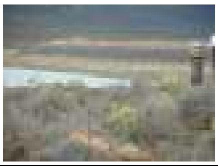
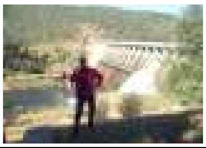
Volume 1 Issue 2 June 2006

Inside this issue:

Verbete stryd van Hantam Karoo na goeie gehalte water	3
Access to water denied in Nuwehoop 	4
Waterregte van Opkomende boere in die Matzikama 	5
Die Gonjemans Landbou Vereniging se stryd tot waterbronne	6
Kliprand se strewe na alternatiewe waterbronne	7
Managing Boreholes	7
Kortliks	8

Debate: The right to water...?

Land and water are important natural resources to address the increasing problem of poverty and stimulating rural economic development. The right to water is often a missing link in the debate on pro-poor agrarian reform. Access to water remains an important link particularly in the context of agricultural reform. The distribution of water across class, race and gender remains unequal. Maintaining a balance between water scarcities, redressing the unequal distribution of water and ensuring access to water for future generations, is one of the biggest challenges facing society. A further challenge remains for farm dwellers, emerging farmers and the landless in general to actively participate in the transformation process of water and agricultural reform.

Why Water Reform?

White commercial agriculture continues to remain the largest consumers of water, approximately 70% in South Africa. This is further compounded by the fact that land ownership patterns remains the same with less than 4% of agricultural land being redistributed. SPP's experience in the Western and Northern Cape shows that emerging farmers and farm dwellers continues to have a lack of access to land and water resources. We have to argue that access to water is first and foremost a right, rather than a commodity or service provided to the poor and landless. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) have put in place a policy framework for managing water resources.

The National Water Act seeks amongst other things to:

- Promote equitable access to water;
- Redress the results of past racial and gender discrimination;
- Promote the efficient, sustainable and beneficial use of water in the public interest;
- Establish suitable institutions to manage water resources and
- Ensure appropriate community, racial and gender representation.

Public participation in the management of water resources becomes essential and a constitutional obligation to ensure the efficient and sustainable use of the resource and provide for the equitable access to these water resources. In this regard Water User Associations (WUA), Catchment Management Agencies (CMA) and water forums are institutions that have been established to democratize the use and management of water as a critical resource. In practice these institutions have become another terrain of struggle composed of stakeholders with competing interests.

For example, while emerging farmers (as new entrants) want access to water and productive assets, white commercial farmers want additional water to expand their agricultural operation, already a major user of water in most of the areas. A few problems have been highlighted in practice:

- Representation on water management institutions does not mean effective participation.
- Participation of emerging farmers and farm dwellers are further constrained by limited knowledge, technical know how and lack of information.

This influence decision making at these institutions and the ability to confront existing power relations. In essence if we do not address these weaknesses real transformation and redistribution could just remain empty words. It is important to emphasize it is our right to participate and make decisions on how water should be managed in our areas. This can only improve through building organisation and through a process of political education to critically engage within this process.

Sustainable Agriculture Practices and the Right to Water

As emerging farmers and farm dwellers we have to develop alternative strategies for agrarian reform based on our daily struggles and the principles of human rights. The right to water should form a critical part of this strategy. This should include access to and control over water and other natural resources. Water reform should ensure that the rural poor and landless gain access to water, as provided in the constitution, and benefits from using water. While water reform is important, this has to be located within the broader framework of agrarian reform.

Studies by the School of Public Health, University of Cape Town and others have shown that the majority of commercial (chemical industrial) agricultural practices are responsible for the destruction and contamination of our water resources. It has shown that the use of pesticides is responsible for contamination of our ground and surface water, particularly canals, dams, boreholes and rivers. This contamination could have long-term health effects as well as deplete our soil and water.

Furthermore, we should also ensure that we expose unsustainable practices and also correct our own farming practices to effectively implement water conservation and demand management.

The struggle for agrarian reform should be broader than just access to land but should include agricultural and water reform to address the problems of rural poverty. It is only through organisation and our collective action that we can bring about transformation in rural areas and broader society.

Verbete stryd van Hantam Karoo na goeie gehalte water

Die mees belangrikste rede waarom mense van veilige, skoon water voorsien moet word, is om gesondheids-redes. Grondwater, 'n bron wat so baie vernalaat word, is 'n sleutelbron tot oorlewing, veral vir die mense van die Hantam Karoo, in die Noord Kaap Provinsie. Boorgate is die hoofbron van water in die Hantam Karoo area. Dit verskaf water aan al die dorpe, nedersettings en plaasskole, maar in baie gevalle, word grondwaterdieptes nie gereeld gemonitor nie. Hoeveel van die resultate na 'n Hidrogeoloog gestuur word vir ontleding, is egter nie bekend nie. Dit is ook onwaarskynlik dat werklike monitering op plase, nedersettings en plaasskole plaasvind. Min van die dorpe / nedersettings of skole gebruik water vanaf damme vir huishoudelike gebruik. Sommige dorpe in die gebied het wel 'n reeks gronddamme waarmee gepoog word om die grondwater mee aan te vul. Van die gronddamme word ook gebruik vir besproeiings doeleindes.

Water aanvraag bestuur/ water besparing

Alle nuwe wonings word voorsien van 'n watermeter en die watermeter word ten tye van installasie getoets. Onwettige konneksies word aangespreek indien dit bekend is dat water onwettig afgetap word. Sommige van die munisipaliteite beskik nie oor 'n vasgestelde Publieke Onderrig Program ten einde die Publiek bewus te maak van die voordeel van waterbesparing nie. Huidige watervoorsiening veral na die informele gebiede, (in sommige gevalle) vind tans plaas uit 'n pypstelsel van onvoldoende deursnitte. Hierdie stelsel veroorsaak lae drukke by huishoudings asook onvoldoende water tydens spits verbruikers periodes. In sekere gebiede is daar ook nog nie water op alle dele beskikbaar nie en inwoners moet water by gemeenskaplike staankrane bekom.

Water en landbou

Mense benodig water vir meer as net om te drink en te was. Aangesien die Hantam Karoo gebied oorwegend vir skaapboerdery geskik is, is die veldsituasie in sommige gebiede, veral in die Hantam redelik

kommerwekkend. Die bosse wat as voeding vir die diere dien, het tussen 30% en 40 % gevrek. Die dorpe hier ter sprake is veral Calvinia, Loeriesfontein, Sutherland en Nieuwoudtville..

Die ondergrondse watertafel het met ongeveer 30 meter gedaal. Die drakrag van veegetalle is vasgestel op 60% as gevolg van die droogte. Baie min natuurlike voeding is beskikbaar en sal verder agteruitgaan indien geen betekenisvolle reën verkry word nie. Dit het ook ‘n effek op die volhoubaarheid van die natuurlike bronne. Die winter reënval gebiede is in ‘n baie swak toestand en die moontlikheid van ‘n totale mislukking is nie uitgesluit nie, indien dieselfde reënvalpatroon voortduur gedurende die komende reënseisoen. Terwyl ons strewe na voedsel sekuriteit, is dit hartseer dat groente verbouing as eenaspek op hierdie stadium nie ‘n opsie is nie, as gevolg van die tekort aan water asook die swak watergehalte in die streek. Dit is dus ‘n groot uitdaging vir almal van ons om kreatief te dink aan alternatiewe om hierdie kosbare hulpbron volhoubaar te benut!

Access to water denied in Nuwehoop

The farm Nuwehoop is situated between Klawer and Vredendal in the Matzikama municipal region of the West Coast. It is surrounded by prospering wine farms, and used to produce fine table and export grapes in the 80’s and early 90’s. Subsequent to the death of the original owner, the farm was sold to a Family Trust.

Farm workers were allowed to stay on the farm but had to seek employment on neighboring farms as the farmer had bought the farm only for the water rights and with no intension of developing it further. The relationship between the occupants and the new owner was never good. The farmer rented the farmhouse to a white family who denied occupants access to water for household purposes by putting barbed wire fencing around tanks and keeping guard dogs in the vicinity of the house. Every time the canal “stood still”, intervention had to take place and the local municipality had to provide people with tanks of water for their households. Knowingly violating the right of access to clean water, the farmer did not react on the plea of people.

The occupants made their desire to buy the farm, known to the farmer and he indicated his willingness to pursue this offer. Together with SPP, the 30 occupants made an offer to the farmer in a letter during February 2005. The farmer, through his lawyer, responded that he would be willing to sell the farm but would want to retain the water rights on the farm.

The portfolio committee for Water Affairs and Forestry visited the farm during 2004. Parliamentarians did site visits on certain farms and were the guests of the Matzikama Municipality. Nuwehoop was highlighted as a serious case in terms of people’s access to water. The

farmer denied the Portfolio Committee access to his property, refused to respond to the questions posed and rudely asked the group to leave. The subsequent report from the committee clearly stated the issues as a violation of basic human rights and the issue was discussed in Parliament. No follow-up action has been proposed to SPP or the Matzikama Municipality.

The group approached LORWUA (Lower Olifantsriver Water User's Association) and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry for help. Mr Johan Matthee (LORWUA) paid the farmer a visit to discuss the terms of his water rights on the farm. The report of Mr Matthee placed the group in a catch 22 situation. The farmer had the right to water on the farm and could not sell the farm without the water. He could then easily say that the farm was not for sale. He also said to LORWUA and the group that if they could offer him alternative access to sufficient water for his other farms, he would consider it. LORWUA had no other options to offer as all the water in area was allocated.

The case of Nuwehoop is not unique in the West Coast but did not receive enough attention from the different government institutions involved. The case further highlights how vulnerable groups (like farm dwellers) rights to access to water are violated without intervention by the state.

Waterregte van Opkomende boere in die Matzikama

Die Matzikama Opkomende boere forum is 'n liggaam wat bestaan uit verteenwoordiging van twelve opkomende boere verenigings in die Matzikama munisipale area. Soos enige ander gebruiker, is dit die begeerte van opkomende boere om aan soek te doen vir waterregte. Al die water in die kanaal is reeds toegeken. Opkomende boere het tans geen regte op water nie. Die forum geniet verteenwoordiging op LORWUA (Laer Olifantsrivier Watergebruikersvereniging) en ondersoek moontlikhede om water aan te koop vir opkomende boere. Huidiglik het LORWUA slegs 7ha water vir opkomende boere. Die forum moet dus 'n behoeftebepaling doen in die volgende orde van belangrikheid:

Institusioneel: Die forum maak tans deel uit van die besluitnemende raad. By alle vergaderings word daar verslag gedoen oor die vordering van die forum en individuele projekte in terme van watergebruik en toegang tot bronne

word na opleiding, fondse en waterregte van opkomende boere.

Opkomende boere is reeds vir die afgelope paar jaar aktief betrokke by verskillende water forums, projekte en die

Bestuurs instansies: Die forum moet 'n meer prominente rol speel en met verskillende rolspelers soos Departement Waterwese en Bosbou saamwerk. Daar moet ook in diepte gekyk verwysings groep van die opvangs bestuursgebied stigting (CMA). Verskillende projekte en inisiatiewe is geloods deur hierdie program. Een van hierdie is die Vanrhynsdorp Opkomende

Boere projek wat beoog om afval (sewerage) water te toets vir 'nuwe "micro-flood" besproeingstelsels om lusern vir voer aan te plant. Die projek vind plaas deur die Nama Karoo Waterforum. 'n Vennootskap tussen die Matzikama Munisipaliteit, en die Weskaap Landbou Departement was gevorm om ondersteuning te verleen.

Opkomende boere projekte in die Matzikama maak meestal gebruik van munisipale water wat baie duur is. Boere kan nie altyd bekostig om rekeninge te betaal nie en moet ook ekstra versigtig te werk gaan met die water wat hulle wel het. Besproeingsmoontlikhede is iets wat Opkomende boere nie eens huidiglik oorweeg nie, omdat daar eenvoudig nie genoeg water is nie.

Die Departement van Waterwese en Bosbou, in samewerking met Setplan het in 2004, 'n "roadshow" gehou in al die dorpe langs die Olifantsrivier. Opkomende boere was genooi om deel te neem aan die besprekings en aanbevelings aangaande die ligging van die Clanwilliam dam. By hierdie vergaderings was opkomende boere aangeleenthede oorskadu deur die behoeftes en probleme wat kommersiële boere ondervind.

Die Departement van Waterwese het hul weereens verbind om voorsiening te maak vir Opkomende boere op die agenda van die departement. Opkomende boere word steeds telkemale genooi na verwysingsgroep vergaderings, werkswinkels en besprekings, maar die realiteit vir die opkomende boere is dat hulle nie op die stadium kan kompeteer met georganiseerde landbou in die stryd vir water nie.

Die Matzikama is geleë in 'n baie droë deel van die land en baie van die inwoners het groot aspirasies vir landbou. Ongelukkig het al die bronne in die verlede aan 'n sekere groep behoort en die konsep van gelyke toegang vir al die mense is nog nie op die horison vir opkomende boere nie.

Die Gonjemans Landbou Vereniging se styd tot waterbronne

Sedert 2003 het ons toenemend aandag geskenk aan die ontwikkeling van hierdie vereniging. Sames prekings was met PPC De Hoek, Bergrivier Munisipaliteit, Landbou vereniging, Lionsklub en SPP gehou om die projek aan die gang te kry. Ons bedien 'n gemeenskap van agtergeblewenes en die lede wat betrokke is, is vir etlike jare al werkloos en sien reikhalsend uit na die aanvang van die projek. Aanvanklik het PPC De Hoek beloof om te sorg vir die boor van water wat ons broodnodig het. Die maats kappy het dienooreenkomstig die gate vir water laat boor, maar het nie sy weg oopgesien om die broodnodige pompe daarvoor te in-

stalleer nie.

Samesprekings is met alle rolspelers gehou om die ontwikkeling van ons program te bespoedig. Ons is innig dankbaar vir die hulp wat ons tot dusver van die Department van Landbou en PPC De Hoek ontvang het.

Die voortdurende ondersteuning van SPP is vir ons 'n riem onder die hart, want sonder hulle hulp sou ons lank reeds in 'n doodloopstraat beland het.

Ons grootste kopseer is egter die installering van die pompe om die projek van water te voorsien wat uiters noodsaaklik is vir 'n lewensvatbare landbou ontwikkelingsprogram.

Die installering van die pompe moet so spoedig moontlik gedien word ten einde ons vertrou in die projek te behou.

Kliprand se strewe na alternatiewe waterbronne

Kliprand Opkomende Boerevereniging werk al sedert die begin van 2005 in vennootskap met SPP en ander rolspelers ten einde 'n vooruitstrewende vereniging te vestig. Sedertdien het ons al heelwat vordering gemaak, maar tog is daar probleme wat ontwikkeling strem, ten einde ons gemeenskap deur veeboerdery, sosiaal en ekonomies op te hef. In hierdie geval blyk water een van die grootste probleme te wees. Huidiglik is die stand van water in Kliprand net genoeg vir huishoudelike gebruik. Dit plaas ons as opkomende boere in 'n moeilike situasie aangesien die gemeenskap se water behoeftes prioriteit is. Aangesien ons opkomend is en oor geen grond beskik nie, maak ons huidiglik op munisipale water-bronne staat. Die WKDM munisipaliteit is tans besig om water-opsies te ondersoek. 'n Moontlike waterbron is reeds geidentifiseer, en volgens die munisipaliteit behoort dit die watertekort gedeeltelik aan te spreek. Ons as Kliprand opkomende boere is positief dat die munisipaliteit nog waterbronne in die toekoms sal identiseer.

Bestuur van Grondwater (Boorgat)

Grondwater is 'n belangrike hulpbron vir die landbousektor. In baie gebiede is grondwater die enigste bron van water. Boere is afhanklik van grondwater vir besproeiing en drinkwater. Dit is belangrik om te weet dat grondwater kan besoedel word deur stowwe wat as 'n vloeistof voorkom (olie), nitraat en bakteireë. Die besoedelingstowwe kan die grondwater bron besoedel as dit in groot konsentrasies voorkom dat die water ongeskik is vir gebruik.

Voordbeelde van goeie Landbou praktyke sluit in:

- Doeltreffende besproeiing en kunsmis skedulering om by gewas behoeftes aan te pas en vermorsing tot die minimum te beperk
- Vermy onbedekte grond en gebruik dekgewasse
- Instandhouding van onddeurdringbare voering onder kraaloppervlakte
- Meet grondwatervlakke en gehalte gereeld om enige verandering waar te neem.

Kortliks

Plaasbewoners sê genoeg is genoeg!

Op 13 June 2006 het die Landless People Movement (LPM) en plaasbewoners van Impendle in KwaZulu-Natal, die kantore van die streeks Grond Eise Kommissie beset. Dit het gebeur nadat daar versoek was on 'n vergaderig met die kommissie te belê. Die besetting deur die plaasbewoners het deur die nag plaasgevind. Die plaasbewoners voel dat hulle nie geken word in die Grond Eise proses nie alhoewel hulle Eise geloods het. Die plaasbewoners moet altyd aan die agterspeen trek van die huidige grond hervormings proses. SPP ondersteun die LPM en plaasbewoners in hul stryd om die regte van plaasbewoners te versterk en toegang tot grond te verseker.

Jonkershoek march

SPP together with farm dwellers from West Coast, Citrusdal participated in a march that was organised to support the struggle of farmdwellers facing evictions in Jonkershoek on 1st April 2006.

Training workshops

Local government workshop were held in Calvinia, West Coast and Namaqualand. This workshop was hosted by SPP and GAP (Gender Advocacy Programme).
A 5-day organic farming training course was held at the Goedgedacht Agricultural Training Centre in Malmesbury (from 3-7 April 2006). Community members from Nababeep, Garies, West Coast and a member of the Nababeep Advice Office attended. The purpose of the course was to provide both theoretical and practical training in vegetable production.

Seminar

SPP has launched a quarterly seminar series, a forum where we can stimulate debate and contribute towards the development of an alternative agrarian reform framework. It is a space where alternative voices to the dominant paradigm can share their views.

The first seminar focused on the theme “Revisiting the Agrarian Question”. This time around Dr Peter Jacobs, an activist and an economist would share his views on the topic “Agrarian reform and rural poverty: a review of mainstream assumption”. The seminar will be held at Community House in Salt river on the 28 June 2006 at 17h30.

Surplus People Project

Kaapstad Kantoor:
Collingwood Weg 45, Observatory
Posbus 468, Athlone, 7760
Tel: +27 21 448 5605
Faks: +27 21 448 0105
E-pos: vuyokazi@spp.org.za

SPP Calvinia: Posbus 228, Calvinia, 8190
Tel: +27 273 411 753
Faks: +27 341 2548
E-pos: pedro@calvinia.spp.org.za

SPP Namakwaland
Posbus 669, Springbok, 8240
Tel: +27 2771 81370
Faks: +27 2771 81302
E-pos: edith@springbok.spp.org.za

Acknowledgements

A special thanks goes to the following persons for their contributions to the newsletter:-

Jan Fortuin - Chairperson of the Matzikama Emerging Farmers Association

Jaco Stuurman - Secretary of the Kliprand Emerging Farmers Association

P. D Esau - Chairperson of the Gonjemans Landbou Vereniging

Bestuur van Grondwater (Boorgat) on page 7 have been taken from the Water Research Commission booklet titled, Handleiding vir boere: Die beskerming van grondwatergehalte

Please watch **Living Land** on SABC 2, 10H30 on Saturdays. This programme aims to assist in developing a sustainable agricultural industry by sharing valuable information with the public. It addresses land reform and agriBEE issues and solutions. Commercial and emerging successful black farming operations are profiled. Viewers questions and comments are welcomed■