

Man with a mission

by Fidelis Zvomuya

Jan Zim is an emerging farmer and the owner of a mixed farming unit with a small dairy. Kagalam Farm is situated on 162 hectares in the district of Kestel in the Free State province. The beneficiaries on the farm were originally the owner and four workers. This has increased to a total of seven people.

Jan is part of the Milk Producers' Organisation's (MPO) mentorship programme. He is mentored by Kotie Annandale, who also oversees the training and farming practices of some other dairy farmers in the region.

In 2006 lack of water, no milking parlour and lack of electricity were identified as shortcomings in this farming venture. These obstacles were all overcome.

Jan currently supplies milk to dairy processing company, Nestlé. While the MPO's training of Jan and his staff focuses mainly on dairy, some of the training also extends into other areas such as crop farming and financial management.

His training under the guiding hand of Annandale, has resulted in the erection of a fully equipped and approved milking parlour. Two years before that, Jan still ran a hand-milking operation.

A photograph of two black and white cows grazing in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. The background shows a flat landscape under a cloudy sky.

Jan has marked all his cows with eartags



Jan Zim, the Free State's emerging farmer of the year for 2008. One of the major improvements on Jan's farm, was the installation of a fully equipped and approved milking parlour

The Kagalam herd

Jan's herd currently consists of 16 cows-in-milk, producing 250 litres per day. During the summer months, production increases to approximately 395 litres per day. At the time of going to press, Jan had 12 pregnant cows, nine calves, 32 dry cows and two Shorthorn bulls in his herd.



With constant training and an enthusiastic willingness to learn, the selling price of Jan's milk has increased from R1,60 per litre to R2,27 per litre. Jan's enterprise has developed so well, that he has:

- Registered a brand
- Marked all his cows with eartags
- Erected an approved milking stall
- Mixes his own feed rations with some assistance from his mentor.

His monthly milk value is in the region of ± R27 000 per month, with a milk production of approximately 11 000 litres per month.

But if growing his business isn't enough, this rising farmer was also crowned as emerging dairy farmer of the Free State province by feed company, Afgri, and the Free State Master Mentor Association.



Other farming operations

In addition to his dairy herd, Jan also has 45 merino sheep. His wool cheque amounts to approximately R3 230. He also harvested approximately 60 tons of broadbeans during the 2007/2008 production season.

We will be keeping an eye on Jan's progress, as he climbs the ladder towards becoming a great commercial farmer in South Africa. We wish him all the best. **UM**