



Project:

Beyond abundance

Annual report 2020/21

Submitted to:

MAIZE TRUST

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1. Project details

1.1. A. Identification of project and applicant

1. Name or Title of the Project:

Beyond Abundance

2. Name and Trading Name of the Applicant:

Name: Grain South Africa

Trading Name: Grain SA

1.2. B. Details relating to the project application

3. Objective of Maize Trust deed

Market access in respect of the South African Maize industry (inter alia by providing marketing infrastructure, training and assistance in rural areas where the need thereto exists).

4. Category under which application is made (as per attached Annexure):

Transformation

5. Reasons why it is deemed that the Project will contribute to the above objective:

There is many smallholder and subsistence farmers in the former homeland areas who have access to land that is not productive. Although small (mostly around 1 ha of arable land per household), putting this land back into production will make a great contribution towards household food security and income. To achieve this, the goal of the project is to ensure that the each of the households participating in the project can achieve commercial yields. Currently the project has 3159 farming enterprises in the form of households.

6. Main aim or purpose of the Project:

The main purpose of the project is to support smallholder and subsistence farmers to self-sufficient in producing food by modernizing the farming practices applied, mentoring and skills development. The production practices need to be closely monitored by the mentors while the

farmers are capacitated with knowledge and skills regarding maize and dry bean production. The project is structured such that farmers make own contribution of R4000 per ha to fund inputs costs. Ultimately this project helps to increase maize production yields, which leads to food security and income generation as well as some opportunity for value adding.

7. Estimated timeframe (duration) of the Project:

One year (2020/21 Financial Year) with annual continuation.

8. Sector(s) in agriculture that could or should benefit from the Project:

The developing farmers, the informal and formal grain markets, local millers, input supply companies.

9. Names of Other Contributors to the Project and the value/extent of contributions:

Farmers, Grain SA, Bayer, Villa, Kynoch, SASOL Base Chemicals, Limpopo Department of Agriculture and the Maize Trust.

10. Summary of the total estimated cost of the Project:

The total budget for the project was R11 565 218 with a total of received of **R12 977 157** and total expenses of **R12 761 985** (see Table 1 on the project income and expenditure to-date).

Table 1: Project Income and Expenditure (Project financial reporting period (1 October 2020 - 7 September 2021).

Beyond Abundance Report			
Financial period: 1 October 2020 - 13 September 2021			
Account Name	YTD Actuals	Budget	Variance
Income			
Farmer Contribution	- 10 988 616	- 10 434 783	553 833
Other Funders	- 1 298 485	- 1 340 497	42 013
Maize Trust Subsistence Funding	- 538 800	- 898 000	359 200
Income Totals	- 12 825 900	- 12 673 280	152 620
Expenditure			
Seed - Maize	2 715 510	3 150 000	434 490
Fertiliser	4 543 687	4 551 000	7 313
Transport - Fertiliser	617 790	591 000	- 26 790
Chemical Round Up	896 872	852 000	- 44 872
Chemical Pre & Post	2 540 800	2 475 000	- 65 800
Transport - Other	78 712	-	- 78 712
Repairs, Maintenance and Contracting	-	578	578
Mentor Fees	764 466	1 048 000	283 534
Grain SA Administration Fees	341 025	596 721	255 696
Bank Charges	216 542	89 848	- 126 694
Transport	20 560	75 000	54 440
Limpopo Mentorship Initiative	96 090	210 063	113 973
Expense Total	12 832 054	13 639 210	807 156
TOTALS	6 153	965 929	959 776

11. Details of similar Projects of the Applicant funded by other entities before:

Since the 2015/15 season Grain SA has collaborated with a number of partners including the Jobs Fund of the National Treasury on a project called 'From subsistence to Abundance – commercial farming starting from 1 ha. The Beyond abundance project previously supported, 5251 farmers and planting 7251 ha of maize. The project now continues under the Beyond Abundance name and continues to impact thousands of subsistence farmers across the country.

Table 2: Performance of farmers that previously participated in the Beyond Abundance project

Season	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Farmers	1674	2905	3804	5251
Hectares	1776	4120	5173	7251
Yield per ha	1.5	4.28	4.3	4.5

2. Annual report

2.1. Background and planning of project

The Grain SA Farmer Development program has been running since the year 2005. The programme supports farmers mainly through training and mentorship through a network of trainers and mentors mainly based in the grain producing areas of South Africa. The objective is to empower and equip farmers to grow their yields.

Although access to secured commercial land for most rural communities is a challenge, most communities have access to at least 1 ha of arable, communal land. Grain SA recognises access to such land as an opportunity to support agricultural skills development, food production and food security with some opportunities for income generation for participating households. The Beyond Abundance project particularly focuses on the subsistence farmers. The principle of the programme is to support farmers to lead their own development. As such, the programme has the following components:

- The farmers have to make an own contribution of R4000/ha.
- The farmers take responsibility for the planting, management and selling of the crop (sustainable development)
- Farmers are supported through training and mentorship support in line with available funding.

The project brings together a number of collaborating partners to deliver and strengthen farmers through a support package with Industry partners such as Bayer, Kynoch, Villa Crop Protection, Sasol Base Chemicals, the Sasol Agricultural Trust and Maize Trust. The different partners have contributed in different ways including providing farming inputs at subsidised rates as well as directly funding different aspects of the programme such as mentorship, training and general programme management. Over the years the Beyond Abundance programme has demonstrated great successes including:

- Farmers have increased their household food security and nutrition;
- The number of participating farmers and area planted have increased annually since inception in 2017;
- Farmers have enjoyed increased yields – up to an 75% of commercial yields;
- The number of hectares planted and yields have increased each year;
- Farmers have also managed to raise household income by selling surplus produce; and

- The participating farmers have improved their farming skills through the training and mentorship support provided through the project.

The project is supported and facilitated by Grain SA Regional Coordinators based in areas such as Dundee, Kokstad, Louwsburg, Maclear, Mthatha and Nelspruit. Most farmers are located within driving distance from the Grain SA regional offices. Figure 1 presents a breakdown of the participating farmers by regional office as well as the number of hectares under production.

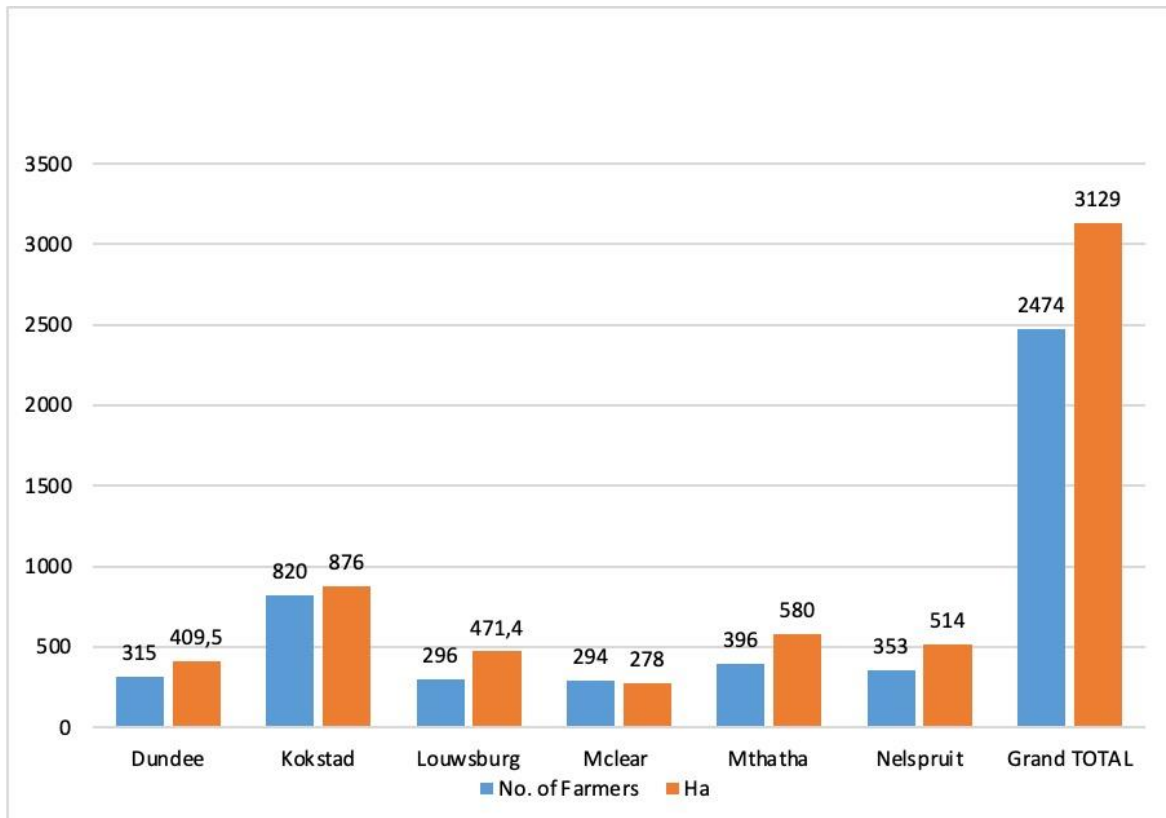


Figure 1: Number of producer involved per regional office for 2020/21

2.2. Project Progress

2.2.1. Kokstad, Mthatha and Maclear Regions

The season thus far has been a good one. The total area currently under production in the Kokstad, Mthatha and Maclear Regional Offices is 1744 hectares. The rains have been good, although in some cases there was too much rain which could result in some lower yields here and there due to not being able to spray as result of very wet conditions. The farmers have started a WhatsApp group which

assists to keep in constant communication with the Provincial Coordinator who provides technical support, especially due to limited face-to-face interactions due the Covid19 lockdown restrictions. Below are some highlights in photos (Figure 2, 3 and 4).



Figure 2: Mthatha with a total of 579 ha planted



Figure 3: Crop progress in Kokstad (888 ha) and training



Figure 4: Maclear with a total of 277 ha planted

The season this year has been great for some and indifferent for others. There have been great rains this year and most of the groups performed very well and harvested much the same as last year and in some areas even more than last year. However, in other areas they were let down with the contractors that they were using and planted late, or it was not planted or sprayed correctly. This reinforces the importance of the mentors and the assistance they can provide, there is just still quite a big gap with some of the farmers and the progress they need to still make. There is need to source more funding to provide more mentoring support for these farmers.

Good results were managed in Kokstad, Mthatha and Maclear. There are the normal issues that have arisen such as hail, stock damage and fire that have hampered the farmers. This year has had many deaths with Covid being so prevalent that some of the areas relied on remaining family members to continue the planting, spraying and harvesting. The farmers have been resilient though with some getting as much as R240 per 50Kg bag of maize. This equates to R4800 rand per ton. Overall, the season very well here in the Eastern Cape, where it has been poor it has been due to contractors and their reliability. Not due to Grain SA and our product or assistance.



Figure 5: An example of harvesting output in the Eastern Cape

2.2.2. Dundee Regional Office

A total of 315 farmers were involved with the BA project in KZN and planted 409,5 ha. These hectares constitute a total of 24 Grain SA study groups. Over the past 2 years, the Dundee office have supported over 1450 farmers. The crop progress evaluation has not been completed yet as the mentors are still in the field. Wet conditions, especially in the Okahlamba region prevented much of the initial crop progress assessments. There are a few farmers that did not plant due to a number of reasons including the loss of a family member, delays in mechanisation support expected from the Provincial Department of Agriculture or relocation for employment among other reasons. Some farmers have had damage due to waterlogging, or parts of their lands actually washing away. The majority of farmers however, have good crops so far. The farmers who have been participating since the inception of the programme are demonstrating better crop performance than the newer farmers who have received less mentoring support. This year the herbicides have been effective, although it is still found here and there that some farmers are not spraying timeously, and the incorrect calibration of spraying equipment remains a challenge for some. In the previous season, funds were limited which means there was a downscale in mentorship. Without more in-depth assistance with marketing (mentors usually assist), the famers' marketing of their maize was slower and therefore the return to the project was lower this year. The own contribution rate of R4000/ha is costly for most of the farmers in the Dundee region, with mentor assistance they used to be able to do monthly depositing from earlier in the year. With the heavy use of the lands, liming will become a critical input for some areas.



Figure 6: Dundee maize crop and farmers receiving inputs

This year proved difficult for the farmers, with covid their financial situation was strained to meet the R4000. Deliveries were earlier than normal, which really helped, but the heavy rains from Christmas to early January proved disastrous for some, especially those that planted later (there is a tradition among some to plant once families are back from work on the reef, thus only mid-December. Covid has hit quite a few of the farmer families with deaths. This impacts as it is usually a family effort to plant and maintain the crops. Those that applied timeously had very good weed control, resulting in the better yields The lower fertilizer application (as opposed to when was the JF) has resulted in slightly lower yields but some farmers are still getting 4 – 6 tonnes per ha which is more than adequate, and is also financially viable yield. The farmers are excited and miss the interaction of not being able to have more regular direct contact. More new farmers are still being attracted to the programme, these are finding it more difficult as the amount of support and training is not available, relying on their fellow farmers who have had more support is a slow process, but still well worth it.

2.2.3. Nelspruit Regional office (Mpumalanga and Limpopo)

The support provided by Grain SA's Nelspruit Regional Office includes farmers from Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. 119 farmer from Limpopo are participating with 235 ha under production. From Mpumalanga 240 farmers are participating with 279 ha planted. About 75% of farmers will have a good crop as compared to about 25% whose crop was badly affected by too much rainfall resulting in the washing away of nutrients and waterlogged soils. Fencing for some farmers was washed away by the heavy floods and as a result livestock was entering their arable lands and destroying their crops. In general the crop is looking good, some farmers will harvest more than 8 tons of maize per hectare. When planting their maize crop during the coming season, farmers will need to do soil corrections by applying Lime and sufficient amounts of fertilizers. See Figure 6 for the progress update in photos.



Figure 7: Delivery of fertilizer and progress of crop development

In Mpumalanga, Farmers have planted 279 ha. About 80% of the farmers have harvested their crop. The average yield that they have obtained was 4.5 tons/ha. The highest yield that they have obtained was 9 tons/ha. Two Women at Hereford West have harvested more than 8tons per hectare. A total of 10 farmers didn't plant because of various reasons, ranging from Covid 19 related problems. Some few farmers, about 6 have passed on because of Covid 19 related complications, some of them were disturbed by waterlogged soils because of the heavy rains that they have received. They were unable to go to their arable lands because of the bad roads accessing to their arable lands and as a result they got low yields, and some had total crop failure because of weed infestation and suffocation of the roots of their crop because of flooding of their arable lands.

In general farmers have performed well except for the Covid 19 related problems and the heavy rains that they have received which made some of them unable to have access to their arable lands to do weed control and scouting of insects, pests and diseases. The other problem which farmers have encountered was the shortage of market to sell their maize produce especially the yellow maize. Lothair Afgri Silo have told farmers that they wanted to take only white maize farmers should hold back their yellow maize until they tell them to take their maize to the silo again. According to them they were not having enough space to keep the yellow maize, they were interested only on white maize. They have started to take the yellow maize mid-August and farmers before they could take their maize to the Silo were supposed to phone first to find out if they could bring their maize to the silo or not. Attached hereto are some seasonal progression photos to-date in Mpumalanga.



Figure 8: Maize harvesting in Limpopo

- **Crop results**

The farmers are very happy with the program and have already deposited their funds for the new season.

The total hectares by all four (4) study groups were as follows:

- Matabane Co-op Study Group – 109 ha
- Makgukubjane Study Group – 24 ha
- Syferfontein Study Group – 23 ha
- Zaaiplaas Study Group – 82 ha

Total hectares planted = **240 ha**

The average yield per hectare:

- Matabane Co-op Study Group – 6 tons/ha
- Makgukubjane Study Group – 3 tons/ha
- Syferfontein Study Group – 3 tons/ha
- Zaaiplaas Study Group – 4 tons/ha

Highest yield obtained by farmers per study group:

- Matabane Co-op Study Group – 11 tons/ha
- Makgukubjane Study Group – 4.6 tons/ha
- Syferfontein Study Group – 6.4 tons/ha
- Zaaiplaas Study Group – 7.7 tons/ha

Total crop failure:

- Matabane Co-op Study Group – 2 ha
- Makgukubjane Study Group – 3 ha
- Syferfontein Study Group – 1 ha
- Zaaiplaas Study Group – 1 ha

Total hectares that were not planted:

- Makgukubjane Study Group – 1 ha
- Zaaiplaas Study Group – 1 ha

In general, the yields that were obtained by the farmers were average. It was not a good year for the farmers in Limpopo Province who planted maize. The first biggest problem that they encountered was the high rainfall they received early during the season and thereafter they had prolonged drought.

They were not able to control weeds adequately because they were not able to go to their lands because they were not easily accessible because of the heavy rains that they had received. Other problems that were encountered were;

- Infestation of termites
- Attack by striga weed (Mlilwane, Bori) this is a stubborn weed which is not easily controlled by most chemicals.

The other problem was the mechanization; most farmers have used defective planters that resulted in both high and low plant population and uneven application of fertilizer. Some of the farmers received tractors and farm implements very late during the season. The other big problem was the Lockdown and protocols for Covid 19 pandemic. Farmers were not able to go to their arable lands as they used to before when there were no restrictions and/or protocols for Covid 19 pandemic.

Most of the soils have a plough pan (soil compaction). Most of their soils are acidic;

Marketing of maize

- Most of their harvest was taken to AFGRI at Stofburg where it was stored. Some were storing the maize to exchange and get maize meal so that they can sell the maize meal. Some were selling their maize to AFGRI silo at Stofburg. Between 10% - 20% were selling their maize locally.

2.2.4. Louwsburg

The number of farmers participating in the Beyond Abundance project under the Dundee Regional Office dropped significantly in the current season mainly due to reasons related to the restricted physical interactions during the lock down which limited study group meetings with farmers. This season a total 295 farmers subscribed to the programme on a total of 471,4 hectares. The favourable climatic conditions with ample rain helped a lot towards the good maize crops with good expected yields for this season (see Figure 9). Weed control is very good and insect damage is minimal. Most of the maize have tasselled and looking very good. The farmers are very proud of their achievements and their beautiful maize to such an extent that most of the farmers have indicated interest in entering the Grain SA farmer of the year competition.

Unfortunately, there is always a few farmers that did not do proper weed control or did not follow advice. The performance of the farmers that have been involved in the programme for longer have learned more and their knowledge is greater than the farmers that joined at a later stage. This

evidently shows in the crop performance and emphasise the importance of mentorship. Having mentors will help a lot to assist these farmers during the growing season.



Figure 9: Louwsburg crop progress

The past season had mixed results with farmers complaining about too much rain and others had above average yields. Results depended largely on the type of soil and drainage. Some of my farmers were unable to spray their post emergence herbicide and without the mentors to assist things sometimes didn't go as planned. This was very evident with farmers that only joined the program in the past two years and didn't have the knowledge. Here Covid can be blamed with not being able to visit study groups.

On the positive side where farmers stuck to their knowledge and their program, very positive results were received. Overall the farmers had a very good season and their higher yields can attest to that. The amount of farmers joining the BA programme was also very positive as our office managed to increase the amount of farmers by 45%.



Figure 10: Seasonal progression photos in the Louwsburg regional office

3. Inputs and logistical support

A total of 3159 ha worth of input packs were delivered. There was however 30 ha of land that could not be planted due to different challenges experienced by farmers including Covid19 related deaths in some families and very wet and inaccessible land as well as delays in accessing mechanisation through the provincial departments of agriculture. Farmers each received following inputs per ha:

- 1 x 10 kg seed
- 3 x 50 kg bags 4:3:4 (40) planting fertiliser
- 2 x 50 kg bags 1:0:0 (40) top dressing fertiliser
- 1 pack chemicals that is specifically customised per ha

- **Logistics**

Inputs were delivered to the relevant study groups and the logistics were planned and coordinated by Grain SA Operations Manager, Ms Liana Stroebel. With the assistance of mentors the Grain SA regional coordinators managed deliveries at the drop off points with some mentorship assistance, but farmers were however fully responsible for collection at the said study group delivery points. This amounted to 117 delivery points.

4. Mentorship and training

Although there was initially no funding available for individual mentorship, Grain SA managed to obtain additional funding during the season to assist with mentorship. The Grain SA Provincial coordinators also coordinated the appropriate governance structures in terms of documentation and feedback. Mentorship assistance was therefore possible for input deliveries as well as to assist with a crop monitoring survey. Mentors were able to provide farmers with some guidance where possible during these visits. The importance and need for additional mentorship was confirmed during these farm visits.

- **Training**

The farmers within these projects also get additional benefits through the training courses provided. Below are some of the examples of training courses presented in Limpopo.

Table 3: Examples of training courses delivered in Limpopo

Name of course	Number of learners	Event date
Introduction to Maize Production	25	2021-05-17
Farming for profits	25	2021-04-19
Mechanization Management	26	2021-04-19
Tractor and Farm Implement Maintenance	22	2021-03-01



Figure 11: Training course pictures in Limpopo

Grain SA is happy to report that the contact sessions in the Limpopo Province went very well and was extremely valuable. All farmers indicated that the information was helpful, and that this assistance truly does have a significant impact on their production.

- ***Limpopo Mentorship***

In the current season only the government of Limpopo funded mentorship support costs for the farmers. Herewith is feedback on the Limpopo mentorship project that was aimed at Subsistence farmers that formed part of the Grain SA Beyond Abundance program. Contact sessions commenced on 14 February 2021. A total of 63 contact sessions took place in Limpopo including 902 attendees.

Table 4: Attendance report

Study Group	2021/08/26	Limpopo	9
Study Group	2021/08/25	Limpopo	22
Study Group	2021/08/25	limpopo	25
Study Group	2021/08/24	Limpopo	18
Study Group	2021/08/24	Limpopo	35
Study Group	2021/08/16	Limpopo	16
Study Group	2021/06/15	Limpopo	10
Study Group	2021/06/14	Limpopo	13
Study Group	2021/06/11	Limpopo	11
Study Group	2021/06/10	Limpopo	6
Study Group	2021/06/10	Limpopo	15
Study Group	2021/06/09	Limpopo	10
Study Group	2021/06/09	Limpopo	15
Study Group	2021/06/08	Limpopo	20
Study Group	2021/06/08	Limpopo	13
Study Group	2021/06/07	Limpopo	11
Study Group	2021/06/07	Limpopo	14
Study Group	2021/06/07	Limpopo	2
Study Group	2021/06/02	Limpopo	41
Study Group	2021/06/01	Limpopo	13
Study Group	2021/05/21	Limpopo	8
Study Group	2021/05/20	Limpopo	16
Study Group	2021/05/19	Limpopo	11
Study Group	2021/05/18	Limpopo	13
Study Group	2021/05/17	Limpopo	12
Study Group	2021/05/14	Limpopo	8
Study Group	2021/05/13	Limpopo	16
Study Group	2021/05/12	Limpopo	13
Study Group	2021/05/11	Limpopo	13
Study Group	2021/05/10	Limpopo	13
Study Group	2021/05/06	Limpopo	10
Study Group	2021/05/06	Limpopo	28

Study Group	2021/05/05	Limpopo	10
Study Group	2021/05/04	Limpopo	11
Study Group	2021/05/04	Limpopo	12
Study Group	2021/05/03	Limpopo	13
Study Group	2021/05/03	Limpopo	8
Study Group	2021/04/22	Limpopo	12
Study Group	2021/04/19	Limpopo	20
Study Group	2021/04/12	Limpopo	68
Study Group	2021/04/12	Limpopo	36
Study Group	2021/04/06	Limpopo	4
Study Group	2021/03/26	Limpopo	6
Study Group	2021/03/25	Limpopo	9
Study Group	2021/03/19	Limpopo	10
Study Group	2021/03/18	Limpopo	11
Study Group	2021/03/12	Limpopo	8
Study Group	2021/03/11	Limpopo	13
Study Group	2021/03/11	Limpopo	8
Study Group	2021/03/10	Limpopo	10
Study Group	2021/03/10	Limpopo	7
Study Group	2021/03/09	Limpopo	5
Study Group	2021/03/09	Limpopo	7
Study Group	2021/02/25	Limpopo	8
Study Group	2021/02/24	Limpopo	11
Study Group	2021/02/18	Limpopo	9
Study Group	2021/02/18	Limpopo	7
Study Group	2021/02/17	Limpopo	12
Study Group	2021/02/17	Limpopo	22
Study Group	2021/02/16	Limpopo	12
Study Group	2021/02/16	Limpopo	22
Study Group	2021/02/15	Limpopo	16
Study Group	2021/02/15	Limpopo	15
			902

5. Additional Projects adding to benefits

The farmers within this project generally also receives additional benefits that is provided through the study groups in terms of information transfer through study group meetings, training courses, demonstration days as well as access to the Pula Imvula magazine. Due to various restrictions this year, information was mainly shared telephonically, via WhatsApp and through the Pula Imvula magazine.

6. Conclusion

Despite Covid19 restrictions and many sad stories of deceased loved ones, most farmers braved the storm and participated in the Beyond Abundance project. Across all four Grain SA regions, the crop performance is very good. With the good rains, there has been a lot of farmers breaking yield records. The Farmers and Grain SA remains extremely grateful for the financial support received from the Maize Trust and trust that this relationship will continue for the sustained benefits of the farmers with a greater benefit for increased food security and nutrition. As highlighted in the report a total of 2474 farmers have been assisted to plant a total of 3129 ha of maize through the Beyond Abundance project. Grain SA is equally grateful to the other collaborating partners including, Villa Crop, Kynock, Pannar, Maize Trust and Corteva for making this project possible among the different collaborating partners.