

AGRI PROBE

Vol 14 | No 2 | 2017

ISSN: 1810-9799



**From apples
of the valley
to fruits of
the world**

**The future of
agriculture:
West Coast
Agricultural
Feedback
Summit 2017**

**Oudtshoorn-
navorsingsplaas
Inligtingsdag & broeivolstruisveiling**



Murraysburg “leiwater” system refurbished

by André Roux



Murraysburg is a town of approximately 5 000 people situated in the far northeast of the Western Cape province. It is governed as part of the Beaufort West Local Municipality within the Central Karoo District Municipality.

History

The “leiwater” (irrigation) infrastructure was the lifeline of the community of Murraysburg for more than a century (since 1886) and provided water to many home gardens in the town. This resulted in food production (vegetables and fruit) and also provided job opportunities for the local inhabitants of Murraysburg. The 1988 flood damaged the intake structure in the Buffels River and since the then local authority decided not to repair the weir, the system fell into disuse. The result was that little vegetables or fruit were produced locally and all needed to be imported from as far as Port Elizabeth, with the associated high price the poor local people cannot afford. Significant job losses also took place with few opportunities for other jobs in the area, apart from the few jobs on the nearby farms.

Boreholes provided a small volume of water to the “leiwater” system that was not sufficient for the demand and at a high operational cost, which was not sustainable. The then Murraysburg Environmental Forum, representing all the town’s inhabitants, requested assistance from the »



André Roux

department with the rehabilitation of the “leiwater” system as the local Beaufort West municipality did not have the funds.

Murraysburg is one of the development nodes in our province and the rehabilitation of the “leiwater” system could contribute significantly to the development of the town.

The funding was made available through reprioritisation of our departmental budget. Staff from the department’s Sustainable Resource Management programme did the survey and compiled the tender documents

after which Casidra called for tenders for the first phase refurbishment of the weir, canal, storage dams in town (the so-called Rooddamme) and the associated water infrastructure equipment. The tender was awarded to a local contractor, Vastrap Grondverskuiwings BK, and the refurbishment started in September 2016.

Casidra acted as implementing agent for the project with Chris Barr of the Murraysburg Environmental Forum, transformed into the Murraysburg Sustainable Development Council, acting as the eyes on the ground for the project.

The project was completed in late November 2016 and the first water was transferred into the now one storage dam, with a bird haven island in the middle. Good



◀ The irrigation (“leiwater”) infrastructure was damaged by the 1988 flood.



▶ The refurbished weir, canal and storage dams in town, the so-called Rooddamme.



The weir in the Buffels River with the canal taking water to Murraysburg.

rain in the catchment area of the Buffels River during January 2017 resulted in the emotional first filling of the storage dam in more than 29 years, to the delight of the whole community.

Benefits of refurbishing the system

For a relative small amount of R1.5 million many benefits will accrue to all stakeholders in the town, including:

- a. The re-instatement of a reliable water supply to the original “nat erwe” in the town. This will result in the creation of many jobs in town and the production of fruit and vegetables at an affordable price for the community.
- b. The re-instatement of a reliable water supply to the original “saailande” on the north-eastern boundary of the town. Once again jobs will be created and fodder can be produced for the animals of the community.
- c. The creation of one or more recreational areas for all residents in the town.
- d. The beautification of the town through:
 - i. a constant water supply to the remaining trees in the town streets,
 - ii. re-instatement of a visually attractive natural feature at the eastern entrance to the town, and

- iii. availability of water to sustain new projects to replace trees and other forms of flora in the public spaces in the main thoroughfares of the old town.
- e. This initiative will ultimately lead to new direct outside investment into the town, which will in turn result in an improvement in the quality and value of the town’s revenue base.

Way forward

The “leivore” (irrigation canals) in town will now be refurbished by making use of local unemployed people to ensure that fruit and vegetables can be grown locally again, after “importing” it from Port Elizabeth at astronomic prices for many years.

The result of the department’s dedicated efforts and relatively small amount of money is job creation to the locals and fresh fruit and vegetables being available to the community. **AP**



For more information, contact **André Roux:** andrerr@elseburg.com

AGRI PROBE

Is a quarterly magazine, distributed to subscribers at no charge by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture.

Subscription

For free subscription to this quarterly magazine, please submit your details to Magrieta de Lange.
Tel: 021 808 7613 | Fax: 021 808 7605
Email: magrietadl@elsenburg.com

Contact us

Western Cape Department of Agriculture
Tel: 021 808 5111
Email: info@elsenburg.com
Web: www.elsenburg.com

Printing

CTP Printers (Cape Town)
Tel: 021 929 6200

Packaging

Stellenbosch Work Centre for Adults
with Disabilities
Tel: 021 887 8688
Email: pmwill@sun.ac.za

You can also read your copy online and subscribe at www.elsenburg.com/resource-library/agriprobe



Don't forget to tune into Radio Elsenburg every Friday morning at 04:45 and Elsenburg Forum on Saturdays at 11:45 on RSG. Listen to the highly informative programmes on the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Sector in general. If you miss it on the radio, you can also listen to the programmes of the week on www.elsenburg.com/resource-library/radio-elsenburg



**Western Cape
Government**

Agriculture

ISSN: 1810-9799