



# SONOP NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2020

## NEWS OF THE MONTH

Sonop is very proud to announce that we have exported 22 Tons of Butternuts to the UK. It is our first vegetable container exported since 2005 to our international customers.



In the past, under the leadership of **Nico(Snr) and Marie van der Merwe**, we have exported butternut to the UK in carton bins that worked very well. Then we tried 10kg boxes for two years, but it was quite difficult with the sizing to get a perfect pallet packed on the exporting standards and specs.

Over years they have developed new genetics on the butternuts that helped us to produce a perfect size that is smaller with more weight. Through innovation on the production side with the butternuts, we manage to get the success in order to deliver high quality with great

productions. We increased our production with almost 40% that enables us to export again to the UK and to be more effective with logistic to move the kilograms needed.

This again is a big milestone for Sonop. **Naturesmart's** innovation leads us to a new marketing strategy with new opportunities for the future.

We want to congratulate the production team with the excellent quality of butternuts that they produced. Also, to the packhouse team for the huge effort to pack the 20 pallets for export standards.

*We hope the Queen of England will enjoys a fresh cup of healthy Sonop-butternut soup.*

Sonop is busy with the second butternut planting season. That will be harvested during the summer months.



*As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."*  
Genesis 8:22

### EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



Congratulations to  
**Tuhafeni Haimbodi**  
From the Packhouse Team  
Thank you for your hard work.  
We are very proud of you.

BIRTHDAYS-SEPTEMBER	
NIEKIE VAN DER MERWE	05 SEPT
KLEMENS NGOMA	06 SEPT
CAYLIN HOLTZHAUSEN	22 SEPT





By Chrispin Inambao NOORDOEWER AS part of an innovative crop diversification programme, grape farmer Nicolaas van der Merwe and his wife Marie notched a Namibian first when they exported their first butternut consignment to the United Kingdom (UK) and neighbouring South Africa.

Though this is the first yield for this couple that tills a fertile strip of land at Noordoewer along the Orange River, they exported 200 bins each laden with 600 kg of high-quality butternuts. Apart from the UK-bound consignment, they also exported a record 10 000 bags each weighing 10 kg to neighbouring South Africa where demand is high. Although the demand for butternuts on the local market is insignificant, they do not neglect the local market as they make provision and retain a tiny fraction of their produce for Namibia, according to Marie van der Merwe who manages the butternut farm.



An ecstatic Marie said this year's harvest was strictly on a pilot basis that was intended to test both domestic and foreign markets to ascertain how much of this produce could be absorbed by these markets. Meadowfresh, an agent selling farm produce in wholesale quantities, deals with the marketing aspect and sold some of the produce to large fruit and vegetable concerns operating in Durban and Cape Town. Though the first consignment of Namibian butternut was planted to "test" the market, Marie says the demand exceeded her anticipation because traditional butternut producers in South Africa had experienced a bad harvest due to various factors.

This year, she only allocated about 10 hectares but due to the high demand, she wants to increase the amount of hectares to between 15 and 20 during the next planting season so that she could meet her growing export quota. In terms of present logistics for the market in the UK the produce is initially transported to a port in neighbouring South Africa where it is eventually shipped overseas.

She says the produce ranges in size from 600 grams to the ones weighing between 1,5kg and 1,8kg. The several seasonal and permanent workers employed during the pilot phase earned N\$30 a day. Though their take-home pay is above the minimum in the Labour Act, they even pocketed more if they worked over weekends.

Butternut that could be used to prepare a variety of appetising meals is good for the body as it contains Vitamin C among a host of other nutrients. Marie, who told New Era she makes a variety of salads from butternuts and that they are also very tasty when stuffed with bacon, onions, among others, says butternuts are as good as carrots in terms of nutritional value.

Though their mainstay is grape production, the couple also runs a small dairy from a herd of several Holstein Friesian - a black and white cow bred for its milk. They also have a growing flock of geese that "clean" immaculate rows of grape vines.

[New Era Reporter](#)  
2005-12-19 00:00:00 | 14 years ago



**THANK YOU, Nico(Snr) and Marie,**  
**for the legacy you left for the new**  
**generation.**

**We at Sonop are proud to walk in**  
**your footsteps.**





## PROSPECT OF SEPTEMBER

With clear blue skies and warmer weather Sonop Farms is entering an exciting time of preparation for the upcoming grape season on the farm.

Good budbreak is visible on all our vines and we look forward to a prosperous season. If one look at the vineyards it reflects the passion with which each worker tackles his/her daily



tasks and it reminds us that when we enjoy what we do and have fun while doing it, we can achieve excellence.



**Arra 33—Topfruit variety**

### Preparation of new Block 28 for grapes

Preparation of the new block 28 is well under way and the Arra 33 should be planted by the end of September. Arra 33 is a new variety from the gumare genetics, and it is a early white variety that is in the same time as Early Sweet.

Sonop are very excited to see the beautiful big white seedless grapes in the future. This cultivar has the potential to replace Early Sweet in our slot to help us with higher volumes early in the grape season.



We are looking forward to the young tomato plants in Nethouse 3 & 4. These are scheduled to begin picking at the end of September.

This will be our first season where we pack all our products at once, in November and December.

## Fun Facts TOMATOES

**DID YOU KNOW?**



- Tomatoes are a fruit not a vegetable.
- 1 Tomato contain 35% of your daily Vitamin C.
- Tomatoes are high in fibre and contains nutrients that supports strong bones.



## Get to know...MILIAMA DAVID

**Name & Surname:** : Miriam David      **Place of birth:** Outapi  
**Favourite colour:** Navy Blue      **Your favourite Sonop produce:** Green Peper  
**When did you start working at Sonop:** 2015/03/13  
**What's your position at Sonop:** Supervisor  
**Who's your role model in the Sonop team:** Mev. Christelle vd Heever  
**Your wish for Sonop Farms:** To ensure that everyone is inspired by our excellent quality products that we deliver.  
**What motivates you?:** : To improve my living standard and to brighten the future of my family.

