

Training

Fun literacy programme teaches feedlot workers to read and write in 80 hours

CATTLE farmer Spencer Watson managed to help 35 of the workers on his Bronkhorstspruit feedlot to read and write in 80 hours this year, thanks to a fun-based literacy programme.

Literati, a basic-literacy programme that builds on learners' existing knowledge, was developed by adult educator Theuns Horne. Horne says the reason for his programme's success is that it differs from formal school-type training in that it is fun, quick and cost effective. Based on a board game, which uses dice and cards to teach the basic sounds and letters, Literati builds on learners' existing mother-tongue skills.

Watson said it was clear the programme succeeded because it was able to hold his workers' attention and interest over the six months in which it operated. For four hours a week (two sessions of two hours each) the

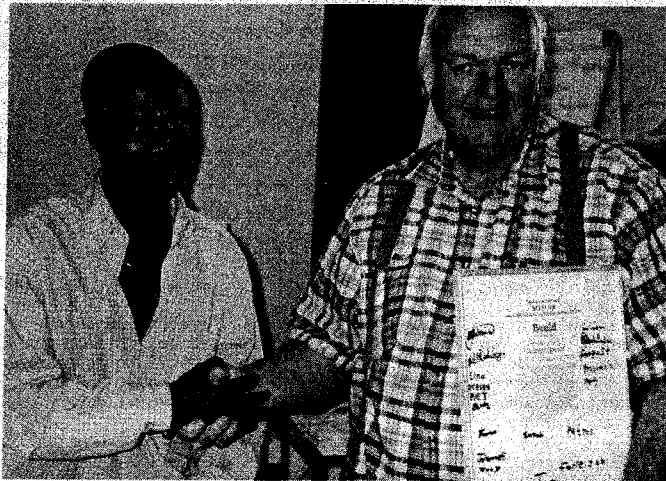
Beefkor workers were able to progress to the point where they could (albeit slowly) read and write in their mother tongue.

At a hand-over ceremony at the end of the programme, the workers were excited to each receive a copy of the bible in Zulu as well as their certificates. The workers said one of their goals in learning to read was to be able to read the bible.

Horne says his programme succeeds in a relatively short space of time because it builds on the existing language skills of the learners. "We find adults generally have better listening skills, better vocabulary than younger learners as well as an understanding of how language functions," he says. "They have an understanding of syntax, they have better memories and they also bring important life



Johannes Masombuku, Jan Mahlangu and Sara Masemula of the Beefkor feedlot near Bronkhorstspruit enjoyed learning to read and write with the fun-based Literati programme.



General manager of Beefkor feedlot, Spencer Watson, receives a framed newspaper article praising Beefkor's successful literacy campaign from Beefkor worker John Nkabinde, one of the facilitators of the course.

skills to the learning situation." By contrast, a recent study showed that many children were unable to read and write after four years of schooling.

Watson said he was happy to be able to give such a big present to his workers and regarded it as vitally important that all workers operating in the modern, sophisticated cattle industry be able to read and write. "It's important not only for safety in the workplace but also for their own development," he said. "We regard it as our contribution to help empower them." — Peter Farlam

To enquire about the Literati programme contact Theuns Horne at (011) 869 2414 (telephone) or (011) 907 1887 (fax).