



Nyadzani Rerani convinced his father to hang on to his land and that has seen him fulfil a dream. / SUPPLIED

Farmer sowing seeds of progress

Rerani thrives after weathering storm

When Nyadzani Rerani completed his degree in nature conservation six years ago, the idea of working for someone else was furthest from his mind.

Instead, the 28-year-old wanted to be an entrepreneur venturing into the business of farming in the rural village of Maluma, outside Thohoyandou, in Limpopo.

His dream was further encouraged when he started to visit a 250ha farm that belonged to his friend's father in Nwanedi village, which opened his mind to how exciting farming could be.

Rerani said at the time his father had 15ha of land that was scheduled to be sold.

"I pleaded with my father not to sell our land, situated in Ha-Mphaila, because I had plans to farm it."

Rerani's first stint in farming was planting mustard spinach on a half-hectare patch of land. From this harvest he saved every cent so he could grow the business. He decided to plant butternut on a 1ha piece of land.

"In the following season I

decided to plant the butternut on two hectares and was able to hire one person to assist me with harvesting. I was already seeing myself as a commercial farmer and I worked very hard," he said.

But a hailstorm damaged everything on his farm. However, this did not discourage him. He registered his company in 2016 with the help of the Small Enterprise Development Agency while the National Youth Development Agency helped him with a business plan.

Rerani now employs 18 permanent workers, 14 of whom are young people, but he also employs as many as 90 seasonal workers.

"The government has assisted me with 10 workers through the EPWP [Expanded Public Works Programme] and I also have an intake of 11 learners from TVET colleges who are doing experiential learning on my farm."

He has leased an additional 8ha of land where he is planting gem squash, pepperdews, chillies, tomatoes, green beans and butternut. He supplies major retail shops around the district of Vhembe and exports his tomatoes to Mozambique. – GCIS Vukuzenzele