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Media statement
For immediate release

Agbiz announces food relief initiative for needy communities

The most needy in agricultural rural communities will receive food relief under the Agri Value Chain Relief Project, a project initiated and coordinated by the Agricultural Business Chamber (Agbiz) in collaboration with Grain SA.

Since the national lockdown was implemented on 26 March 2020 the need for adequate food in vulnerable communities has increased rapidly. “In this time of extreme hardship, the agricultural industry can play a significant role to stabilise society and alleviate hunger amongst the most vulnerable of society,” says Agbiz CEO Dr John Purchase.

To assist in countering a humanitarian crisis, Agbiz has initiated the Agri Value Chain Relief Project with organised agriculture and other role players in the agricultural value chain to provide food relief to these communities. “Key role players in the various agri value chains, including producers and agribusinesses, have indicated the need for a coordinated and critical mass effort to launch a significant relief programme. The project will benefit agricultural rural communities where the need is the greatest, irrespective of race, colour or creed.”

Agbiz calls on all major role players in the value chain to make a **voluntary** contribution in kind. “We are aware that there are already producers and agribusinesses contributing to relief schemes in their communities, so this will be additional to such relief programmes and does not replace such initiatives.” Dr Purchase emphasised that participation in the Agri Value Chain Relief Project is totally voluntary.

The project entails the following:

- Producers contribute 1 ha of dryland grain or oilseeds, or the equivalent (~R10 000).
- Grain silo owners receive, manage, store and deliver equivalent from producer donation to milling company.
- Milling companies to mill the maize and bag, free of charge, but keep the chop to cover partial expenses.
- Livestock producers can also donate the equivalent product value to participating agribusinesses through this scheme.

Dr Purchase said individual agribusinesses will identify and liaise directly with the appropriate relief service providers in the communities where they are commercially active to ensure the food aid reaches the most needy beneficiaries in as non-discriminatory and organised manner as possible. “We need to keep the system as simple, efficient and transparent as possible, with the participating individual agribusinesses acting as the agents for the project.”

Participating agribusinesses to date include Senwes, Afgri, VKB, OVK, GWK and NWK. “We are very grateful to be part of this journey and wish to thank the many individuals, agribusinesses and other companies who are contributing to this cause and making it a success,” says Dr Purchase.

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