

## **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA (APPSA) HELD INFORMATION SHARING MEETING**



The Agricultural Productivity Program for Southern Africa (APPSA) is a six-year project supported by the World Bank which seeks to promote a regional approach to agricultural technology generation and dissemination by supporting the strengthening and scaling up of regional centre of leadership. In Lesotho, APPSA supports the regional centre of leadership in horticulture. APPSA is a research project under the Department of Agricultural Research (DAR).



Implementation of APPSA-Lesotho project activities under guidance of the Project Steering Committee will be undertaken on agricultural research stations as well as farmer' land as on- farm trials located within the four agro ecological zones of Lesotho. The District Agricultural Officers are going to serve as overseers of all agricultural research activities within their areas, and assist with the selection of farmers for on-farm trials. For that reason, a two day APPSA information sharing meeting for District Agricultural Officers (DAOs) and District Extension Officers (DEOs) was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

The purpose of the meeting was to share information on APPSA to these officers so they can understand how the project is going to operate and their roles as well as responsibilities towards the success of this project. On the other hand, the meeting was meant to further strengthen linkages between the Department of Agricultural Research (DAR) and Department of Field Services (DFS).

The Director of Field Services (a.i) Mr Lereko Masopha indicated that the meetings of this nature are of paramount importance as the Research-Extension-farmer linkages are strengthened. Mr Masopha asserted that the Ministry of Agriculture, Marketing and Food Security intends to break the silo approach within the Ministry in undertaking agricultural activities. He pleaded with the researchers and extension personnel to work hard for the success of APPSA and for the benefit of the farming community.

During the meeting, information on project overview, progress to date, challenges, and lessons learned was shared with the participants. APPSA implementation strategy, communication management and arrangement of DAR staff at district level were also shared. Discussions on the shared information, questions, inputs and clarifications were made.



The DAOs and DEOs presented on the existing structure in which they operate at district level so that they can also cater for APPSA activities. Their presentation also included the gaps that needs attention for success of the project, proposed implementation strategy, their expectation regarding APPSA and suggestions. Even though it was evident that the meeting of this nature was long overdue, both DAOs and DEOs were contend that APPSA information was eventually shared. They pledged their support to APPSA activities at district level.

The Director of Agricultural Research Dr. Lefulesele Lebesa expressed her appreciation for the active participation of both DAOs and DEOs in this meeting. She acknowledged the inputs, concerns and suggestions from the deliberations. Dr. Lebesa highlighted that the project is not a stand-alone but has to close the gaps that exist on the ground hence both DAR & DFS should work together to realize the success of APPSA considering limited time left before it comes to an end.

A total number of ten (10) District Agricultural Officers and nine (9) District Extension Officers attended the APPSA information sharing meeting together with ten 10 officers from APPSA-Lesotho.