

Murimi-Umlimi app boost for farmers

Zimbabwe - A local ICT company, Rubiem Technologies, has designed an application that is set to revolutionise the agriculture industry, which is the cornerstone of the country's economy. Dubbed Murimi-Umlimi, the app seeks to impart valuable farming advice and information to farmers that are not always available on their farms.

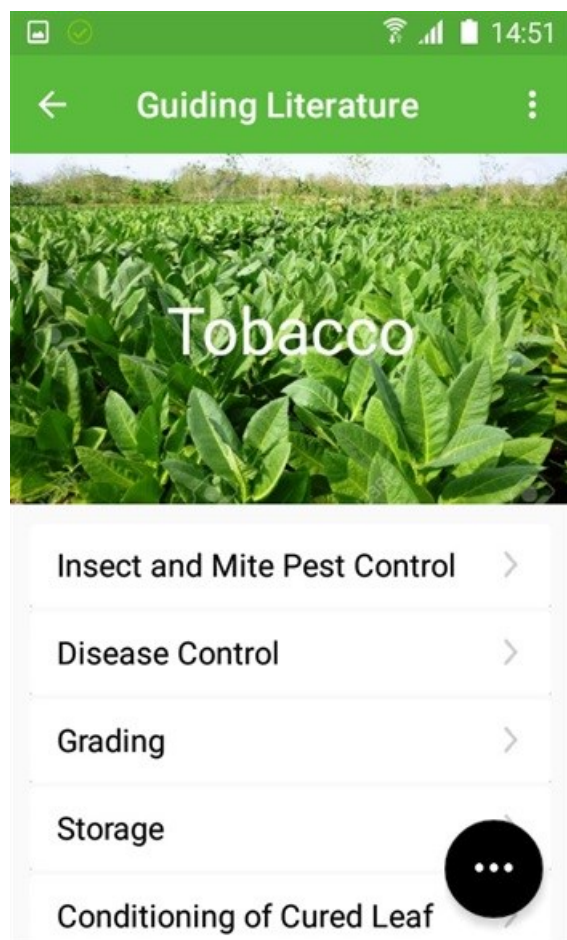


Image Source: [Google Play](#)

Rubiem Technologies CEO Dennis Magaya said that their application, which is downloaded onto the farmer's phone from Google Play free of charge, is targeted at assisting the government and the farmer.

"We appreciate that the land reform programme resulted in the establishment of more than 150,000 A1 (small-scale) farmers and it's not all those farmers that are resident on their farms as they are employed elsewhere and normally visit the farms over the weekend, but despite that, they would need to be aware of what is happening on their farms in their absence.

"In addition, the increase in the number of farmers also applied more pressure on extension officers and because of tight budgets the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, has been able to increase their numbers or equip them with transport to reach every farmer leaving some farmers exposed in terms of expert agricultural extension support.

Assisting farmers with step-by-step information

"Our app, therefore, seeks to fill this vacuum by assisting the farmer with step-by-step information in the production of a variety of crops or livestock as well as addressing their concerns via SMSes on their cellphone.

"The farmer receives daily information on prices, budgets, profits and costs for crops, livestock, fertilisers, and weather. They can also get consultancy and training services on demand and in the case of emergency due to diseases and pests, the farmer will be provided with support by an expert. The app allows farmers to buy and sell farm produce to peers by simply taking a picture and posting or sending an enquiry to the platform," he said.

Magaya said that for farmers without internet capable phones, the service is available on an Interactive Voice Recording (IVR). "The farmer's phone will ring every morning and by simply listening, the farming guidance is received. Alternatively, the farmer can dial a certain number and follow instructions to access information. Telecel offers the IVR service called Farmers Club accessed by dialing 551.

"We believe that this app is what the country needs to bring innovation into farming and it will go a long way to making the success of command agriculture more sustainable," he said.

The development comes at a time when the country's economy is forecast to grow by 3,7 percent this year, which is higher than the SADC projected figure of 3,6 percent, due to a resurgence of the agriculture sector.