



The HPSA Jozini Agricultural Model Project is funded the European Union

Mam Kosi See Chicken Numbers Grow through Vaccination Programme



Mam Kosi surveys her chickens as she waits for the vaccine to be brought by one of her family members.

IT'S vaccination day. Usually Mam Kosi goes herself, from her home in the lee of the mountain in the Mange area to Mpungamlillo. Today, however, she feels her 87 years and has sent one of the children to fetch the vaccine mix for her 10 chickens. Five of the chickens have been supplied through HPSA's Pass on the Gift programme. They are important to allow her to meet her responsibilities towards the grandchildren, whom she must ensure are well fed and healthy. This is never easy in a family of 29, where only three of the women are working contract jobs at the Mkhuze Game Reserve. There are, thankfully, eight child grants and Mam Kosi's own pension grant, but chickens take the sting out of the month's meat shop.

The chickens pecking in the yard are now part of a longer term view of sustainable livestock in the home. Formerly, if a chicken looked unwell, it would go straight to the pot. Now, after

a number of training sessions and with the convenience of not having to go to town to get vaccines, Mam Kosi is determined to see the numbers grow.

As she waits for the two-litre bottle of vaccine to be brought, up at Mpungamlillo the queues have lined up to fill their bottles with the fresh mixed vaccine. The skies are clear, which everyone is grateful for, because if it were raining the event would have been called off. The vaccine is mixed into the chickens' drinking water, but in the cold and wet they won't drink and the vaccine goes off.

Among the three dozen farmers who have gathered is Totoli Ntshangase, the chairperson of the local dip. He finds the training and information sharing that happens at vaccination days most useful because they make his job easier. He has always been responsible for educating farmers about diseases and animal management, but people see his advice reinforced by HPSA and so they take it more seriously. He can also relax a bit. For example, he knows that there's avian flu in chicken flocks in the neighbouring province of Mpumalanga, but the local farmers have vaccinated their chickens and he's not concerned about it spreading here. He has seen an increase in the number of chickens, and more and more farmers have been coming to vaccination days as success breeds success.

Mr Ntshangase carries his 72 years well, and he wears his skill and experience lightly. For Mr Ntshangase is a farmer of some substance himself. He has 33 cattle, which are his kitty for school and university fees, goats which take care of clothes, furniture and some necessities, and chickens, which he sells for R100 apiece and all the proceeds go to his wife for food purchases. He is still rebuilding the numbers, because, canny farmer that he is, he sold off most of his animals as the drought started biting.

And yet, Mr Ntshangase is not too proud to admit that he too has learnt a thing or two, especially about diseases, from the HPSA training sessions. They have been, he says, a general benefit to the community, and spread general consciousness about basic animal health which helps everyone. It also means that Mr Ntshangase can pay more attention to how Mam Kosi is doing with her chickens.

The Jozini Agricultural Model, or Jozini Project, has had 25 chicken management and production training sessions. There are three associations operating in the Jozini project, the Jozini Livestock Association, Hlabisa Livestock Association and Khulani (Nongoma) Livestock Association. The Livestock Associations are equipped in general management,

minute taking, governance, management and business planning in their dip tanks. In Year 2, HPSA had its first Passing of the gift (POG) for 275 chickens in 55 households.

Chicken vaccinations training have taken place in all dip tanks and CAHWs have vaccinated chickens for Newcastle disease. 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. Project partners are the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mdukatshani Rural Development Project and the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.



1 HPSA Field Assistant Dumisani Gumede (left) swops details on vaccination day with Simentini Fakude (centre) and her daughter Bonisiwe Fakude (right).



2 HPSA Field Assistant Dumisani Gumede explains to chicken farmers how he first mixes skim milk powder into a basin of water to neutralise it before he adds a vial of vaccine.





3 and 3a A chicken farmer pours the vaccine and water mix into her two-litre cooldrink bottle, which she takes straight home to put in the drinking bowls of her chickens.



4 HPSA Field Assistant Dumisani Gumede mixes skim milk into a basin of water before adding the vaccine.



5 The dip chairperson at Mpungamlillo, Totoli Ntshangase, on vaccination day