

**ELANDSKRAAL BALIMI IRRIGATION
SCHEME**

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SUBMISSIONS**TO****PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
LAND AFFAIRS****ON THE****GMO ACT****REPRESENTED BY****MPE PENWELL BENDANE****SECRETARY**

ELANDSKRAAL BALEMI IRRIGATION SCHEME

1. BACKGROUND REPORT

My name is Mpe Penwell Bendane, a small-scale farmer from Elandskraal Community. I am the secretary General of the scheme and have been involve in farming for the past six years

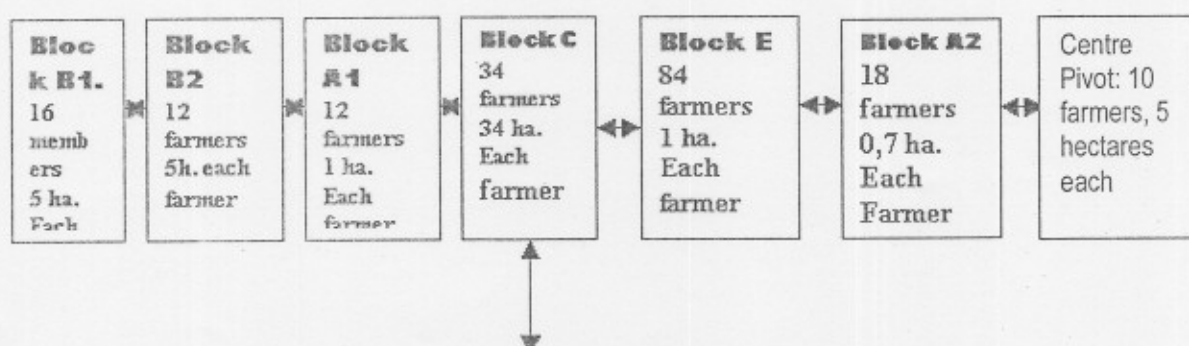
EBIS is the association of small-scale farmers from Elandskraal community. Elandskraal is located about 30 kms. North of Marble Hall.

The production programmes started in 2002 after the Department of public works granted the farmers 6.5 Million for infrastructural development. With this funding, the farmers managed to install electric water pumps, above and underground irrigation system.

The farmers now have building with offices, storage and pack houses

2. Membership and Activities

The irrigation area is divided into 7 blocks and farmers have been allocated farms according to their capacity.



Farmers grow maize, wheat, sunflower, cotton, and beans. These crops are all commercial crops and are the main source of income for Elandskraal community.

We also have a communal vegetable garden where each household grows there own vegetable for domestic consumption and sell .

The farmers are have currently located about 53 hacter for organic farming and will need to know the negative impacts of GMO on the organic production and marketing.

3. CONCERNS

3.1. LACK OF INFORMATION

We feel that the government is not giving them information on what the GMO's are and their positive or negative impacts on their farming practices, Health and environment. We are also not told by the seed companies about whether their seed are Highbred or GMO's

3.2. Lack of awareness and capacity building on policy

We feel that the Government is not building our capacity to understand how GMO policy and legislation affects us and how we can actively participation in these processes. We are concerned that we might be growing GM seed and products but are not made aware of the impacts on our farming practices and on our health.

We are concerned that the cost of farming is getting more and more expensive. New products like GMOs add to the high costs. This result in us small-scale farmers been in debt and loosing interest in Farming. Big seed and chemical companies charge lots of money for there products like seed, pesticides and fertilizers but when we go to the market to sell our products we have to be satisfied with low prices for cotton. We are caught in a trap and Government is not protecting us. We are tired of the get rich quick tricks that big companies come up with that only benefit themselves.

Contamination

We feel that GMO seeds will contaminate our local varieties, which will results in us, highly dependent on the seed company. Again Government must ensure that GMO seeds do not contaminate our indigenous seed. They must be kept separate and labelled and prevented from pollinating local plants. We need to know where GMOs are planted, what is being done to stop cross pollination and who will be held responsible for contamination and loss of our indigenous seeds.

Conclusion

We feel that the Government must protect our farming practices by providing subsidies to small-scale farmers, develop legislation that protects the interests of small-scale farmers, by promoting products that will benefit our people's health and the environment.