



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

### **Hope from desperation through Passing on the Gift**



Zodwa Buthelezi

WHEN hyenas killed eight of her goats last year, Zodwa Buthelezi gave up. “I was totally demoralised,” she says. “I could not carry on so we sold the remaining five goats that we had.” Zodwa Buthelezi has received three goats through Passing on the Gift.

Hope springs eternal, however, and she has decided to give it another go, with the help of three goats entrusted to her as part of HPSA’s Passing of the Gift (POG) programme. When she received them two months ago, she was too nervous to let them out of her sight and kept them in the house at night to be safe. Now they’re kept in an enclosure at night so that they don’t get attacked in the veld again.

The deep, peaceful valley that drops away in front of her house into the hazy distance belies the hardscrabble existence of Mrs Buthelezi and her husband and five children in KwaMyeni. One thing she is grateful for

is that there are no baboons around here, so her maize field doesn’t get raided and she manages to harvest enough for the household to get by on. She occasionally gets piece work combating alien plants and building fences at the Mkhuze Game Reserve to generate some income. She also sells vetkoek and chips at school, but it’s vacation time now and so it’s a lean month.

Starting to rebuild her flock of goats is therefore important to Mrs Buthelezi. The largest it’s ever been is about 20 animals, but that was for a brief period before her husband lost his job and they had to sell some of them off. And that was also before the hyenas dealt the death blow.

Mrs Buthelezi says she finds the help of the CAHWs invaluable, and so too the training sessions she goes to every two months, where she gets information on disease control and animal management.

It was through the CAHWs that she found out about the POG programme. She was eventually selected as a receiver early in 2017, and it's boosted her morale. She acknowledges that she is effectively only a custodian of the goats for the time being, until they produce three kids and allow the passing of the gift to be carried over to another family. She's confident that the flock will grow, and once she is able to sell animals it will help put her children through school and to buy food. These goats mean one thing above all others: "Hope".



Zodwa Buthelezi tethers her three POG goats

At the end of the road beyond Mkuze town, beyond even the regular CAHW rounds, lives Thabitha Khumalo. She's pushing 80, but it takes a while to agree on her age with her daughter in law. "I don't know, where's my ID," she says. She's very pleased with herself. "I've already given back all the goats," she says. She got two POG females and a male last year. One died in a snare up the mountain, but apart from that everything went according to plan and two females and a male kid duly made their appearance. Her flock is now a comfortable eight strong, but she'd like it to increase to about 15. That way some basic needs will be taken care of for her family of 11. No one has a job, and income comes only by way of grants.

The goats were granted to Mrs Khumalo as head of the family, but it's her son who has been to the training sessions. She says she brings the goats in every day, and she hasn't had any problems apart from routine ticks and worms. Her goat enclosure helps with security and flock management. There are hyenas in the area, and they are always a concern, but so far they have kept their distance. The big problem, "the biggest problem", says Mrs Khumalo, is theft, but her vigilance means none of her animals have been stolen, and she has been able to pass on the gift of goats.





Thabitha Khumalo: 'I've already given back my POG goats'

The Passing of the gift (POG) for goats has been rolled out to 390 households and chickens to 34 families, after training in livestock management was completed in Year 1. It forms part of HPSA's Jozini Agricultural Model Project, which 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, and assists 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 the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Mdukatshani Rural Development Project and the KZN