

Training Challenges Faced by Smallholder Farmers: A Case of Mopani District, Limpopo Province in South Africa

P. Maponya^{1,2*}, S.L. Venter¹, C.P. Du Plooy¹, S.D. Modise¹ and E. Van Den Heever¹

¹*Agricultural Research Council-Vegetable and Ornamental Plants, Pretoria, South Africa*

²*University of Johannesburg, Department of Geography, Environmental Management and Energy Studies, South Africa*

**E-mail: <maponyap@arc.agric.za>, <phokelemaponya@gmail.com>*

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ABSTRACT Training plays a strategic role in improving the competitiveness and the productivity of the agricultural sector. This paper identified training challenges faced by smallholder farmers in the Mopani District, Limpopo province, South Africa. This entailed taking a representative sample consisting of 56 agricultural projects, with 1938 beneficiaries participating in the research. The following 5 local municipalities were visited: Greater Tzaneen, Greater Giyani, Maruleng, Greater Letaba and Ba Phalaborwa. Quantitative and qualitative design was used as a detailed questionnaire written in English, with a stakeholder's discussion, and field observations as part of the data collection. A purposive sampling technique was used to select fifty-six (56) projects, in order to cover uniformity and homogenous characteristics such as infrastructure requirements, skills availability, production challenges, agricultural training needs, water source needs, educational level and others. Data was coded, captured and analyzed with a software packaged for social sciences (SPSS version 20). Descriptive analysis was conducted and results identified the following training challenges: Soil Preparation, Seed Sowing, Pests and Diseases, Marketing, Harvesting, Transplanting and Post-Harvest Storage. It is recommended that transfer of agricultural knowledge to support smallholder farmers should be priority for the government especially the seven training challenges identified by smallholder farmers.