

MASAKENG FARMERS NEWSLETTER



In This Issue:

Developing skills to manage production
Knowing what's what - A note on spoor identification
CCB's Demonstration Farm 2018 progress update
A farmer's reflections
Safety around elephants

April 2019

Issue No: 3

Welcome Note

Welcome to another edition of Masakeng Farmers Newsletter. It has been quite a beautiful journey being the chairperson of such a dedicated team of young farmers from Samane in the Jwaneng area — which is an area of great significance to cheetah conservation. Our networks have been beneficial because they brought us together and gave us an opportunity to learn from one another, while at the same time transforming and developing our livelihoods through farming. Our expedition with Cheetah Conservation Botswana (CCB) comes a long way and we are grateful to have received such assistance from CCB in shaping us to be ambassadors of conservation and better farmers. Today, I am confident to say that we are no longer seeing carnivores as threats to our farming but rather as valuable assets to our land and tourism. We are farming productively alongside carnivores by using a range of livestock management techniques to minimise predation, optimise herd health and maximise production. Many of our members have been recipients of trained livestock guarding dogs (LGD) from CCB that have proved successful in reducing livestock loss due to predation.

2018 has presented opportunities for growth of our farming ventures and also brought a lot of benefits from working together as a team. We pride ourselves in promoting coexistence with carnivores. Though seasons have changed and the weather conditions are also bad for us as farmers, we remain hopeful that if we farm in a smart way, we should be able to reap positive rewards. We shall continue to work together to feed our nation and make this world a better place for our future generations and us. PULA!

Donald Simon
Southern Livestock Farmers Network (SOLIFANE)
Chairperson

Activities of the Networks

Developing Skills to Manage Production

Together with the Department of Agricultural Business and Promotion from Kanye and Ghanzi, CCB hosted record keeping capacity building workshops for SOLIFANE and Ghanzi Smallstock Farmers Network (GFN) in October 2017 and February 2018 respectively. Record keeping by livestock farmers can dramatically help farmers to keep track of their stock by monitoring numbers, diseases, injuries and deaths from various factors, including predation. Without proper record keeping, cheetahs and other carnivores often get blamed for an inflated number of livestock deaths, including those from other causes like disease, snakebite and theft. By encouraging farmers to keep better records on their farms, we can help improve the accuracy of the administration involved in farming. We would like to thank both the Department of Agricultural Business and Promotion offices for their support and we hope to continue to work together in improving the lives of the farming communities.



GFN Members at the record-keeping workshop in February 2018

Activities of the Networks (continued)

SOLIFANE at the Ghanzi Agricultural show

The Ghanzi Agricultural show is an opportunity for farmers around the country to gather and share experiences on best farming practices and to watch some of the best products of successful farming on show. In July 2018, 12 committee members of SOLIFANE attended the show with assistance from CCB. This gave network members a chance to meet with Ghanzi farmer, Mr Geoffrey Moyo, a committee member of GFN who arranged visits to some farms in Ghanzi including his. Mr. Moyo gave a talk on how he was able to overcome the challenges that were posed by the abundance of carnivores on his farmland. He mentioned that being an absent farmer hardly ever yields the expected results and highlighted that it is best to safeguard what is yours than rely on a hired livestock manager. Mr. Moyo encouraged network members to increase their presence at their cattle posts particularly if they could not stay there at all times.

Of the visit, SOLIFANE Chairperson Mr Donald Simon had this to say, "As usual, I always enjoy to be part of this trip as it gives me inspiration and motivation to carry on with my work as a livestock farmer. I regard the Ghanzi Show the biggest agricultural show in the country, and it never disappoints. I learned a lot from Mr Moyo. I thank him for hosting us at his farm. The trip was worthwhile — thank you".



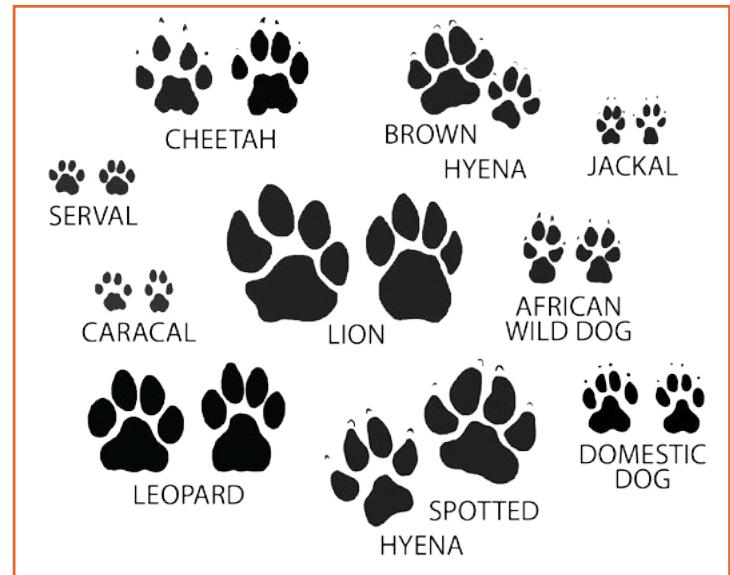
Network members sharing stories around the fire.

Exchange Visit Facilitates Idea-Sharing

The GFN members in partnership with CCB went on an exchange visit to Jwaneng on 25th May 2018. The main purpose of the visit was to give members of the GFN an opportunity to meet with SOLIFANE members and other farmers in that region and to share ideas and experiences on livestock farming. Both groups also had a chance to attend the Southern Beef Farmers Association Field day in Moleleme (in Samane village). Ms Mothibi from the GFN said of the experience, "The group discussion around the fire was a marvel. Learning from farmers that are performing well and them sharing their successes on what they do was very useful."

A Note on Spoor Identification

Cheetahs and other carnivores such as jackals often interact in the same spaces, especially on farmlands. If you share your land with carnivores, it would be helpful to familiarise yourself with their differences, notably their tracks (spoor). Knowing the specific kinds of carnivores existing in your area will help identify suitable, non-lethal methods to deter them and protect your livestock. One trick to remember is that you rarely see claw marks on cat species' spoor (with the exception of cheetahs). For more detailed information about how to identify carnivores on your farm, check out CCB's Carnivore Identification leaflet.



CCB's Demonstration Farm — 2018 Progress

The demonstration farm at CCB camp in Ghanzi serves as a venue for research and testing of new livestock farming methods. The farm currently has 53 goats, three sheep and two LGDs servicing the herd. Through this farm, CCB has so far trained 116 dogs and placed them in farms around the Ghanzi, Kgalagadi and Ngamiland Districts. On 21st May 2018, the demo farm was used to host a LGD workshop, whereby farmers were invited for a benchmarking session for intensive practical knowledge-sharing on working with LGDs. This was seen as an opportunity for attendees to share ideas and come up with possible recommendations on how to better improve the guard dog programme. Lessons were also conducted on training and care of LGDs to farmers interested in receiving dogs from CCB in the future. First-hand testimonies from CCB's LGD beneficiaries were also shared for farmers to get tips on how best to handle and manage a LGD.

A Farmer's Reflections



Ms. Seitiso Moreputla – SOLIFANE Vice Secretary

“My farming adventure dates back to 2008 with assistance from a government initiative called Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development (LIMID). I started with 18 female goats and one ram. In 2015 – 2016, I received a grant from the Youth Development Fund (YDF) of 60 goats and two rams and ever since my farming business has been one of the greatest adventures of my life. I work very well with government departments such as Veterinary Services in our area of Samane and they support us with trainings, business management workshops, vaccinations and finding markets for our livestock. I make sure that I frequently call and visit the above mentioned offices to keep up with recent farming news and advice and look for other arising opportunities.

As a SOLIFANE member, I have participated in network activities including the record keeping training in 2017 and attendance at the Ghanzi Agricultural Show and Southern District Beef Farmers Association field days. I can confidently say that these active collaborations with different groups of people have helped me improve my production practices. I am a proud owner of a LDG puppy I received from CCB from their LGD programme and I greatly appreciate the relationship we have with CCB. With these various interventions, we are no longer experiencing conflict with carnivores in our area and we are coexisting with wildlife better than before. I do most of the work myself at my farm and this saves me time and money. I am able to sell my livestock to individuals as well as to those that are also taking government initiatives like LIMID and YDF. The challenges that exist at the moment are the lack of market for smallstock and the lack of land for grazing. I have a strong passion for farming and my goal is to see my goat herd increase in size so that I am able to support my family.”



Safety on Your Farm

Elephants Everywhere

As elephant populations in Botswana expand from their current range into territories that they haven't occupied for a number of years, the threat of human-elephant conflict is growing. When one is not used to living with elephants, seeing such a huge animal on your land can be intimidating to say the least. Here are some tips on how to keep safe around elephants and how to avoid confrontations if they are moving around your area (brought to you by our friends at Ecoexist).

- **Avoid walking around in the bush at dusk and at night** if you know elephants are around
- **Don't go too close** and don't try to scare it away - give it space. Elephants usually choose to stay away from people if they know that you are there
- If an elephant mock charges you (signs of a mock charge include head raised, ears out and trumpeting) – don't run. Clap your hands or make a sharp sound
- If an elephant charges you for real (head down, ears back) – run away and climb something tall and sturdy (large tree or termite mound)

Although elephants are usually peaceful creatures, every elephant is different and has had different experiences. If people have attacked an elephant previously, they may display aggressive behaviour even when unprovoked. Always give elephants a wide berth and try not to aggravate them.

How do I keep my farm safe from elephants?

Most elephants in the Ghanzi and Kgalagadi Districts are migrating to find new habitats in which to live. However, most of the Kalahari is not ideal habitat for elephants. As such, it is unlikely that elephants will stay in any one area for extended periods of time. They may break fences as they walk across farms, but usually this damage is minimal, especially when male elephants are involved (they usually step straight over cattle fences, whereas breeding herds have smaller elephants that can't make it over the fences). Some elephants will break water infrastructure, especially if there are no other water sources in the area. Keep in mind that any damage caused by elephants is eligible for government compensation to the full value of the damage caused. If problems persist and elephants start causing repetitive damage, there are several techniques that can be used to protect fields and water sources – such as chilli fences, beehive fences, trenches and concrete blocks to protect boreholes and pipes. Check out Ecoexist's website for more information on how to mitigate human-elephant conflict — www.ecoexistproject.org.

SOLIFANE Contacts

Donald Simon (Chairperson)	7347 1478
Letlhogonolo Setswalo (Vice Chairperson)	7165 5122
Phenyo Moakofhi (Secretary)	7358 9282
Seitiso Moreputla (Vice Secretary)	7383 5591
Boiteko Mokabati (Treasurer)	7349 9779
Gabaakanye Keakohile	7345 8558
Tshekiso Tsholohelo	7358 1739
Dipui Motswaiso	7580 9711

GFN Contacts

Rachel Kelefitsetse (Chairperson)	7317 7432
Kabelo Modise (Vice Chairperson)	7303 4511
Setlhabane Boikotlhao (Secretary)	7165 8055
Vivian Mikgatlhanyane (Vice Secretary)	7394 5514
Kebalepile Bantshwanetse (Treasurer)	7627 9626
Ofaletse Thaushe	7370 1935
Moalpi Kwadipana	7371 2676
Nelson Molatole	7369 6785
Tjiramanga Mokgatlhanyane	7777 8512
Bakang Ramoswaane	7269 1516

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

Department and role	Location	Phone number
Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP)	Mabutsane	588 9244
Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP)	Kanye	544 1250
Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP)	Ghanzi	659 6323
Police	Mabutsane	588 9333
Police	Kanye	544 0632
Police	Jwaneng	588 0334
Police	Ghanzi	659 6222
Department of Veterinary Services (DVS)	Jwaneng	588 0466
Department of Veterinary Services (DVS)	Ghanzi	659 6378

BMC SLAUGHTER PRICES (P/KG) - 2018

Kgs	NON-EU MARKETS							EU MARKET					
	<180	180-199	200-219	220-239	240-259	260-269	270+	180-199	200-219	220-239	240-259	260-269	270+
Prime	17.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	30.60	32.10	32.20	33.00	33.00	33.00
Super	17.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	29.50	30.00	30.20	30.90	30.90	30.90
Grade 1	17.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	26.80	27.90	28.20	28.70	28.70	28.70
Grade 2	17.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	25.60	26.10	26.50	27.10	27.10	27.10
Grade 3	12.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	25.40	25.40	25.40	25.40	25.40	25.40
Grade 4	7.10	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Canning	7.10	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	-	-	-	-	-	-

Contributors:

Botswana Meat Commission
Anna Songhurst - Ecoexist

CCB Contacts:

Morulaganyi Kokole: +267 7211 9355/ 7294 1197
Phale Seele : +267 7511 9485/ 7289 7874
King Modise: +267 7440 4531/ 7348 6482

Network Activities Supported By:

