

SA poultry farmers upskilled in farm, financial management

Over 240 small and disadvantaged South African poultry farmers have learned new business and farm and financial management skills in a series of workshops as part of a World Poultry Foundation (WPF) programme supported with grants by United States government.



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The programme saw stakeholders partnering with Pretoria-based Franchising Plus to implement training designed to improve production and management models among emerging poultry farmers.

Eight workshops on financial management and sustainable farming methods were undertaken around South Africa, with support from US Department of Agriculture (USDA), a South African financial institution, and the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), with the support of the KwaZulu Natal Poultry Institute (KZNPI) and the Future Farmers Foundation of South Africa.

With an initial target of 200 beneficiaries, the programme proved more popular than expected, and 243 farmers and extension agents, well over half of them women, have benefited, with positive social and economic benefits for their communities in KwaZulu Natal and inland areas such as Potchefstroom, Nelspruit and Bloemfontein.

Programme successes

Reviews of the programme impact found that farmers had not only improved their sales and expense record-keeping and banking, but had also managed to decrease their expenditure. Through better record-keeping, the farmers have been able to reduce the amount of feed they used by almost half, without affecting the health and growth of the chickens. Enhanced records also allowed farmers to identify changes needed in the way they fed and watered the chickens, with resulting declines in mortality.

"The course was a huge eye-opener," said Seipati Maseko, a participant in Potchefstroom. "As a result, a lot of changes will be made in my business, and hopefully my business will grow."

Another participant in Potchefstroom, Mosele Mokoetsi, said: "I am confident now that when I return to farm I will be able to manage my finances and farm better."

In another move to support agricultural transformation among emerging South African farmers, the WPF has also funded an internship programme for students to travel to the United States to gain exposure to farming methods there.

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