



The HPSA Jozini Agricultural Model Project is funded the European Union

Protein Blocks Save Goats



Mam Nxele- "Protein blocks have helped me a lot"

IF only, says Mam Nxele. If only she had heard about protein blocks before the great drought of 2016 decimated their livestock. In all, her family lost 44 head of cattle, and all the kids from their flock of 25 goats. But then she attended a training day held by HPSA where the value of blocks was explained, and they started putting them out for the animals. She says this stemmed the deaths. "The blocks have helped a lot. If we'd bought them sooner, we would not have had so many deaths," she said.

MamNxele and her husband have nine children and two grandchildren. Four child grants help her provide for the children, and Mr Nxele helps make ends meet by selling phuthu and meat on pension days. Their livestock consists of cattle, goats, sheep and 15 chickens. The winter of 2017 has not been as harsh as expected, and there is enough grazing to keep the animals going. MamNxele

expects, however, that before the rains come she'll need to make a call on a CAHW for protein blocks to see her through.

These protein blocks were developed in 2015, by HPSA in collaboration with Mdukatshani Rural Development Programme, Department of Agriculture Cedara scientists and others, to be given to goat mothers and kids. They are made with five readily available ingredients by Community Animal Health Workers and sold to farmers at an economical price. Initial results have been very positive with farmers saying it has helped reduce the stress the drought has brought.

The protein blocks are just one of several innovations, such as enclosures for kids, to help increase productivity. KwaZulu Natal cannot meet its own demand for live goats with estimates of a million coming into the province from other provinces and countries a year. A large part of this problem lies with stagnant goat production in rural, indigenous herds. Heifer Project South Africa (HPSA) Jozini Agricultural Model project, funded by the European Union and Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, in UMkhanyakude and Zululand districts, aims to help 2100 farmers increase their livestock production.

A further advantage of the protein block initiative is that, on top of helping farmers keep their animals alive, it offers a way for the CAHWs to generate a small income. An average income of R4500 (312 Euro) was made through selling protein blocks during last winter by all 30 CAHWS, with each CAHW making about R150.

The initiative forms part of HPSA's Jozini Agricultural Model Project, which covers four areas in the Umkhanyakude 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 2100 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 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.