



**The Communication And Utilisation Of Recommended
Agricultural Practices In Three Mankwe Field Crop Projects**

by

MONA BEN MATIWANE

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ABSTRACT

The general state of agriculture in Rhenosterfontein, Schoongesicht and Bapo II is unsatisfactory in that many recommended agricultural practices are not implemented. This includes practices related to:- soil preparation, planting, weed control, pest control and harvesting. These practices and the cause of their non-adoption need to be investigated thoroughly and addressed.

The study also focussed on communication, and communication networks. The role of opinion leaders and their influence on decision making were also observed. Communication networks revealed all opinion leaders of the projects and the farmers who speak directly to them. The study revealed the level of extension and information transfer as seen by farmers of the three projects.

The area of Mankwe district was chosen because no documentation existed regarding cropping. There was no available information to reveal the perception and the views of farmers about cropping in the area. The results of this study will help extension workers to draw up programmes to address the needs and problems of the farmers.

Sunflower and maize are the main crops in these three projects. Sunflower is grown in all projects and maize is planted in Rhenosterfontein and Bapo II. The production practices carried out by all the farmers influences yields of crops planted.

The potential of the land where the projects are, as shown in the maps, is fairly good. It is the dual responsibility of Farmers and Extension Officers to raise production to the level of the potential of the area. The challenge for extension is to help farmers through training and guidance, to produce within the yield potential of their projects.

Projects differ in size and number of farmers. They are located at the extreme ends of the district, Bapo II in the west, Rhenosterfontein South and Schoongesicht North. In this way a good part of the district is covered by this study.

Agricultural practices in these projects presents some problems to farmers and they can be addressed by: changing attitudes and beliefs of farmers, as well as conducting demonstrations and on-farm trials.

In order to alleviate the agricultural production problems, the farmers perceptions of the different characteristics of these various practices need to be assessed and extension programmes be drawn up accordingly. Adoption and utilisation of new technology and (agricultural) innovation may be a solution to some of the agricultural production problems.

Training of farmers is an element that could change the general state of the projects so that farmers are able to produce within the range of the potential of the area.

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