

SUCCESSION STORIES IN THE CITRUS INDUSTRY

Threepence Farm

Threepence Farm – spanning 363 ha – is on the road between Hankey and Patensie, and has 48 ha of citrus orchards and approximately 100 ha of vegetables. The farm was awarded to the Katoo family as settlement for a land claim by the Katoo Family in 2003. Khaya Katoo's mother is a beneficiary of the Katoo Family Trust and Khaya is the manager of Threepence Farm. By Gloria Weare (adapted from Louise Brodie)



Khaya Katoo (left) with Luzuko Katoo in front of a spraying machine

"Our ancestor (my great-grandfather) was known as Threepence Katoo," explains Khaya. "He had acquired land near Hankey between 1912 and 1930, and he was dispossessed of his property and removed from his land. Although he was told to move to Elliot he did not leave the Hankey area. The land he originally owned is close by and is 360 ha of fallow land. We did not get the original property back, but were granted this farm by the government instead. There were originally 42 households that are the beneficiaries of the trust and these are the descendants of the six sons of Threepence Katoo. Today, there are still 40 households."

Khaya is a director of both the Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB) and Gamtoos Irrigation Board. He is also a member of the Citrus Growers' Development Chamber. Khaya has been running the farm for 16 years, although he did not grow up on a farm nor had any exposure to farming before he took over running Threepence for the family in 2003.

The farm produces satsumas, novas,

Nardocotts, Witkrans and Leanri. The area of the farm under vegetables was initially leased to Pieter Ferreira, the previous owner of the farm, cultivating potatoes, maize, broccoli, cauliflower and lettuce. "We had a very good relationship with him," says Khaya. "In fact our relationship with this family has been ongoing for generations and we are now dealing with the grandson of the original owner of Threepence."

For several years now most of the Threepence fruit has been packed at the local Wagondrift packhouse and exported by Capespan. Some of the excess citrus is packed by Patensie Citrus. "Patensie Citrus has a great MD, Fredri Kok, who is extremely helpful," says Khaya.

"God has been good to us at Threepence," says Khaya with a broad grin. When they received the farm in 2003 they were promised funding from government, which was only received more than 12 years later. But today they are extremely grateful for this. Threepence received R5 million and they planted 30 ha. Their total number of hectares is now 52.8 ha. They also received three tractors, a spray machine and a bakkie; and have been able to clear 60 ha of old orchards.

"My wife Crewelyn and I moved back to the farm with our family and we are enjoying the lifestyle here. We have two children – Bryan and Kristen – who are still at school in Humansdorp. Our children are living and growing up on the farm and are experiencing the farming lifestyle and activities first hand. Bryan likes to drive the tractor when he has the opportunity. He and Kristen are both leaning towards chartered accountancy, with Kristen also interested in marketing and Bryan in agriculture. They are both very interested in the farm."

Khaya explains that there are six trustees of their family trust and he knows that the family members trust and believe in him. They tell the other beneficiaries that they are doing the farming together, but they add that Khaya is actually doing most of the work alone. "Trust is earned," says



Above: Khaya with his family: daughter Kristen, son Bryan and wife Crewelyn in front of their orchards Left: Khaya and Khayaletu Katoo (right) in front of the tractor.



Khaya emphatically. "I am not the only one from our extended family that is involved with our farm. One of my relatives Mabuti Katoo is the foreman at Threepence and my cousin Luzuko Katoo works for the vegetable farmer who rents our property for vegetable production and he also produces his own vegetables. Currently there are still 40 households that are beneficiaries of our trust. From the dividends, each household receives R6 000. We are currently in the process of restructuring our trust with the help of our lawyers and auditors."

Khaya is also the chairman and

shareholder of Entabeni, also known as Gamtoosvalley Farming (Pty.) Ltd. at Patensie. He is one of eight beneficiaries that acquired the farm from the government in 2012. The total size of this farm is 180 ha and initially there was 87 ha of vegetables and 48 ha of citrus. "We have been converting from vegetable to citrus production and today we have 91ha of citrus orchards on Entabeni," says Khaya. "My wife is one of the eight beneficiaries and is the only shareholder of Entabeni who is currently working on the farm. We have six other partners in this business with us."

During October 2018 Khaya had the opportunity to visit the Fruit Attraction show

in Spain (Madrid) with the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum (FPEF). "My visit to Fruit Attraction in Madrid was a huge eye-opener. I was invited by the fruit industry to visit the show and travelled there as a guest of FPEF. To see the level of competitiveness in the international fruit industry was remarkable. One of the UK receivers put things starkly into perspective for us by explaining that the consumer only wants top quality fruit, and that on the open market there were no concessions on quality, no matter who produced the fruit or where it originated. This illustrated to me very clearly the level of competition that we face in the export markets." 🍋

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