

# CONVERSATION

News from Timbali Technology Incubator

May / June 2018

## NWANEDI PACK HOUSE TRADING IN EXPORTS FROM DAY ONE



### NWANEDI HISTORY

Behind the spectacular Soutpansberg in Limpopo Province there is a small river known as the Nwanedi. It leaves the mountain and meanders in a north-eastward direction across the Lowveld, where it has brought sustenance to the local residents since the beginning of time. The exceptional agricultural potential of the region soon led to small scale and commercial farming in the valley, and with the support of Venda chiefs, provincial and national government, international funders, market agents and commercial farmers in the district, subsistence small holder numbers increased steadily. In however, yields and quality remained low and many of the smallholders struggled with the complexities of marketing their products at fair prices.

### ENTER DAFF AND TIMBALI

In 2014 the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) aware of their difficulties, approached Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (LDARD) and introduced Timbali to LDARD, and the rest as they say is history. Funded by DAFF, Timbali established a centre from which intensive support and extension to 50 farmers were offered. Today we are serving over 100. The small holders are grouped into ten clusters comprising 15 farms in each, and trained Timbali "extension" officers use motorcycles to regularly visit and assist these farmers. The vision for these outstanding farmers then moved towards full packing and marketing services of their products cooperatively.

### ENTER LDARD AND JOB FUND

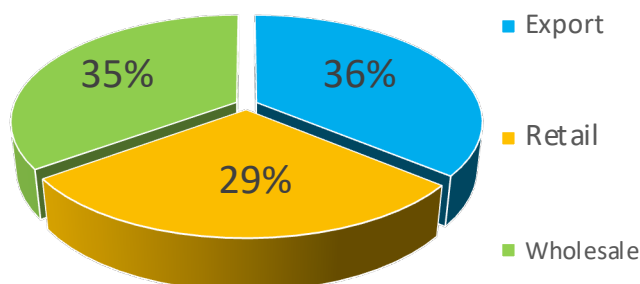
Motivated by Timbali's model, LDARD partnered with us and Timbali applied for a Jobs Fund Contract. The National Government through its Job Fund programme, partnered with Timbali and the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development provided the matched funding to fund the project. After two years of blood, sweat and toil, we are seeing our vision reach fulfilment.

Pack House off to a strong start Timbali's mandate was to establish a vegetable supply chain to link the small holder farmers to niche markets.

The now fully constructed Nwanedi GLOBALG.A.P packhouse is the fourth constructed by Timbali in recent years, adding to those at Nelspruit for cut-flowers and baby-veg, and Komatipoort and Lydenburg for baby-veg. It is also the fourth project in which Timbali has instituted as professional management system, able to continually increase efficiencies, reduce costs and increase profit.

In following the Timbali system, the Nwanedi Agri-Park has begun with a running start. The first sale were made on 24 April 2018 and the first report up to 19 May 2018 as seen in the pack house sales dashboard.

### Sales Mix 24 April 2018 - 19 May 2018 (in RANDS)



# GROWTH CONVERSATION

May / June 2018

## NWANEDI PACK HOUSE STARTS TO EXPORT



From Concept to Functional Export Pack House

### ✓ How do we do it?

We are often asked how we set up new farmers in a new location, supplying into highly competitive market that demand quality, quantity and consistency, and the answer is always the same.

The key secret is that we set and agree clear achievable targets; we then measure performance against these targets; and provide quick feedback to the farmers and all staff involved. But there is more to it than that.



### ✓ Problem solving

But it's not so simple. For example, the harvesting of Yellow Patty Pans, Baby Ma, Green Patty Pans and Fine Beans started in April. Farmers had been familiarised with the specs of the different markets, but initially were not following these, and as a result packhouse productivity was low. Specs had once again to be demonstrated, and to improve pack house productivity, a transparent packhouse dashboard allowing the entire farmers community to see the daily productivity was developed.



### ✓ Growing programs

Timbali provides the growing programs for both export and local retail markets in a plan that sets out detailed weekly quantities and qualities required by these markets, with the balance going to the wholesale fresh produce markets. Individual farmers see the short terms and seasonal plans, and decide which crops they want to produce and for which markets. They are able to plan their own season for their chosen crops and decide what to plant, when to plant it, how much, for which markets at what prices.

The Timbali clustered production strategy allows both the Nwanedi farmer as well as the Timbali staff members to know what is expected from them and to be able to coordinate production and to coordinate market supply.



### ✓ Clustering

As mentioned above, Timbali groups farmers into clusters, sharing appropriate growing land, infrastructure and technology, empowering farmers with commercial buying power and enabling peer-to-peer learning to enhance sales and financial performance.

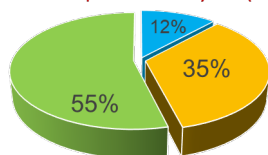


### Timbali Pack House Dashboard:

#### Nwanedi Sales Mix 24 April 2018 till 19 May 2018

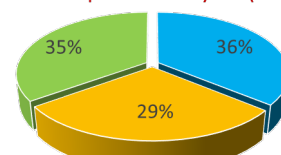
Consolidated KG's sold	13019
Consolidated Income	R210 393

Sales Mix 24 April 2018 - 19 May 2018 (in KGs)



■ Export ■ Retail ■ Wholesale

Sales Mix 24 April 2018 - 19 May 2018 (in RANOS)



■ Export ■ Retail ■ Wholesale





# GROWTH CONVERSATION

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## Export quality made possible through Technology Transfer

### NWANEDI FARMERS BENEFITTED FROM THE FOLLOWING TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IN THE MONTH OF MAY 2018:

- Water management: Proper irrigation scheduling implemented, and farmers are updated regularly dam levels.
- No Till: The use of fixed beds, in order to reduce costs, improve soil structure and reduce soil compaction.
- Nitrogen efficiency: Following a recommended fertiliser programme based on soil analysis and specialised agronomist advice.
- Soil fertility: Using organic fertilisers such chicken manure as pre-fertilisers.



### EDUCATOR TURNED FARMER

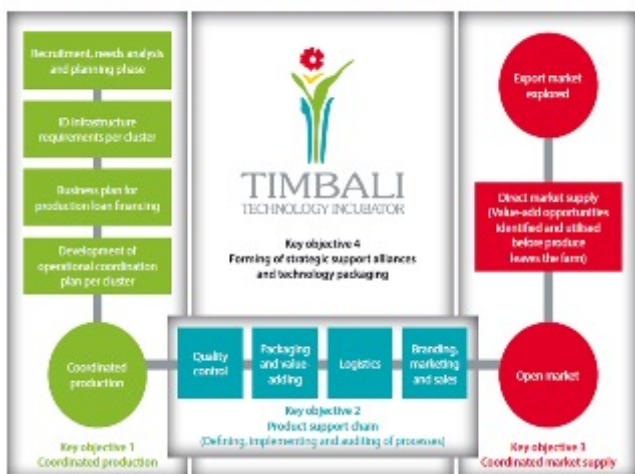
#### Nempfumbada Regina

is 38 years old, and was farming in Nwanedi when Timbali came on the scene. Growing up in a farming

family, she left the teaching career to follow her parent's footsteps. Regina's decision to leave teaching career to start farming business was an easy one for her. Regina joined Timbali Technology Incubator in 2015 and is currently farming on 10 hectares as part of Timbali Cluster 2, producing vegetables, comprising mainly of tomatoes and butternuts. Recently she planted 0.5ha of green beans and 0.5ha of baby gem squash for the new packhouse.

When we met Regina, amongst the challenges she was facing were a lack of business skill; no current business plan; employment of unskilled staff; lack of knowledge of the market and no proper marketing; no access to export opportunities and markets and inadequate equipment. Timbali's Business Unit Manager, Sydney Chaucer, counseled here about business development processes, record keeping quantification, and data driven decisions such as soil analysis, with the outcome that today the quality of her products have improved significantly, tomato yield improved from 40 to 70 tons per ha, and business's turnover increased by 70%. She now employs 12 persons on a permanent basis, and has 20 temporary employees during the harvesting season.

Figure 1. Schematic representation of Timbali's enabling environment to successfully link small-scale farmers to markets in order to increase sustainability.



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## TIMBALI TEAM LEADERS IN NWANEDI:



### **SYDNEY CHAUKE: NWANEDI BUSINESS UNIT MANAGER**

**Sydney Hendry Chauke** is Timbali's Business Unit Manager in Nwanedi since June 2015. Sydney came to Timbali with 23 years of experience working in a

commercial fresh produce pack house in Musina managing employees, negotiations with unions, liaising with markets and clients, communicating with stakeholders, etc. He also mentored emerging farmers with programs for markets. Today Sydney heads up the Nwanedi pack house and champions' the Timbali "Ndlela" or Yellow Brick Road system of development in Nwanedi. Sydney is responsible for both farmer and market related issues and prefers a structured approach when organizing himself and others as a good organizer. Sydney has a very good network of people in the Nwanedi/ Musina area and knows lots of people. Sydney understands the importance of meeting daily market supply targets. He understands that to grow and sustain any market supply relationship, requires meticulous attention to detail.



### **ERNEST MUSANDIWA: Senior PSF OFFICER**

**Ernest Musandiwa** has a Bachelor Degree in Agriculture in Crop Production, Plant Pathology, Entomology and Horticulture in 2010. Ernest completed his internship in Crop

Production in 2013 in the LDARD in Nwanedi after which he applied for a position at Timbali. Today Ernest is the Senior PFS officer who visits the farmers on his motorcycle on a regular basis. Ernest is responsible for production and for communication and implementing the targets set in the Concept Master Plan by the farmers with the farmers so that production meets the market demand on time in the quantities and qualities required. Ernest understands the Timbali model and knows how to implement the systems to meet the market demand. Ernest is quiet and reflective, but knows how to be careful and meticulous when working with the farmers and he has learnt how to follow through to the end.

