

# Hijackings disrupt health service delivery

Thando Ndlovu

THE increase of car hijackings in rural areas is causing concern and officials of the KZN Department of Health are demanding action.

The hijacking of government vehicles is especially rife in the Dondotha Reserve.

The problem was highlighted by the King Cetshwayo District's Department of Health Communication Officer, Sibongiseni Manqele.

'Two weeks ago one of our drivers of the eNseleni Community Health Centre

who was transporting nurses to Dondotha, was attacked by three gunmen. They demanded the car keys and cellphones.

'Our officials are not safe. We plead with community members to assist us in discharging our duties without any interruptions.

'It is our duty to deliver health services to our communities, but that responsibility is now under threat.

'The sad reality is that most of these criminals are known in the community, but they are not being exposed or reported to the police.'

# Stock theft suspect sought at Nquku

Larry Bentley

THE Nqutu Stock Theft Unit is appealing to Mncedisi Richard Buthelezi to hand himself over to the police as a warrant of arrest has been issued regarding a stock theft case at Kingsley.

Community members may also assist by providing information about his whereabouts.

The case relates to an incident in June 2016 when 21 sheep were taken from the grazing camp at De Rust farm in Kingsley.

Anyone with information can contact Detective Captain Mbongiseni Mtshali on 082 5577659 or the SAPS Crime Stop number 08600 10111.



Mncedisi Richard Buthelezi who is being sought by the Nquthu police

# Rural development NPO takes agriculture seriously

Muzi Zincume

SOUTH African youth tend to view the agricultural sector as an 'old persons' domain.

Subsequently most of them relocate to urban areas to seek employment.

But faced with high unemployment rates in KZN, government has identified agriculture as a key sector for job creation.

Non-profit rural development organisation Siyazisiza Trust's spokesperson, Ilene Abrams, says both government and experts have identified the potential of agro-processing to create jobs and enhance food security.

'As an organisation we are assisting marginalised and vulnerable rural communities with food security and agricultural enterprise development, and we have recently established an agro processing facility in Empangeni.

'In KZN we are currently assisting a group of ambitious young black entrepreneurs who have organised themselves into a registered company called Mindbrain.717.

We provide training and mentoring with the ultimate aim of guiding this group to self-sustainability.

'Mindbrain.717 explored numerous business concepts, but as is the case with many emerging SMEs in South Africa, experienced great difficulty in securing the necessary capital and support to take their ideas to scale,' said Abrams.

She explained that upon



Grain puffing trainees Celimpilo Thusi and Brain Phungula

learning of the business potential of agro processing through the trust and based on market research, these entrepreneurs were enthusiastic to pursue this business opportunity.

'With the aid of donor funding, the Siyazisiza Trust secured the business premises and procured all the necessary start-up equipment and inputs for the operation, which currently focuses on production and sale of puffed ancient grains such as sorghum, millet, grain amaranth, buckwheat and pearl barley.

'Besides being indigenous and traditional, these grains have historically played an important role in ensuring community and household food and nutrition security and are known for being extremely drought resistant.

'As a result, the trust is also promoting the cultivation of these grains by its supported small-scale farming collectives.

'An extensive market engagement by the Siyazisiza Trust has also revealed opportunities and a growing demand for the supply of ancient grains into more formal markets, particularly within the health food and cereals sectors.

'This agro-processing business venture will not only create direct sustainable job opportunities for at least three youth and small-scale farming collectives growing ancient grains, but it will also showcase the potential of agriculture and agro processing to budding entrepreneurial youth in the KwaZulu-Natal region,' said Abrams.

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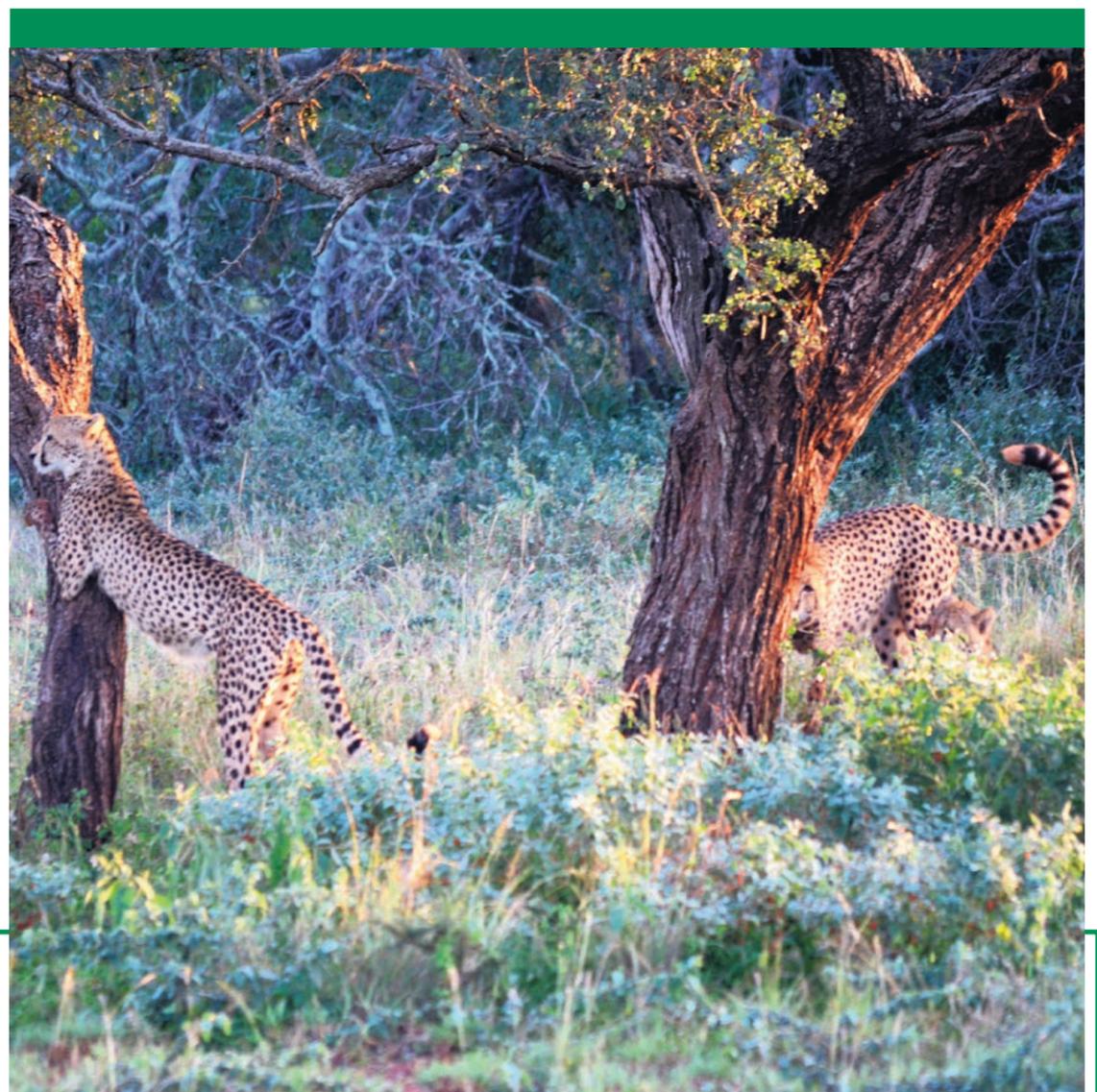
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## Surveying their turf

A pair of cheetah photographed by Bheki Njoko in the Mkhuze section of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park