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MEDIA RELEASE: APPOINTMENT OF WILLIE JACOBS AS CEO OF POTATOES SA

Willie Jacobs took over the leadership of Potatoes SA (PSA) as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) after Dr André Jooste, who as part of his career planning, left the organisation after 9 years.

Initiatives established by Dr Jooste are highly regarded and supported by industry. Under Dr Jooste's leadership valuable research was done not only in terms of product, but also in terms of producer concern issues in specific areas.

The potato industry is privileged for Willie to have accepted the position of CEO at PSA. The Board of Directors of PSA is confident that Willie with his expertise and experience as agricultural economist, will build and expand on the legacy of Dr Jooste. Willie officially took up office on Monday 18 January 2021.

He studied BSc Agricultural Economics at the University of the Free State and obtained an MBA at North West University.

Recently he worked on several contracts as an independent consultant. Most of the contracts were agricultural funding and management related. Previously he worked as Executive at the Land Bank, serving corporate clients and later, as Executive Director of Obaro Financial Services, where farming activities were funded.

Willie considers the impressive legacy of Dr Jooste during which he succeeded in breaking the ice, in particular with regards to the transformation financing agenda and piloting some of the improved financing methodologies in the potato industry as well as liaison with government, as aspects that in future will assist him in his role as CEO.

Where the difference comes in from where Dr Jooste created a good foundation for entrance into the market and the direction that Willie will take, is to utilise the financial exposure he had to optimise the farming profit of potato producers and to place potatoes as product within the consumer environment on a new level.

For Willie it is important to have the ability to address the risk of everything that could affect the quality, volume and consumability of the product in order to support stability in the potato industry. The risk of the production of a specific cultivar lies in

its quality and production volumes. For this reason, it is critical for PSA to continue to provide the research capacity, addressing these needs.

Willie concedes that with all these factors taken into consideration, the producer as marketer and business owner, must understand all the factors that have an impact on their businesses by making informed decisions for themselves.

Willie aspires PSA and its members, to expand the market space of potatoes to the extent that there will be room for new entrées without impeding existing producers.

He sees his role in PSA as spearhead, with a sharp focus on the accuracy and relevance of the outputs of the organisation through a management style of involvement, participation, and facilitation. He trusts that each of the current staff of PSA, in his and her own right, is the best the market has to offer for their specific role, and he will find pride in bolstering that capacity.

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NOTE: As endorsed by the PSA Board of Directors, it is company policy that all media enquiries be directed in writing to the PSA Communication Department:

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