“My love for farming was under threat from limited land resources, but after observing an overwhelming demand for pork in Botswana and realising that a lot of available supplies were imported, the idea to establish my own pig farm took root”.

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“I have always had a passion for farming, but the decision to focus on pigs was really a question of land”

Promoter’s Profile

Udo Kebadiri Hahn was born in 1980 and grew up in Ramotswa in the South East District of Botswana. He has also spent some reasonable period of time in Gaborone during his childhood. Married with a son, Udo grew up in a big family of 7 children and currently has a Diploma in Computer Programming. Before venturing into the piggery business, Udo as he prefers to be called had never ran his own business except two partnerships he tried with some friends but never materialized. Prior to running his own business, Udo was working for a construction company but quit to pursue his own dream of being self-employed.

He then started an event management company called Empire Synergy (Pty) Ltd with a friend but soon realized it was not working and parted ways with the friend before venturing into farming with yet another partner in 2006. However, they both realized over time that they did not necessarily share the same vision and have since parted ways as business partners. Despite the disappointment in his voice when speaking of the unsuccessful partnerships he still believes in working with other players in the piggery industry to take it to greater heights as well as enlisting as a member of the South East Piggery Association.
“Everyday is a challenge, piggery is simple but needs good management, the right workers with the right attitudes”

About the Farm

Massy Holding (Pty) Ltd which is in the process of name change to Kebadiri Farming (Pty) Ltd is the name of the company under which the piggery business operates. The change in name is a result of the unsuccessful partnership as already alluded. For now Massy Holding’s focus is on piggery production which started in 2007 but there are future plans to venture into horticulture as part of the integrated farming approach as a supplementary business to offer some financial support during dry piggery farming periods. Inspiration comes from everything everywhere, and Udo got his after visiting a piggery enterprise in Mochudi where he had accompanied a friend who had gone to buy pork there. Armed with a high yield borehole, fenced and electrified 4Ha freehold agricultural farmland, Mr. Hahn saw this as a sustainable business opportunity he could take up and has never looked back since then.

Mr Hahn is passionate about farming and this is evident when he speaks of his piggery business located in the Senthane area along the A1 road to Lobatse. This is the place he calls home because he spends most of his time there and where his employees reside making it easier to monitor progress in the farm 24 hours a day. Udo started his operation in 2007 with five (5) sows which he obtained locally from the Botswana College of Agriculture and imported some from South Africa. Currently there are twenty (20) sows and two (2) boars in the farm which serve as breeding stock. Massy Holding (Pty) Ltd was conceived from own funds and currently employs a total of five (5) workers of which three (3) are skilled and two (2) are not. There are three (3) locals and two foreigners, and one has had training on piggery production from Zimbabwe. Udo says his workers are motivated to ensure that they contribute positively to the growth of the business. They receive incentives in the form of bonuses when
they reach the set production target as well as zero-piglet mortalities and are now able to go on leave as and when they want. “Treat them well to get the best out of them”, concludes Mr Hahn.

Start-up challenges

“Every day is a challenge, piggery is simple but needs good management, the right workers with the right attitudes”, says Udo sharing his practical experience in piggery industry. Udo has stood the test of the business, tackled the challenges head-on one by one. His story is a true testimony of a seasoned entrepreneur driven by passion and the will to grow and succeed. It could not have been simple, every business has its challenges and without determination many businesses collapse before they actually start. This was not to be for Udo, without the challenges, he would not have had a story to share.

The piggery industry was a new territory for Mr Hahn, and for a starter, he had not done enough ground work therefore had inadequate knowledge of what the business would require with regards to skills and financial requirements. Piggery business is a capital intensive business and needs some specialized training which he lacked. He needed funds to procure all the necessary inputs as well start up operational costs. Mr. Hahn took it upon himself to overcome these challenges by researching and benchmarking with farmers who were already well established in the piggery industry in South Africa and locally. He

“In order to yield the right quality of produce, it is important to provide the right feed, which comes at a cost”.

Udo measuring and preparing the piggery feeds
has also attended training courses facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture, which equipped him with the basic knowledge and skills required to carry on with his piggery project.

Experience being the best teacher, Udo has learnt his lessons. There is nothing that beats practical experience if one wants to start a business in any field. He is implementing his ideas gradually, which on its own is a challenge because of slow implementation but he is adamant his initial capital contribution and sound knowledge of the piggery business will reduce his capital requirements in seeking financial assistance from potential financiers. “You cannot do everything at a go if you do not have money”, Udo remarks.

Massy Holding (Pty) Ltd has in the past experienced a high staff turnover citing ‘greener pastures’ as the main reason for the attrition until he improved their working conditions; improved accommodation and paid competitive wages. And he is happy with the outcome. “You take care of the employees; they will take care of the business”, he explains.

Production and Market access

Massy Holdings (Pty) Ltd supplies whole pork carcasses and pork cuts to individuals, butcheries and hotels as and when the need arises as he has no standing contract with any consumer.

On a monthly basis they are able to sell about 40 porkers. When quizzed about the quality of his products, Mr Hahn quickly points out that he meets the market quality requirement because he feeds the pigs with good quality feeds as there is no compromise when it comes to ensuring quality pork produce in the piggery industry. “If you want to sell in three months’ time you have to give them the right feeds; bran may be cheap but the pigs take long to grow and the meat quality becomes poor”, reiterates Udo. While he is confident of his product quality, Udo is alive to the fact that pig production in Botswana is far from meeting the market demand in terms of quantity due to inadequate amounts of breeding stock. It is for this reason that he is working hard day and night to expand his business.
With regards to market for pork, Udo points out that the demand for pork has gone up especially from butcheries being sold as braai pork chops. It is however; unfortunate that large consumers, in particular hotels and distributors dictate prices that are way below market prices making it difficult for him to penetrate the large consumer market. As an individual he does not have much power to lobby for better prices. Udo markets his products through word of mouth and social media networks like Facebook.

Some of the challenges Massy Holding (Pty) Ltd had to deal with include transportation of live animals to the abattoir, the collection of cold-dressed carcasses using a refrigerated truck from the abattoir to the consumers. Udo says that some consumers go to the extent of actually checking the refrigerated trucks to confirm functionality and transporting temperature to ensure compliance. The company has since acquired an open truck for transportation of live animals and a 1-ton refrigerated truck to transport cold-dressed carcasses to his markets.

As already highlighted, Massy Holding (Pty) Ltd is now able to retain staff due to the measures that Udo has put in place like giving employees incentives for a job well done. He says he is not worried when he goes away for some time because he has learnt to trust his workers for they are now fully devoted and highly efficient and productive.

Business Opportunities

Youthful as he is, 32 year-old Udo’s dream is to go beyond just selling whole carcasses and cuts but to add value to his products by processing pork and producing bacon which he says is in high demand in the Maun tourism area.

It is also his wish to own an abattoir either as an individual or through affiliation with an association. He beams with a smile when he talks of an abattoir plot
that the Piggery Association in Ramotswa has acquired with the assistance of the Local Enterprise Authority (LEA), and the many opportunities it presents to the industry players. He is however worried that the Association members have shrunk in numbers from 55 to only 5 and this might have an impact on the financial muscle of the Association to develop the plot. In Udo’s words “for the Association to be successful there is need for members to commit to it and have the will to take risks”.

In a bid to expand his business Udo is building more structures to house more animals for increased pork production and is also working with the LEA on a business plan to solicit funds from Citizen Enterprise Development Agency (CEDA) and increase his breeding stock from 20 sows to 100 sows. He speaks with conviction that the business plan will be submitted to LEA before it could be passed on to CEDA. He just wants to make sure he does not submit a sub-standard business plan that is why he wants it to be appraised by LEA first. Udo takes cognizant of the fact that he has already invested so much in the project. There is no need for him to look back. With or without financial assistance from finance institutions, he will soldier on despite the dire need of funds to take advantage of abound opportunities he sees in the piggery industry. It is his ambition to start breeding and training facilities in the farm which he sees as

Udo’s Word of advice

“There is a misconception out there that piggery business is quick money, there is nothing like quick money, it’s all about hard work, hard work and it has its own rewards”, Udo advises. “Those who want to venture into piggery should start by acquiring experience and practical skills by working in farms and also do some benchmarking in order to understand the dynamics of the piggery industry as well as understand the capital requirements for a successful piggery business!” Udo is also adamant that if farmers in the piggery industry were to work in clusters they could easily meet the local demand of pork and pork products.
The Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) is a statutory body set up under the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) with a mandate to develop and promote Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in Botswana. LEA commenced its operations in 2007, dispensing its mandate through adoption of an organizational structure comprising a network of thirteen (13) national branch offices across the entire country. These branches which constitute the LEA’s National Branch Network Division (NBN) are the client facing arm of the Authority. LEA also has four (4) Business Incubators to accelerate technology diffusion and adoption of specialized business skills.

Initially, from 2007 through 2009, LEA pursued a long term organizational strategy that focused on the four sectors of Agriculture, Manufacturing, Tourism and Services as prescribed by the Small Business Act of 2004. In promoting entrepreneurship in Botswana LEA proceeded to dispense Business Development Services (BDS) through a system of sequenced interventions to existing and start-up businesses in these four broad sectors across the thirteen LEA branches.

In 2010 LEA reviewed its first strategy and streamlined its operations, embarking on a sector-intensive and focused three year (2010 through 2013) short term organizational strategy. This new strategy emphasized exploration and promotion of SMME opportunities along sub-sectoral value chains including related upstream and downstream industries to the agriculture sector. In this regard the four sub sectors of horticulture, leather, piggery and dairy were prioritized for promotion during this strategy.

Further, LEA’s choice of the Agriculture sector and, specifically, the four subsectors was informed by this sector’s higher demand for BDS as evidenced by the majority of Agriculture based LEA registered clients coming through the NBN. Further, studies conducted by LEA in the aforementioned sub-sectors of Agriculture found a great potential for their growth and import substitution for the country. Noteworthy is the fact that the same studies observed infrastructural inadequacies which had hampered the development of these subsectors in the past.