

POB Empowers Small-Scale Farmers to Boost Potato Production



In May, a group of seven smallholder farmers celebrated a successful harvest after months of hard work. This dedicated group, based in Sekokong, Mokhotlong, planted 300 bags of potato seeds across 45.5 acres (18.2 hectares) with the support of the Crops and Livelihoods officers at Polihali.

The LHDA provided these farmers with essential resources, including potato seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, technical advice, and monitoring services throughout the cropping season. This comprehensive support enabled the farmers to expand production to meet market demands effectively.

The farmers have achieved notable success, selling their produce to the Senqu Bridge contractor WRES JV, local supermarkets, and individual customers. Efforts are underway to identify additional market opportunities. The income generated from these sales will help purchase seeds for future planting seasons. Assessments are ongoing to improve quality assurance and storage compliance for the upcoming season. Additionally, the farmers are receiving training in bookkeeping and general business management to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and scale up production.

Beyond potatoes, the LHDA is collaborating with other commodity groups to enhance variety of vegetable production. This initiative aims to meet household dietary needs and market demands. Inspired by the successful vegetable production at the Mojakisane demonstration site, similar projects are being piloted in Malingoaneng, Tsépong, and Tlokoeng. These new groups have planted a variety of vegetables under an irrigation scheme, including sixty thousand cabbage seedlings in the last cropping season.

The vegetable production initiative is part of the Phase II livelihoods programme, which focuses on sharing knowledge and skills to advance the vegetable production sector. By doing so, it aims to improve the resilience of rural livelihoods and foster sustainable agricultural practices in the region.

Through these efforts, the LHDA is not only empowering farmers to enhance their productivity but also contributing to the overall development and sustainability of the local agricultural sector. The success stories from Sekokong and beyond showcase the potential of small-scale farming to transform communities and improve livelihoods.