

## MARCH REPORT 2019

UMATI hosted its AGM on the 13<sup>th</sup> March, which was well attended, showing continued support for this movement & the principles it stands for. It was a wonderful opportunity to briefly discuss the projects UMATI have been actively involved with over the year, the success stories, the new opportunities and also creating more awareness at the highest levels within our country and abroad.

Steve Colenbrander addressed the meeting as our guest speaker. He discussed 'changing our mindset' and becoming lobbyists. He feels the word transformation is now being mis-interpreted and there is a specific stigma attached to it. Thereby changing our attitude towards upliftment by transferring skills that will lead to equal opportunities for all farmers.

Below is a brief summary of what UMATI has achieved over the past year:

### **Building Relationships**

UMATI continues to strive to build working relationships with all role players to create a user-friendly environment

- After the successful Premier & MEC DARD visit in January, UMATI gave a presentation of all their projects to the KZN Provincial Cabinet. They were adopted by the KZN Legislature on the proposal of The Premier.
  - At this presentation The Premier remarked to the Cabinet that the relationship between Commercial farmers and all other members of the community was indeed unique and it impressed him immensely.
  - The MEC DARD, Mr Themba Mthembu, said that he was not surprised about The Premier's remarks, as he too observed the good relationships that existed.



Figure 1: The Premier, MEC DARD visiting Sarsgrove Dairy with Dave Sharpe; building farmer-worker relationships

Highlights of the Presentation Included:

- The Submission of the Mpofana Irrigation Project, now known as the Umgungundlovu Water Resource & Expansion Project.
- The State of the P164 Rosetta to Kamberg Road.
- The need for support for Education on Agriculture, with special reference to Weston and its role in Agricultural Education.

Umati Continues to interact with such entities as:

- ILRMC Committee (Interim Land Reform Management Committee)
- FPSU (Farmer's Production Support Unit)
- Mpofana LED (Local Economic Development)
- Municipality Officials and a number of others

### Support for Developing Farmers

- Assisting the FPSU, Mpofana Farmers & Committee Members with Elesmore Dairy Farm, the Gugulethu Community & other Middlerus & Rietvlei Farms
  - Gugulethu Farm & Middlerus PSA Potato SA Project had a successful 12 ha potato crop.
  - Future projects in the Gugulethu community include beans, barley, green mielies and vegetables.
  - Dealing with issues on Elsemore Dairy Project
  - Meeting with Project Souflet & Heineken making progress with the Barley Production Project.
  - Meet with Makhosi Xakaza of WARD (Women in Agriculture & Rural Development) with growing vegetables in the Rietvlei area.



Figure 2: Potato Harvest at Gugulethu

### Skills Development & Training & Education

- Debbie Stratford has also been running regular beef and other training workshops, which is hugely appreciated by UMATI and the Emerging Farmers – Thank you!
- During the visit by The Premier in January, John Bates outlined all the projects and skills development courses that their members are invested in amongst various schools.
- KVA continues to support social responsibility programmes, which were presented to The Premier on his visit.
- Umati is presently assisting 9 students at Weston Agricultural College
- UMATI Commercial Farmers are placing students as Internships, which provides experience in a commercial venture for the Agricultural Emerging Managers.
- Bruntville Dog Project is gaining momentum, and has cast its net far wider than just Bruntville. Participation in this project has increased tremendously.



Figure 3: Training Children about feeding calves at Blesburg Farm



Figure 4: Jon Bates with The Premier



Figure 5: Brett Moller, Themba, The Premier & Councillor Khumalo

## Other News

- Steve Colenbrander has offered to host a 'brainstorming workshop' to better create awareness for UMATI; where we will invite all members to actively participate. As UMATI is an evolving concept, with few guidelines to assist us in the way forward, it is anticipated that by running a workshop we will get a clearer idea of our aims, objectives & goals.
- NRLA AGM held on the 27<sup>th</sup> March. Graham Armstrong presented "UMATI MILESTONES & PROJECTS 2019" to the AGM. Jon Bates was congratulated by Graham on the good work he is doing in Nottingham Road. Chairperson, Andrew Bates, commended UMATI on their work and commented that, "there should be more interreaction between NRLA & UMATI, especially for the projects in that area"
- Bobby Hoole, Kwanalu Director, reported on the Activities of Kwanalu, and they commend and support organizations such as UMATI & Harry Gwala and believe they play a very important role in promoting viable and economic change.

UMATI would very much like to thank all the ongoing support from all its contributors and sponsors.