

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**EMBARGO – Immediate**

**Sharing a vision of sustainability**

The prevailing bleak economic outlook in South Africa inevitably places financial strain on institutions and organisations depending on donor funds. Buhle Farmers' Academy is such an institution. Monsanto SA once again demonstrated their continuous commitment towards Buhle Farmers' Academy by making an additional 28 hectares of land available for Buhle to operate income generating activities such as grain production, on.

The partnership between Monsanto and the academy was forged way back in 2000. Monsanto, at that stage, donated a research farm near Delmas and the start-up capital that was needed to kick off the Buhle Farmers' Academy.

The signing of the **Right of Use Agreement** on **Tuesday 1 August**, brings Buhle a step closer to their ultimate goal of financial independence. Niel de Smidt: Buhle CEO explains, " We took the policy position in 2008 to lessen our dependence on donors and funders. In order to get there, the decision was taken to generate income from the land made available to us. Getting access to more land will always be a challenge. This additional piece of land will now enable us, provided agricultural conditions are favourable, to generate an extra income of close to R100 000 annually. "

Parusha Pillay: Monsanto SA's B-BBEE Transformation Manager said, "When we make investments of this nature, we envision the long term sustainability of the project, and when organisations we invest in share our vision of sustaining themselves long after donor funding ceases – we know that we have accomplished what we have set out to achieve. We can see the successes of the farmers that graduate from Buhle as well as the academy itself and they stand as a testament to Monsanto's investments."

The 28 hectares are adjacent to the existing Buhle Academy's land and has similar fertile soils. Nyiko Maluleke: Buhle Chief Operating Officer said, " We plant dry-land maize and soy beans. Bi-annual crop rotation puts nitrogen back in our soils and prevent depletion. This is also in line with best practices farming and will be used as a good example for our students on how commercial farming should be done, in a sustainable manner."

The Delmas area is known for it's rich, fertile soil, perfect for crops under irrigation. The use of an irrigation system could better Buhle's yield per hectare substantially and ultimately their income as well. But the pivot on the Buhle management's wishlist, will cost just shy of R1 000 000. Buhle Farmers' Academy approached the Lotto for funding but has not been successful yet.

Niel concluded: "Thank you Monsanto. Because of your input, people have moved from having no food, to being able to feed their families; from having small profits, to having bigger ones, and from having subsistence operations to having commercial or semi-commercial farming ventures. " He thanked Monsanto SA for helping Buhle to bring dignity and hope back to so many people's lives.

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Note to the Editor:

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**Caption:**

*Parusha Pillay: B-BBEE Transformation Manager Monsanto SA congratulates Niel de Smidt: CEO Buhle on the signing of the **Right of Use Agreement** with Monsanto SA. Looking on from the back are Nyiko Maluleke: Buhle Chief Operating Officer, Zamo Shongwe: Director Business & Finance ,Buhle, and Magda du Toit: Corporate Engagement and Communication Manager, Monsanto SA.*