

CITRUS ACADEMY SHORT COURSES

Adding value to the citrus production value chain

Citrus Academy short courses are aimed at providing a short, sharp insight into essential components of the citrus production system. By Sive Silo



Short courses give learners a good induction into the subject matter, while helping them to understand how that component fits into the broader production system.

We connected with Lerato Moilwa from Batlako Temo Services, a 61 ha farm in Brits to get first-hand feedback about the courses. Batlako Temo sent several of their employees to various citrus short courses, and this is what they had to say:

Q How many employees do you have in total?

A We have 16 employees, 15 in-service training students, five casual workers, and 50 seasonal workers (pickers).

Q Which of the Citrus Academy short courses have your employees attended?

A Over the years, we have attended all the short courses offered by Citrus Academy, namely Citrus Production, Citrus Export Supply Chain, Citrus Packing and Citrus Business Administration.

Q How many of your employees have attended citrus short courses?

A In 2022 so far, a total of 11 of our employees have attended citrus short courses – five attended the Citrus Production short course in April, and six attended the Citrus Export Supply Chain short course held more recently.

Q What impact has each course had on your business?

A The courses that we are sponsored to attend are incredibly informative and very helpful to us as citrus growers. The content is well organised and focuses on practical scenarios faced by the industry.

Q What was the aspect most enjoyed by those who attended the courses?

A We like that the short courses offer up-to-date information and help us enhance our skills in the workplace.

Q What practical knowledge from the short courses have you been able to implement in the day-to-day running of the farm?

A Some of the practical skills and knowledge that our employees have gained from the courses include scouting and monitoring of pests, handling and managing accounts, and citrus production activities. These are all skills that are required on a day-to-day basis on the farm, and assist with the long-term development and growth of the business.

Q How have the short courses impacted on the personal development of your employees?

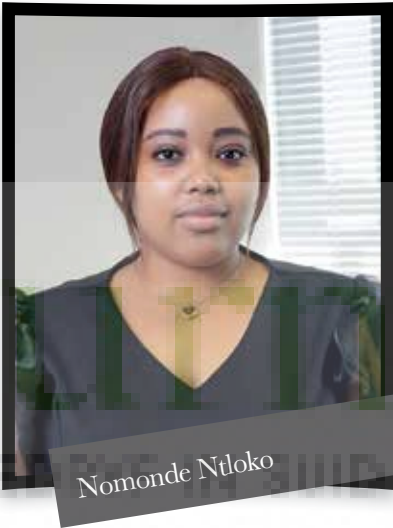
A The short courses have assisted our employees in gaining more knowledge about the overall citrus production value chain and have given them the confidence to perform their daily tasks proficiently.

Batlako Temo Services have expressed immense gratitude for the Citrus Academy and the CGA Citrus Growers' Association for the informative and well-presented courses.

Citrus Academy short courses will resume in October. Please see the course schedule below.

October		
5 - 7 Oct'22	Citrus Production Short Course	Sundays River
12 - 14 Oct'22	Citrus Export Supply Chain Short Course	Addo
19 - 21 Oct'22	Citrus Packing Short Course	Patensie
27 - 28 Oct'22	Citrus Export Supply Chain Short Course	Letsitele
November		
2 - 4 Nov'22	Citrus Packing Short Course	Letsitele
16 - 18 Nov'22	Citrus Production Short Course	Onderberg
24 - 25 Nov'22	Citrus Export Supply Chain Short Course	Hoedspruit

THREEPENCE FARMING: a successful land reform story



ThreePence Farming, a restitution farm in Patensie in the Eastern Cape, was officially launched on 19 July 2022 by DALRRD Minister Thokozile Didiza. By Nomonde Ntloko

The ThreePence Farming launch event kicked off at the ThreePence farm where Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) Minister Thoko Didiza, Deputy Ministers Mcebisi Skwatsha and Nokuzola Capa, and MEC Nonkqubela Pieters assisted with harvesting of the fruit before the official programme began. In her speech, Minister Didiza highlighted the importance of partnerships with like-minded, profit-driven partners in growing farming enterprises.

In his message of support, General Manager of the CGA Grower Development Company Lukhanyo Nkombisa emphasised the importance of supporting land reform farms such as ThreePence to unlock their potential for the greater benefit of the communities.

ThreePence farm is managed by Khaya Katoo and was transferred back to the 40 households that have been beneficiaries of the farm since 2003. However, because the land officially claimed back from the government by beneficiaries was not suitable for farming, they were given alternative land.

The total size of the farm received is 365 ha with 100 ha that had already been planted with citrus. Due to internal disputes, the farm went into decline and Khaya Katoo – the then farm manager – resigned. But when he returned to the farm in 2010, the internal feuds had been resolved and 80% of the trees needed to be replaced. This saw 30 ha of new trees established.

The beneficiaries received support from the Department of Agriculture by means of a center pivot to assist with the vegetable farming that they had started. A further R5 million grant was received from the Department of Land Affairs in 2012, which finally came into fruition in 2014. While waiting for the grant to be finalised, working capital was required to ensure business continuity and a strategic partner was brought in to form the Wag-onDrift joint venture. To date, this development has been beneficial to both parties.

The farm is a beneficiary of the Land Development Support Programme (LDS) whose aim is to provide comprehensive farm development support to land reform farms, and to address the gaps identified during the farm

assessment process. The program provides a full grant support to farmers and it is implemented in partnership with the commodity organisations. In this instance, it's the CGA Grower Development Company, which is helping to realise the objectives of the Black Producer Commercialization Programme.

Although already approved in 2020, the farm officially benefited from the LDS program in 2022. Cebo Hermanus, director for the Land Development Support Directorate at DALRRD, discovered this farm and it was funded through a business plan developed by the CGA Grower Development Company. A cheque of R13.9 million – the total grant fund – was handed over at the event and will be utilised to further develop another 20 ha of citrus on the farm, as well as purchase mechanisation and working capital.

The expansion at ThreePence will create eight more permanent positions on the farm and Khaya has expressed his gratitude for the programme, saying: "This is one of the greatest programmes the department has come up with."

Khaya's vision is for a fully established citrus farm, and to reinstate the packhouse on the farm to being fully operational. The LDS programme has put the farmer one step closer to making this vision a reality.



Harvesting from left: MEC Nonkqubela Pieters Minister Thoko Didiza, Khaya Katoo, Deputy Ministers Mcebisi Skwatsha and Nokuzola Capa