

Young farmers learn of animal husbandry

by Fidelis Zvomuya

Samuel Mabotja, headman of the Ga-Mabotja tribe, has welcomed the Milk Producers' Organisation (MPO) training programmes targeted at small-scale livestock producers in once disadvantaged communities.

He said that government needs the support of the private sector, especially professional, commodity and sector organisations such as the MPO, to assist in addressing some of the challenges faced by emerging farmers such as training and technical skills assistance. Mabotja challenged other commodity organisations to also come up with practical driven training programmes to assist in building a strong agricultural base.

The MPO is on a national crusade to train emerging farmers in animal husbandry, dairy management as well as exposing them to practical skills such as vaccination, castration, dehorning and animal handling. Jas Wasserman, MPO training manager, says they have developed animal husbandry and dairy management training manuals for smallholder producers.

The manual on animal husbandry gives the farmer knowledge on correct procedures to maintain feed quality, apply feed level control, record-keeping and select appropriate feed type.

"The training duration is a minimum of 80 hours of which 70% of the time will be devoted to practical operations. There is no entry requirement. Learners must be physically capable of performing without difficulty the task involved in the unit study," he says.

Joel Nkogatse, Polokwane animal health technician, said it was his first time that he has seen such a huge number of younger people attending an agricultural course. "I have been working in this area for nearly 17 years, but this is amazing. Stakeholders in the agricultural sector need to build a base for future farmers. This can only be done through training the younger generation to take up farming as a profession," he says. **UM**



Samuel Mabotja, Ga-Mabotja headman, and Joel Nkogatse, Polokwane animal health technician



The group of young people who attended the training