

Recognising local innovation in livestock-keeping – a path to empowering women



Brigid Letty, Natural Resources Institute,
Pietermaritzburg, South Africa (lettyb@ukzn.ac.za)

Ann Waters-Bayer, ETC EcoCulture,
Leusden, Netherlands (ann.waters-bayer@etcnl.nl)

Local knowledge is dynamic. Trying to improve their livelihoods, rural households innovate in agriculture and natural resource management. PROLINNOVA–South Africa partners have discovered women making novel use of local resources to improve animal production.



Mrs Maduba Mbila in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal Province, uses very palatable leafed branches to attract her goats home each night. This reduces time spent fetching them and losses from predators. (Photo: M Malinga)



Mrs Sarah Martha Mbuyisa of KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga Province, developed a system of raised grass baskets for her hens to lay eggs in. This makes it easier to find and collect eggs. (Photo: J S Maphosa)



Mrs Machoncho Dlamini in Msinga makes nesting boxes out of sisal stems. This insulates the chickens well against heat and cold and protects them from predators. (Photo: R Alcock)

Recognising this creativity:

- raises the women's esteem in their own eyes and those of others
- reveals entry points for pro-poor livestock development
- encourages women to join in experimentation to develop the innovations further.

PROLINNOVA–South Africa records and shares such local innovations and provides Local Innovation Support Funds to villagers – both women and men – wanting to explore options for further development.

Village women are in selection committees that allocate grants to experimenting farmers.

Women are thus empowered to have a say in local-level research and development.



Members of Local Innovation Support Fund selection committee, KwaZulu-Natal (Photo: A Krone)