world, with an isolated community living on the slopes at a place known as Nsunguza. Our project managers hesitated. Funds were scarce, staff were thin on the ground, and there was the real problem of distance. The next goat dip was a two hour drive away close to Jacob Zuma's Nkandla home. The *Nkosi* tried phoning at night. *Please?* His persistence would eventually pay off. Today the Nsunguza goat dip is one of the most successful in KZN, with the community dipping about 1000 goats a month, even during the Covid lockdowns – an indication of local initiative as well as GAP's reach into the most remote areas of the province.

Although GAP has done nothing to advertise goat dips since the first was built as an experiment in 2016, it has been overwhelmed with requests for more, and there are currently 31 spread across five districts, dipping 44 130 goats a month. One of the new dips launched last year was built for training at the Owen Sithole College of Agriculture. It was a combined effort between GAP and OSCA staff members, Francois du Toit and Jabulani Gumbi, who soon came up with a suggestion. Could GAP model a smaller dip that could be handled by just three people? And so, with a bit of tweaking, a new, narrower dip has been designed that can still handle high goat numbers but with very little help. The new model will not only to help women and children on dip day, but commercial farmers who may want to dip at home.



Gugu Mbatha, Mdukatshani's project director, on her knees helping to build one of the new low-labour goat dips – and in doing so breaking the rules she sets her staff, who cannot resist taking part in the building although it is not their job. Officially GAP just provides the materials. The farmers build the dips. Unofficially everyone works together, enjoying being part of a team.

Top left. A new goat dip tank in the Bomvu area on the top of the Msinga mountains. Bottom left. Youngsters help catch and dip the goats at Buhayiga, Msinga.



GOAT AGRIBUSINESS PROJECT

A SMALL REVOLUTION

Cattle dipping day has always been man's work. Goat dipping is different. Ever since GAP's first goat dip was built in 2016, dip day has become an event handled by women and children – often without a man, in sight. Some drive small flocks, some drive large, their toddlers alongside them sharing the excitement, or with babies tied on their backs. Initially dips were designed to take up to 2000 goats at least 20 helpers were needed to push the goats through. Last year a new, smaller dip was designed with women in mind, and it is now possible for just three people to handle the dipping on their own.



“Our focus as government is ordinary communities in rural areas because they have a long history of growing and consuming cannabis, although they have been doing it illegally”.

MEC for Economic Development in
KwaZulu-Natal, Nomsa Dube Neube.



AN AMNESTY?

It was not a good year for local cannabis growers. With government talking openly about legalizing the crop, prices dropped, and many gardens were left unharvested. Was it or wasn't it legal? The answer was confusing. Police continued to make arrests even as the Minister of Justice, Ronald Lamola, talked of expunging the criminal records of anyone who had ever paid an admission of guilt fine for possession of the weed. This would not apply to the 1041 prisoners in South African jails serving sentences for cannabis offences, he added. They would have to petition the President for a pardon. Despite expectations that restrictions on cannabis were about to be eased, in August 2020 the cabinet approved a Cannabis for Private Purposes Bill with harsh penalties for anyone found with more than one kilogram of dried cannabis, or nine flowering plants. Trading carries a maximum penalty of 15 years. Home growers in the suburbs who had hoped for more may challenge the Bill, but it could offer a lifeline to the local industry which depends on illegality to keep prices high. This may have been the reason for a sudden flurry of new gardens during the Covid 19 lockdown in June. Were the gardens saying something about the ban on cigarettes?



Although cannabis is being touted as the crop of the future, the investment and technology to produce oil and hemp are out of reach of small growers who sell to a smokers' market.

Despite appeals to small growers to “grab the opportunities government is providing” there are few signs of opportunity on the ground.

GOAT AGRIBUSINESS PROJECT



The *Msasane*, *Acacia tortilis*, flowered as usual in December 2019, but the trees produced virtually no pods to help livestock through the 2020 winter.



The previous year – a plentiful pod harvest made winter feeding trials possible.



There was an urgent need for feed blocks but the Covid lockdown made it difficult to access ingredients, and prices suddenly doubled.



Trial feeding of pregnant ewes at Ncunjane.



The best fed goats in the district - Tugela Ferry's street goats.

A HARD WINTER

Everybody had been watching the trees, and although the *Msasane* (*Acacia tortilis*) had flowered as usual, the branches were bare of pods. That meant only one thing to the farmers – a hard winter lay ahead. With a protein content higher than lucerne (15%) the fallen pods are an essential supplement that helps to get the livestock through the winter. Nobody knows why there are good-pod-years, and no-pod-years, but even the small boys take note of the crop, knowing the harvest is critical. In 2019 pods lay so thick on the ground they were used as the basis for GAP's 100 goat kid feeding experiments. In 2020 the lack of pods turned farmers to commercial alternatives. GAP's feed blocks could have filled the gap, had it not been for the Covid lockdown. When shops closed ingredients became unobtainable, and when business resumed prices had doubled. CAHWs did what they could to manufacture the blocks at home, but it was impossible to meet demand. When GAP started an experiment feeding pregnant ewes, it had to buy commercial feed. The trial was set up in response to suggestions from both farmers and technical experts who wondered if feeding pregnant ewes in their last month of pregnancy and first month of suckling would make any difference to abortion and kid mortality. So far the results look good, and the trials are being extended to every area where GAP has a presence.



HAVE PEACEFUL NIGHTS

We hamble apologies for late coming of Zamani. We was working at Estcourt. After that we go to lord hammer mill machine and it take us long time. For now we on the way from Weenen. Sorry for late report. Have a lovely weekend.

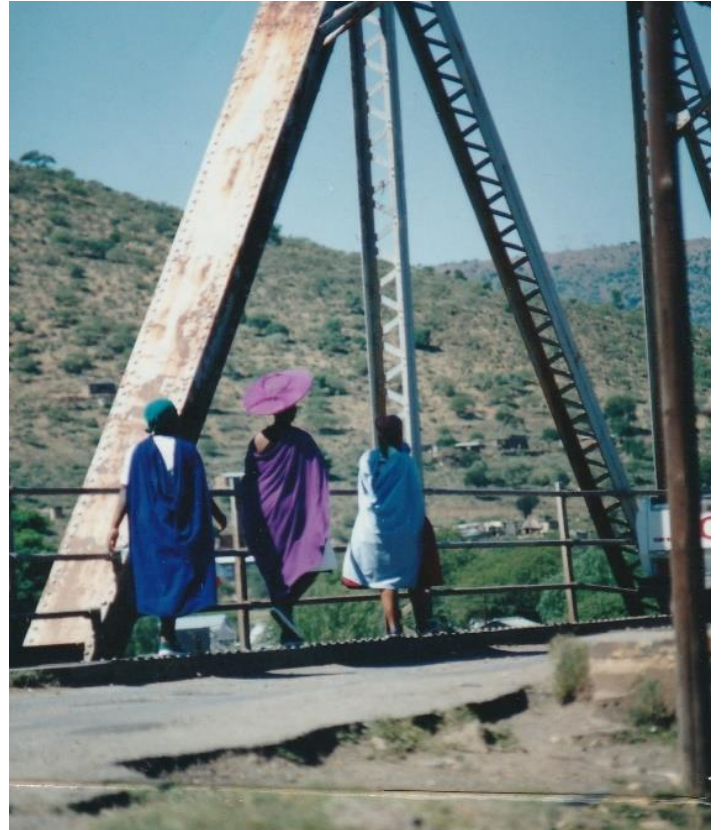
Apology for late coming. We late due to Dip tank training at Mnhlanyane area under Mabomvu tribal in Dunge B dip. Our programme and farmers questions push us to finish late. We just leaving now and Zamani going to be late. Have a lovely night.

Apology for late coming we conducting dip training at Cwaka. A lot of thing we need to do. We end up finish late. But Zamani is on the way from Tugela ferry. Sorry that. Have peaceful nights.

Because it's not safe to be on our roads after dark it's a rule staff return before sunset. It's a rule they all ignore, however, Working with farmers there are no set hours, and as Mdukatshani staff have never heard of overtime, getting home late is just part of the job. The longest hours probably fall to our driver Zamani Madonsela, picking people up, dropping them off, coming home grinning long after dark even when he's just had two punctures. If it's *really* late, and there's a signal where they are working, Sindi Ngubane sends messages to the farm. They are like Sindi herself – warm and reassuring. She's a mother of three, and in a hurry to be home, but not before she's finished the job.

A RETIRED BRIDGE

Until recently one reason for being late was waiting in the queue at the old iron bridge at Tugela Ferry. With its single lane and no give-and-take, the elegant iron structure kept motorists in line, fuming but helpless, gridlocked among goats. Originally erected in 1936 to replace the government ferry, the bridge has stood firm against many historic floods, but was never designed for heavy traffic. A two-lane bridge was long overdue when construction started about 5 years ago. It was completed at last in 2019 - but remained barred to traffic for months. With rumours the contractors were waiting to be paid, the community decided to take a hand. Just before Christmas the barricades were cleared away, and vehicles began to drive across. The old bridge has not been demolished, however. It is still standing firm, as elegant as ever – a pedestrian bridge for Tugela Ferry.



Tugela Ferry's elegant iron bridge is now used by pedestrians.



A view of the single lane bridge in the days of occasional traffic.



The community forced the new bridge open before Christmas –pushing aside the barricades which contractors had erected to try and force government to pay money due on their work.



Heritage Day 2019. Staff were working but they dressed up to celebrate. From the left Nobuhle Sithole, Zanyiwe Ziqubu, Sindi Ngubane, Busisiwe Mntungwa, Gugu Mbatha.



Looking like a bunch of bandits – the first GAP planning meeting after lockdown. From the left: Mthembeni Mbatha, Senzekile Mntungwa, Mtungwa, Zamani Madonsela, Sibusiso Khuzwayo, Mduduzi Mntambo, Sindi Ngubane, Nobuhle Sithole, Zanyiwe Ziqubu, Busisiwe Mntungwa, Thokozaan Xulu, Gugu Mbatha, and Rauri Alcock.

PROJECT PEOPLE



Two members of the S.A. Society of Animal Scientists, Doreen Ndlovu and Phindile Mlaba



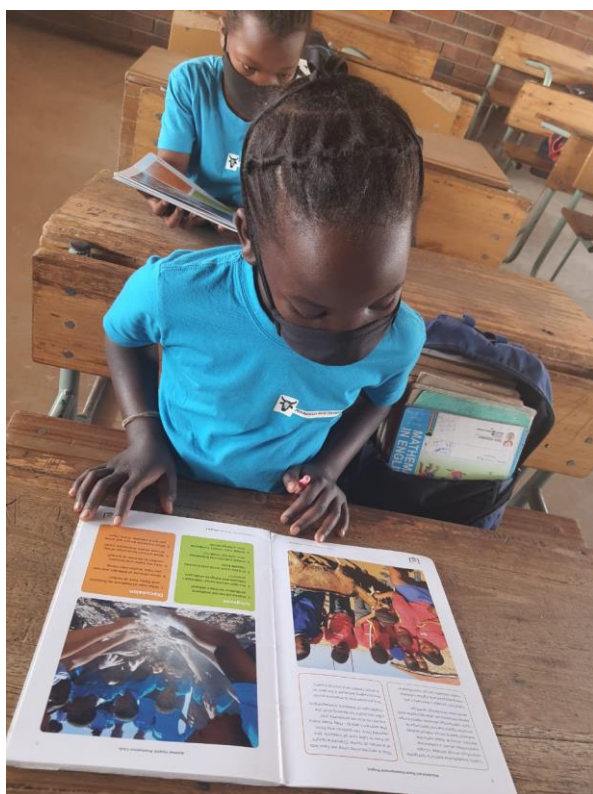
A presentation to the Uitval Livestock Association at Limehill.



A presentation to a Department of Rural Development workshop on 'Connecting rural producers to markets.'



Every year since 2008 Mdukatshani and Heifer Project SA have sent staff and fieldworkers to the MSD Malelane Learning Academy, the only place in the country that offers courses in basic animal health care. The 2019 group was the largest ever, and included GAP's top CAHWS, promising commercial farmers, and shopkeepers, who passed the course with an average 80%.

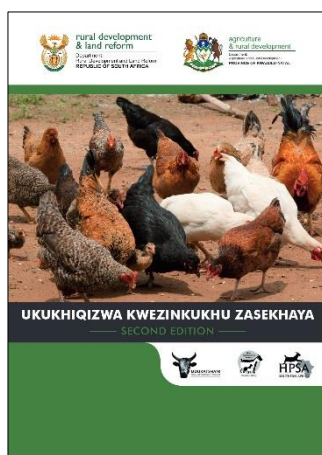
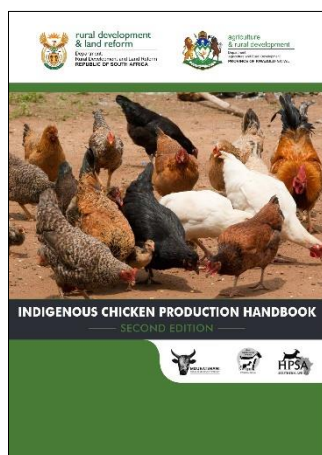
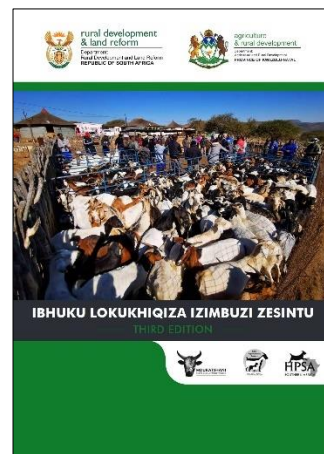
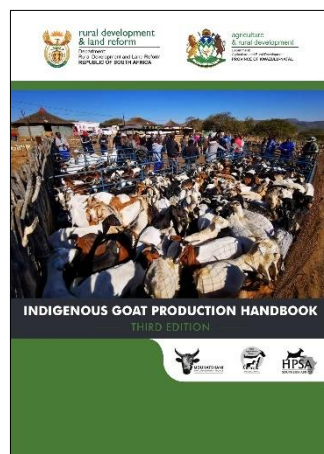
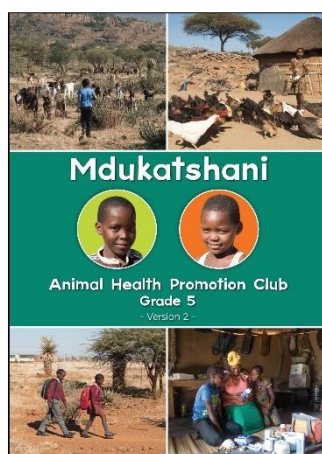
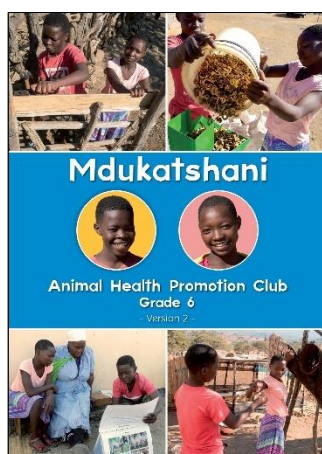


PUBLICATIONS

The children couldn't wait to take their books home. For many it was the only book in the home and would be read aloud to those in the family who couldn't read. Although the stories and activities were designed for the Grade 5 and Grade 6 Animal Health Clubs, the books helped sustain the children during the long months of lockdown when schoolwork – and the clubs – were suspended. Because of the difficulties of spacing regulations schooling remains a problem, and the Clubs are on hold until next year.

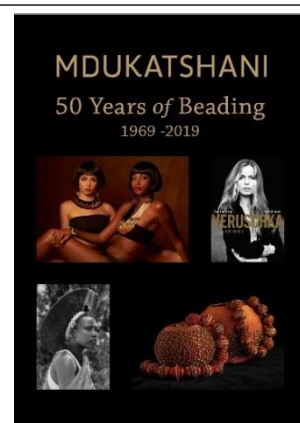
The continuing popularity of the Indigenous Goat Production Handbook saw a third revised and updated edition published during the year, as well as a second edition of the Indigenous Chicken Production Handbook. Both are published in English and Zulu, and have been put together as a combined effort of the staff of Mdukatshani, Heifer Project SA, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, and the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

A different kind of publication is Mdukatshani's illustrated report on the history of the bead project, which celebrated its jubilee in 2019. This report is also published in English and Zulu, and present and past crafters will all receive a copy.

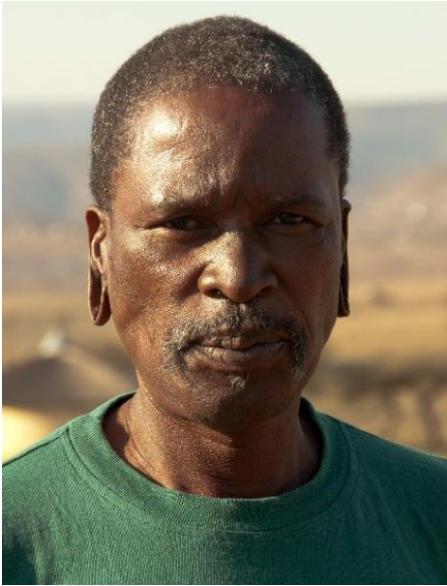


A CELEBRATION

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Mdukatshani bead project a special 60 page report has been published in both English and Zulu. The report is fully illustrated and describes both the history of the beads, as well as the stories of the men, women and children whose spirit of joy, courage and skill kept the crafts going through the hard years.



OBITUARY



Induna Khonzowakhe Mvelase



An induna's presence is obligatory at all formal events. Mvelase sitting among Mashunka men at a local memula, a coming-of-age.

KHONZOWAKHE MVELASE

Mthembu Induna and Mdukatshani Trustee

Soon after Khonzowakhe Mvelase was appointed induna in 2005 he climbed through the gap on Mashunka Mountain to visit Mdukatshani. He came on foot – he went everywhere on foot – a reticent man with an air of gravity, and the easy grace of a dancer. It was his first visit to the farm, and he had come to introduce himself, he said, on the instruction of the Mthembu Nkosi, Ngoza, who had instructed him “to help look after us”. It was one of his many unpaid duties, readily fulfilled over the next 15 years. When he died suddenly in February, he left a community stunned at his loss, and the Mdukatshani family in grief.

Mvelase was born in 1951 in the Mashunka area of Msinga, and like his father, Mawaleni, grew up to be a nightsoil carrier in Kimberley earning R 30,00 a month. He never went to school – there were no schools – and “we were very poor growing up.” His father struggled to support two wives and 12 children and was one of those who went to jail after the Battle of Ngongolo in 1944. “There was always drought,” Mvelase said. Cattle died, crops failed, and jobs were scarce in the cities.

He did not want to carry nightsoil all his life, and as soon as he could find alternative work left Kimberley for a Springs engineering company that made “*insimbi* for the mines”. The work was easier, but the wage was much the same, so after two years he moved on to “Hotel American” where he was paid R 80,00 a month for washing dishes. It was during this period he joined an *ngome* dance team, and began dancing at the hostels with Johnny Clegg and Sipho Mchunu. If he had ambition, it was focused on his need to dance, and he continued to perform into his forties. Talking about *ngome* he gave a rare insight into his feelings. “I was happy” he said.

Always vague on dates, he could not remember how many years he washed dishes. Three? Four? He left the hotel for a short spell at Isando working for a company that made oil out of peanuts. “I cleaned the drums and fixed the leaks, but I didn’t finish even a year because the money was small”. Then he found a job at Alberton, working for a company that “built the rims of metal drums. They had big machines. They delivered even to Sasol.” Here he earned real money, R500,00 a week, that made a real difference to his family. Like his father he married two wives, and earned enough to pay lobola. “Four cattle – four cattle,” he said. Songile Sokhela and MaMazana Ngqulungu gave him nine children, and he had 27 grandchildren when he died.

It is hard to measure the impact of an induna – a traditional role that helps to keep order in society. It is as important as the police or the councillor, but because of the induna’s intimacy with his people, always more demanding. Mdukatshani learnt to value the steady judgement of this quiet man, and his support whenever he was needed. In 2010 he was appointed an Mdukatshani trustee and the official Mthembu liaison with the project. He had never been as far as Durban when he attended his first trustees meeting in June that year – an event mentioned at his funeral for it gave him his first glimpse of the sea. We watched him climb out of the vehicle at Blue Lagoon, marvelling at the sand, before he stood in reverence at the water’s edge, gazing at the ocean.