

Justice Mathebula explains the importance of hygiene and udder health at a training day near Magaliesburg



Training with passion

by Liza Burger

Justice Mathebula, one of the chief trainers at the Intervet MPO Institute for Dairy Technology (IDT) and the MPO's Centre for Producer Development (CenDel), is responsible for training dairy farm workers.

Farm workers are the eyes and ears of the farmer, spotting cows in heat or sick animals. Mathebula understands the important role that farm workers play in the daily running of dairy farms. He enjoys teaching workers and developing dairy farmers the basics of dairy farming and the more technical aspects of artificial insemination.

Mathebula travels a lot and gives lessons all over the country where the IDT has its training days. He is fluent in Zulu, Swazi, Ndebele, South Sotho, North Sotho, Tswana and English. He can communicate in Afrikaans and a bit in Tshivenda and Shangaan.

He likes to keep lessons simple, without losing the message. He is also very sensitive to different education levels, but he says this is not a problem in his classes. More experienced workers often help those who are less experienced.

Mathebula was previously employed by semen company, Taurus. He has specialised knowledge of artificial insemination. This is where his passion for instructing others comes from. He started working for the IDT four years ago.

Mathebula says the most important things he teaches, are hygiene and respect: "It is important for workers to respect themselves, their co-workers and the farm's management to ensure their future on the farm.

"They must know that bad hygiene will affect the quality of the milk and that the quality of milk determines the success of the farm. Buyers don't want contaminated milk. Workers must know that by doing their jobs properly, they ensure their own future and the future of their fellow workers." **UM**