



Achieving our aims in 2020

ANNUAL
REPORT

“Farming puts food on the table and creates employment. It develops a person’s character and knowledge in a short space of time.”

Sandile Feni, Buhle graduate

Our Vegetable Production students gain hands-on experience at the Buhle working farm.



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Letter from our chairperson

Bonile Jack-Pama

Agriculture creates economies on many levels.

When the Covid-19 pandemic began, we underestimated the impact it would have. Farmers' supply chains and markets were disrupted; farmers' and farmworkers' health suffered; the way society functioned changed forever.

Nevertheless, it has been a time of silver linings for our sector. Agriculture grew by 13% in 2020 amid a general economic slump due to good rains, bumper crops and as proof that in times of trouble, demand for food continues. Many of us remembered that we need to grow food that boosts our immune systems and as medicine: ginger, garlic, and traditional produce including *isibhaha* (*warburgia salutaris*) and *umhlonyane* (*artemisia afra*) and *umsuzwane* (*lippia javanica*). Demand for these foods rocketed as people sought to ensure their own health. Such produce offers another opportunity for new

farmers, who can market them on the social media channels some of our graduates are already using.

Agriculture creates economies on many levels: householders growing their own food and selling some to their neighbours; emerging farmers on several hectares of land, and larger commercial farmers. All have a critical role in ensuring food security. We can all produce food on the level that suits us.

Our government must be applauded on its relief efforts for smallholders and farm workers in 2020, which helped many. To further develop new farmers, it should now extend its partnerships with organisations like [Buhle](#), who have grown specialist expertise. As we have learnt that in times of crisis, agriculture is the backbone of our nation.

In 2020
Buhle trained
a total of 354
students



42% were women

58% were men

62% youth
(18 to 35 years old)

This is short of our aim to train 500 new farmers annually but, given the challenges, we are pleased with the achievement.

Reflections from our CEO

Nyiko Maluleke

The year 2020 marked Buhle's 20th anniversary, and we intended to hold a major celebration. However, this was put on hold as Covid-19 struck. The lockdown made us realise that Buhle would need to embark on a period of massive adjustment to a different future. Unable to provide several planned courses, we used the time to reflect.

In the first few months of lockdown, it became apparent that Buhle should start providing online courses, which were becoming the norm across the world. This required some major shifts: setting up Wi-Fi throughout our campus, moving to a cloud-based computing system and launching an [Online Learning Platform](#). We launched our first online course, in [Financial Management](#) for farmers. In another first, we live-streamed the Vegetable Production course in partnership with the NPO Bulungula Incubator, to a group of farmers in a remote region of the Eastern Cape. We plan to provide many more online courses in the future.

The lockdown also gave us time for a long-overdue refurbishment of our classrooms, and when we were able to open our campus in October 2020, we launched several new short courses that, student feedback revealed, were in high demand.

Donors were hard-hit by the Covid-29 restrictions. Buhle was fortunate, in that sufficient funders continued to support us to ensure our survival. Nonetheless, the lessons learnt include that in the future we will need to raise a greater proportion of our funding through our own services and expertise and the sale of produce from our own working farm.

Despite the challenges, we have started 2021 on a strong note and trust it will be a better year than 2020. Our deepest thanks to all our funders for sticking with us. You are making Buhle's survival – and growth into a new era – a reality.



We now have over
6 000 alumni!

and have made a major contribution towards
empowering new farmers in South Africa.

Our Farmer Support Officers were able to visit the farms of **321** Buhle alumni, advising them of how to overcome challenges and optimise their production.

These farms covered a total of **27121ha**, and between them had over **12000** head of livestock, including almost **6000** cattle; over **124000** chickens and more than **5300ha** of vegetables and grain crops.

NEW AT BUHLE

Online Learning Platform

In the past, Buhle used traditional computing systems for our record-keeping and data-management. This made us vulnerable to losing data in the event of a crash or theft.

In June 2020 we developed and finalised an open-source Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS is a broad framework that processes applications, registrations, course administration, assessments, student tracking and reporting.

The cloud-based computing system includes an [Online Learning Platform](#) (OLF) on which students can view and download the course material, complete assignments, find support and, when they have completed their courses, obtain their certificates. The benefits of the LMS are many. It enables students to complete

courses in their own time; the information is immediately available and immediately applicable to their farming businesses; it allows for flexible multimedia learning that includes graphics, audio narration and explanatory text; it enables the efficient tracking of student progress and testing, and allows us to reach farmers in other African countries and across the world.

We reviewed our staff's skillsets soon after lockdown began and realised the need to improve these skills to integrate IT in the classroom and for farming. This process ran parallel to setting up the online platform. The first course we provided online, funded by Santam, was [Financial Management](#) for farmers.

Financial Management is a skill that all farmers need to run a profitable

agribusiness, regardless of their location or preferred production, and constitutes a module in every course that Buhle provides.

The content consists of animation, slides and tests. It is available on demand and, although it can be completed in three days, registration is valid for six weeks.

During the test phase, 80% of the students who registered completed the course within 10 days. Both the National Agricultural Marketing Council and Department of Agriculture enrolled students on the course.

We continue to encourage students to bring their own devices to Buhle.

The new online platform reduces physical contact between staff and students, as paperwork need not be exchanged. Students complete and submit their work on their own devices. We made 10 tablets and seven laptops available to students who did not have their own smartphones, tablets or PCS, to help them adhere to Covid-19 protocols.



Campus-wide Wi-Fi

We overhauled our internet connectivity in 2020 to align with the technology needs of future farmers, both on campus and in their own farming businesses.

Sufficient routers were installed to provide an internet connection in all four classrooms, the administration block, hall, student housing and staff residences.

This puts us on a par with other leading tertiary institutions, and sets us up for the e-learning that will become standard in the future.

This project was made possible thanks to a generous donation from our partner E-Squared, the main funder for the project.

Refurbishments

In November 2020 we began the first major refurbishment project of our campus in decades, and the work was finished within a month.

Along with our shift to online learning, this positions us as a centre of excellence for the African farmer.

Our four classrooms were renovated to meet minimum standards. With ceilings lifted, additional windows installed to let in more natural light, electric work undertaken and walls plastered and painted, the new-look classrooms are a huge improvement. The layout allows for social distancing. One of the classrooms is equipped with an interactive smart board for presentations and demonstrations, making learning easier overall.

In the future, we hope to refurbish our student accommodation too, and look forward to bringing you news about this.



OUR FARMERS

Bulungula Incubator

Nolesile Dodwana, 58, has 13 dependents – eight children and five grandchildren, whom she struggled to support. In 2020, she bravely embraced the technology of her grandchildren's era, taking part in an online streamed Vegetable Production course taught on Zoom and other platforms.

The course was provided by Buhle through non-profit organisation Bulungula Incubator to 10 residents of villages in the remote Eastern Cape municipality of Mbhashe, one of the most food insecure areas in South Africa. “The course is giving me hope. It will help me to educate the children and put food on my table,” Nolesile said. “I gained a lot of knowledge about what to do, and when.”

The success of the online course demonstrates that internet access can help people to gain the skills they need to farm for a profit, regardless of their location. Buhle delivered its full three-month Vegetable Production course



to the 10 learners, half of them women and seven of them under 30 years' old. Bulungula is based in Nqileni, a village in the municipality that is not electrified, with rural roads. Over 90% of the community has never graduated from high school. The local spaza shops and stores currently import vegetables from Port Elizabeth.

Buhle used a variety of platforms to deliver the lessons. “Despite my original concern, the online lessons using photos and videos worked well,” said Buhle training office Ntsako Baloyi. “This feels like the new normal.”

Sandile Feni

Prestige Farming

Name:

Location:

Buhle course:

Current production:

Previous production:

Jobs created:

Market:

Sandile Feni (26)

Delmas, Mpumalanga

Livestock Production 2016

1,5ha of organic swiss chard and peppers

None

Four permanent, seasonal as required

Formal and individuals

“When I am no longer on this earth, my children will be able to continue with farming.”



Buhle graduate Sandile Feni's focus and hard work is paying off. He is thriving through producing organic vegetables in four tunnels, with plans to expand his production soon.

Sandile produces more than 10 000 bunches of spinach and more than 1000 crates of peppers at a time, selling to the Springs Market, Johannesburg Market, Pick 'n Pay in Delmas in addition to farm gate sales. He plans to introduce cucumbers soon too.

Despite studying Human Resources at university, Sandile had always hankered after farming. After graduating, he began farming pigs and cultivating their feed on communal land, then went to Buhle to improve his skills. He now farms land that belongs to a local youth centre, providing them with food and money for electricity in

place of rent. His tunnels were sponsored by a local coal mine.

“My secret to success is being at my farm most of the time and studying my plants carefully,” he said. “At Buhle, I learnt to study what plants need and what makes them happy. Farming puts food on the table and creates employment. As much as farming is hard and complicated, it develops a person's character and knowledge in a short space of time. When I am no longer on this earth, my children will be able to continue with farming.”

Sandile's advice to emerging farmers is not to wait for government support. “Start as soon as you graduate from farmer training, because that is when the fire is still within you. Look for land that is underutilised and begin. Even if it has become a dumpsite, clear the trash away.

“You can grow your farm to become commercial and raise enough money to buy your own inputs.”

Sandile has proven this as, with only 1.5ha, he is producing under shade-netting, giving his plants protection from the elements, producing a higher yield and giving the farmer greater control.

One of his greatest loves is livestock farming, and he intends to diversify into livestock in the future.



Nancy Lesia

Lesia Dairy Production

Name:	Nancy Lesia (25)
Location:	Rosendal, Free State
Buhle course:	Livestock Production 2017
Current production:	22 dairy cattle producing 90 litres daily
Previous production:	None
Jobs created:	Two permanent
Market:	Formal and individuals

“I get so much happiness from working with my cattle.”

Nancy Lesia has taken the road less travelled. She is an award-winning female livestock farmer, and, even more unusually, has opted to focus on dairy cattle. Nancy farms on family land with her twin brother Mpikane, who grows vegetables, and her father KB, who produces maize - it's a family affair.

She has 22 cattle, supplying milk to the local community on order, and the demand from local schools and creches is so great that she cannot yet fulfil it. Mpikane grows spinach, beetroot, cabbage and tomatoes on 2ha of the 390ha farm, selling to local supermarkets, and produces his own seedlings. Employing two seasonal workers, he makes enough profit for a good income. Nancy's father built her a milking shed and she began production as soon as she returned from her studies at Buhle. Her father gave her seven cattle and, due to her success, she attracted the attention of the likes of the National Youth Development Programme and Total.

Nancy won a Best Female Farmer award from the Free State Department of Agriculture in 2019 and has been nominated again this year.

“I grew up watching my father milk by hand, so it's what I know,” she says. “There is money in milk. If I had more cattle, I could supply 2000 litres per day, because the demand is so great. I will get there; some of my cattle are pregnant and soon I will have more calves.

“I spent so much money on diesel for the generator that powers the milking machines, but will expand in future and make a better profit. Youth should take an interest in doing something they can achieve themselves, with their own hands,” she advises. “I get so much happiness from working with my cattle.”



Tsholofelo Mokwele

PTM Squared

Name:	Tsholofelo Mokwele (29)
Location:	Bronkhorstspuit, Mpumalanga
Buhle course:	Livestock & Poultry Production 2020
Current production:	100– 300 broilers per cycle, 50 layers, 30 pigs and 1ha seasonal vegetables
Previous production:	None
Jobs created:	Three permanent, two seasonal
Market:	Individuals – by delivery



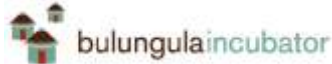
Tsholofelo has grown her farm quickly, and with great success, in less than a year since graduating from Buhle. Starting with just 100 broilers per cycle and a few cattle, she now has up to 300 broilers per cycle, 50 layers, 30 pigs and 1ha of seasonal vegetables – spinach, lettuce, sweet potatoes and sugar beans. She markets her produce on WhatsApp and Facebook, and delivers to individuals, door-to-door.

“My aim is to contribute to food security and provide local people with a reliable source of healthy food,” she says. “I want to feed the nation.”

Friends and family helped her buy the first cohort of animals, and her farm has been growing ever since. The farm has a borehole but the sugar beans and sweet potatoes are rain-fed. Buhle supplied her with shade-netting, donated by Master Plastics, for her spinach.

Tsholofelo continues to plough her profits back into her agribusiness, to ensure its growth. “Farming is good. It's not right to get food from far away – far better than we produce our own, local products,” she says.

OUR FUNDERS



**Humulani
Trust**



**Schoeman
Boerdery**

Audited Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2020

Buhle Farmers Academy (2004/016680/08)

Association Incorporated in terms of Section 21

Statement of Financial Position


	2020/12/31	2019/12/31
Assets		
Non- Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	2 043 735	2 487 391
Loans receivable	2 960 163	2 960 163
	5 003 898	5 447 554
Current Assets		
Inventories	30 081	101 072
Other current asset		
Trade and other receivables	225 825	88 398
Cash and cash equivalents	2 137 670	6 321 611
	2 393 576	6 511 081
Total Assets	7 397 474	11 958 635
Reserves and Liabilities		
Reserves		
Retained earnings	7 397 474	11 958 635
Total Reserves and Liabilities	7 397 474	11 958 635

Statement of Cash Flows

	2020/12/31	2019/12/31
Cash flows from operating activities		
Surplus for the year	-4 561 161	1 794 056
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation of tangible assets	591 470	582 881
Investment income	-154 789	-186 059
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment		0.00
Operating cash flow before working capital changes	-4 124 480	2 190 878
Working capital changes		
Decrease/increase in inventories	70 991	-40 849
Decrease/increase in trade and other receivables	-137 427	439 289
Decrease/increase in trade and other payables		
Net cash flow from operations	-4 190 916	2 589 318
Investment income	154 789	186 059
Net cash flows from operating activities	-4 036 127	2 775 377
Cash flows used in investing activities		
Property, plant and equipment acquired	-147 814	-531 204
Proceeds on disposals of property, plant and equipment		1
Movement in other current asset		
Net cash flow used in investing activities	-147 814	-531 203
Cash flow used in financing activities		
Loans repaid		
Other		2
Net cash flow used in financing activities		2
Net decrease/ increase in cash and equivalents	-4 183 941	2 244 176
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	6 321 611	4 077 435
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	2 137 670	6 321 611

Statement of Comprehensive Income

	2020/12/31	2019/12/31
Revenue	11 522 777	18 514 000
Cost of sales	-1 549 217	-1 696 836
Gross surplus	13 071 994	20 210 836
Operating costs	-14 689 510	-15 209 167
Operating surplus	-4 715 950	1 607 997
Finance income	154 789	186 059
Surplus for the year	-4 561 161	1 794 056
Retained income at 1 January 2020	11 958 635	10 164 579
Surplus for the year	-4 561 161	1 794 056
Retained income at 31 December 2020	7 397 474	11 958 635

A blue tractor is pulling a metal trailer filled with a large pile of cut weeds and brush. The scene is set under a translucent shade-netting structure supported by wooden poles. A person in a grey hoodie and green pants is standing on the trailer, using a long-handled tool to manage the debris. Another person is partially visible near the tractor. The ground is covered with reddish-brown soil and some sparse vegetation.

Clearing weeds to
prepare for planting
under shade-netting
at Buhle.

“My aim is to contribute to food security and provide local people with a reliable source of healthy food, I want to feed the nation.”

Tsholofelo Mokwele, Buhle graduate



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