

## **Empowerment of Women through Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) in Gauteng Province, South Africa**

Edward Nesamvuni<sup>1</sup>, Sylvester Mpandeli<sup>2,3</sup>, Khathutshelo Tshikolomo<sup>4,5</sup> and Frans Swanepoel<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Office of the Academic Registrar, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 0950, South Africa*

<sup>2</sup>*University of Venda, School of Environmental Sciences, Department of Geography and Geo-Information Sciences, Private Bag X 5050, Thohoyandou, South Africa*

<sup>3</sup>*Water Research Commission of South Africa, Gezina, 0031, South Africa*

<sup>4</sup>*College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, University of South Africa, Johannesburg, 1710, South Africa*

<sup>5</sup>*Limpopo Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, Polokwane, 0700, South Africa*

<sup>6</sup>*African Doctoral Academy, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch, 7600, South Africa*

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**ABSTRACT** A desktop study coupled with first phase of farmer survey (43 farmers) was conducted in all municipalities of Gauteng Province. A desktop audit of empowerment initiatives in the four sub-sectors (field crops, horticulture, animal products, and industrial products) in the province was conducted. Data collected on infrastructural support indicates that the number of women funded through CASP increased steadily from 20 in 2004/2005 financial year to 102 in 2011/2012 financial year. The results further show that for the past six financial years except for financial year 2008/2009 at least 341 women or female farmers were supported through CASP compared to at least 229 male farmers. The highest number of women farmers funded were in poultry (163) followed by that in horticulture (81), animal production (63) and then field crops (24). There seems to be a trend to support women and small-scale farmers in the intensive production systems such as poultry and horticulture through vegetable tunnels. The fact that the majority of farmers receiving support from the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) were females is not surprising, similar results were also reported in provinces such as Limpopo, North West and KwaZulu - Natal. The budget associated with women also grew from about 1.8 million rands in 2004/2005 to just above 42 million rands in 2011/2012 financial year. Poultry was allocated a higher budget than any other farming infrastructure with over 19 million rands allocated. The largest number of farms funded through CASP were based in Sedibeng (172 farms), followed by City of Tshwane (158), then Westrand (61). The Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Cities were the bottom two with 33 and 38 farms, respectively.