



The HPSA Jozini Agricultural Model Project is funded by the European Union

HPSA's Jozini Agricultural Model Project covers four areas in the Umkhanyakhude District and the Zululand District - Jozini, Nongoma, Hlabisa and UMhlabuyalingana. The project, funded by the European Union, started in May 2015. The project aims to help 2400 farmers increase their livestock production. Part of the project activities are focused on helping goat farmers increase their productivity and assist with formalising the indigenous goat market by linking stakeholders throughout the value chain and organising goat sales at pension points and regular auctions. Project partners are Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mdukatshani Rural Development Project and the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

For the first time ever, Agrivet shop owners servicing rural areas in KwaZulu Natal received formal training in basic animal health. The training was hosted by Merck Sharp and Dohme (MSD), one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world. They have a training and research centre in Malelane, Mpumalanga. These trainings are normally run for staff of farmers cooperatives and agricultural shops of big towns. This training was specially held for this group as unusually they were an English group and totally African. The trainee leaves with sufficient knowledge to be able to serve any farmer with livestock problems needing over the counter medicines. It is an intensive course covering all major diseases and parasites as well as treatments, medicines, the main active ingredients and how to understand labels and cold chains.



Trainees in the MSD Research Centre training hall and learning about castration at the research centre

As proof of the commitment and interest of the Agrivet shop owners and staff from HPSA and partners, the group received the highest marks of any group to date on the final written test to pass the course. All participants receive a certificate at the end of the week-long course that culminated in a visit to the research station and taking part in a post mortem. This final day is not part of their

normal curriculum but added to create as much value as possible for the trainees. The training was provided free of charge to HPSA and the project at a cost of over R100 000 to MSD.



Trainees learning about different types of ticks at the diptank (left) and participating in a post mortem of a cow that died of Blackquarter (right)

MSD also see this as a start of an initiative that will allow them access to rural African farmers which as Dr Willem Klein explains MSD has almost reached saturation in the formal farming market. MSD have little experience, access or contacts into the millions of rural African farmers. This is where they want to create linkages with HPSA and the Jozini Project to pilot access to shop owners and rural areas.

This unique training also sparked interest of journalist, Sabrina Dean, at the Farmer's Weekly.

Fieldworkers empowered through animal health training

Sabrina Dean
September 7, 2017 8:41 am

Approximately 30 people involved with an NGO partnership in KwaZulu-Natal benefited from a recent basic animal health training course in Mpumalanga.



Staff and field workers from Heifer Project SA and the Mdukatshani Rural Development Project with some of the organisers of the MSD Malelane Academy of Learning on basic animal health
Photo: Sabrina Dean

The course, offered by the MSD Malelane Academy of Learning, focused on a number of important animal diseases, covering causes, clinical symptoms, treatment, prevention and vaccination.

The 30 attendees were from the Mdukatshani Rural Development Project (MRDP) and Heifer Project South Africa (HPSA). The aim was for them to take their newfound knowledge to farmers at grass roots.

CEO of HPSA, Marisia Geraci, said that about 3 100 farmers across five districts in KZN were involved the heifer project.

Farmer's Weekly article highlighting MSD training