



THE FARMER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Silindile Zondi graduated from MUT with a Diploma in Agriculture: Plant Production in 2002. She knew from the onset that she was going to be a businesswoman, and agricultural farming was her main interest.

Silindile Zondi - Class of '99

She owns a 17-hectare establishment located in Port Shepstone called BBS Farm. "I was inspired by my grandmother at a very young age. She used to take me to the fields at KwaHlongwa, Umzumbe, when I was very young. She would also send me to Emfundeni, a communal agricultural plot in the area, to buy fruit and vegetables which were not available in her fields," remembers Silindile. BBS Farm delivers tons of macadamia nuts from about 3000 trees, as well as two types of tomatoes, to KZN supermarkets and provides work and income to 16 workers, mostly women. Silindile knew that turning a dream into a reality was going to need dedication and hard work. Soon after graduating in 2002, she upskilled herself in business management, co-operative management and leadership. Besides her wealth of knowledge acquired through formal training, Silindile gets advice from a number of professionals in the industry.

Her professional approach has seen Silindile and her business partners working with Hygrotech, which supplies them with seeds, and FilmFlex, which supplies them with chemicals, manure, seeds and advice. The 16 workers at BBS are also kept busy in the process of producing tomatoes as well as spinach, cabbage, beetroot, brinjal, cucumber, carrot, cooking herb and lettuce seedlings. "There is a possibility we might add another farm. We enjoy the effort required in order to make money," she said, adding that the hardships they have endured have made them even stronger.