

The Development of Agriculture and Nutrition

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Scientific approach to agriculture and nutrition in the Homelands is an absolute necessity. We must bear in mind that the Blacks were a people used to getting what they could from the soil while living in an area, and moving on whenever they felt that the land was not producing sufficient for their needs. Today, they have settled. With the introduction of rehabilitation schemes, comprising grazing areas, farming (ploughing), and residential areas, it has become imperative that a scientific approach be adopted. By scientific approach, I am referring to the best methods one can use to get what is wanted from the soil, with that same soil remaining fertile in order to maintain life—'Return to the soil what you get from the soil'.

If we expect motivation from the people we seek to assist, we must have a reconciliation between the scientific and traditional approaches to agriculture and nutrition. There must be two-way communication between the Western approach and traditional farming practice. The agricultural officers, whether White or Black, must penetrate the farming areas and they must instruct in such a way as to motivate people to take the desired action. For this reason the Black agricultural officer in one area (Mount Frere, Transkei) decided to contact certain local key members to form an organisation to establish communication between the department and the community. On 27 May 1972, the first meeting was well attended by a cross-section of the community. An organisation, 'Lubacweni Farmers' Association', was formed on 17 June 1972, and it was minuted that this organisation was to 'struggle to progress against the forces of nature under many different circumstances, i.e. how and when to plough, which manure to use, and what to eat'. Membership was open to all on payment of a membership fee of R2. Office-

bearers were elected, and to date there are 26 active members.

What has been done during this period? Many organisations meet and talk, but very little is accomplished. This organisation has not progressed as it could have, but (a) the agricultural officer has had his platform of communication with the people; (b) agricultural plots on mealies (one contour) were agreed upon and most members used the methods recommended by the officer; (c) all members who belong to the Association have vegetable gardens — 8 plots to demonstrate crop rotation, crop succession, variety of vegetables, use of compost or deep trench composting, etc.; (d) communal buying of seed, chickens and fertilisers, and (e) demonstrations arranged of the preparation of nutritious dishes from their produce.

CONCLUSION

From what has been discussed we can say that the following are necessary:

1. To convince the people on how best they can handle their farming—to do so we need communication media.

2. We need to have as many groups as possible in our respective areas. Membership should not be restricted to paying members, but all members must do their utmost to actively participate in implementing scientific methods. Members must be exemplary in their area and able to exchange ideas with others. Where one person has an excess of a particular commodity, it should be exchanged for another product with others in the group.

The Lubacweni Farmers' Association, has met most of its commitments within one year of its inauguration but there is always financial difficulty in achieving the best results. It further aims at having fund-raising projects for the purposes of purchasing fertiliser and seeds, and to have special areas fenced off for vegetable production. People are eager to learn and this learning motivates them into action; with a view to being a healthy person by using the soil properly and profitably.

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