



FINAL PROGRESS REPORT TO MAIZE TRUST

1. PROJECT

BUHLE FARMERS' ACADEMY – Practical farmer skills development of emerging farmers with special reference to the maize industry in S.A.

2. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

TRAINING

Practical training in maize and crop production was supported by Maize Trust donor funding for 18 eligible students from 17th October 2006 to 14th June 2007. Training included technical instruction in the principles of maize production, on-farm crop management, maize marketing channels and processing as well as farm business management, production planning, cash flow and loan finance management.

Each trainee was allocated 1 ha of land at Buhle for maize production and was evaluated on the practical management of this "mini" farm. Trainees established a successful maize crop although the yields averaged only 2,4 tons per ha this season due to poor rainfall in the second half of the season. The Progress Report from November 2006 – June 2007 is attached for further information on Buhle's wider training activities.

GRADUATION

All 18 Maize Trust sponsored trainees met the assessment requirements of the Academy and were awarded Buhle certificates of competence at the graduation held on 14th June 2007. The MEC for Agriculture, Mpumalanga, Me D. D. Pule officiated as the guest speaker.

FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMME

In keeping with Buhle's policy of providing a support system for maize farmers through the Academy, 11 learner farmers are now participating in a post-training mentoring programme in maize production. In a joint venture between Tongaat Hullett Starch (previously African Products) and Buhle these trained learner farmers will be producing maize commercially on farmland belonging to the company with coaching and support from Buhle. On completion of the 2007/2008 season these learner farmers will hopefully be placed on farms through the Department of Land Affairs programmes to establish entry level maize farmers in their own sustainable and profitable enterprises.

3. APPLICATION OF MAIZE TRUST DONOR FUNDS

EXPENSE ALLOCATION

As at 31st July 2007 expenditure of the total Maize Trust grant in principle of R582 687.00 amounted to R371 725.20 which is 63,8% of the total based on the pro-rata amount of 18 students registered for the 2006/2007 course. Attached is the detailed allocation table of how the donor funding has been expended relating exclusively to the Crop Courses and Crop Farmer Support Programme. The Academy's expenditure is within the expected budget and no unusual expenditure has occurred to date.

FUND UTILIZATION IN RELATION TO OBJECTIVES

We believe the Maize Trust's grant funding is a direct investment in the basic empowerment of primary commercial maize farmers in S.A. and that this falls squarely within the objective of benefiting the maize industry through training entry level producers, disseminating scientific and technical information and supporting market access for emerging maize producers.

ATTACHMENTS

1. List of 2006/2007 Trainees
2. Grant Funding Expense Allocation 2006/2007
3. Buhle Farmers' Academy Progress Report: November 2006 – June 2007

Neil de Smidt
Director: Buhle Farmers' Academy
21st August 2007