



AGH and AFGRI announce structure to support mentorship and training of farmers

Lemang Agricultural Services is established

Centurion, 5 November 2018 – To better support farmers poised to become the commercial farmers of tomorrow, AFGRI Group Holdings (AGH) and its invested company focused on agriculture, AFGRI, have enhanced on a concept that has made a massive impact over the past five years in farmer development.

AGH, an investment holding company with interests in several food, agriculture and financial services related companies providing products and services to ensure sustainable agriculture and food security, has as its investment philosophy to create long-term value through targeted investments in four strategic pillars: agriculture, food, financial services and impact.

In support of its vision to contribute to sustainable food security, a full spectrum of investments forms the base of the Group, which ensures food producers, farmers and companies involved in agriculture have access to finance, insurance, storage, equipment and inputs, feeds, retail, processing of oils and grains, technology and sustainable farmer development.

“It is thus important that we foster an approach to developing the future generation of South Africa’s farmers that has impact, is meaningful, is sustainable and is useful to the farmers. It must also be geared towards ensuring food security, not only in our own country, but further afield,” said Chris Venter, CEO of AGH.

Venter added that a total of R90 million had been invested in farmer training and development and related CSI initiatives over the past four to five years, exceeding the Group’s commitment to the Competition Commission Tribunal.

He said that having viable black commercial farmers enter the agricultural sector is essential for the future of the country, as the population grows, and food demands increase. “These farmers will also create much-needed jobs and provide a welcome boost to the economy.”

The concept will see Harvest Time Investments (“HTI”), the entity created in 2012 to train, develop and mentor new era farmers, renamed Lemang Agricultural Services and housed within AFGRI as a focussed service in the further development of commercial black farmers in South Africa. Lemang Agricultural Services has been created specifically to support large farmers ready to take the final steps towards becoming full-scale commercial farmers.



This includes offering financial assistance to these new commercial farmers, one of the benefits flowing from having access to a banking license following the recent regulatory approval of the Group's acquisition of the South African Bank of Athens Limited, alongside existing financial services such as UNIGRO.

Marion Shikwinya, who spearheaded AFGRI's Harvest Time initiative that developed small scale farmers to the next level, will head up Lemang Agricultural Services to ensure these farmers now enter the market as successful, fully-established commercial farmers.

The Group has invested R60 million alone in farmer development and training over the past five years, with 825 farmers benefitting from the programme in some way. "In this time over 18 400 hectares of crops were planted, and we estimate that over 5 600 people have been supported by the income received, with over 660 permanent jobs and almost 1 000 seasonal jobs created," said Shikwinya.

"We also assisted farmers in achieving higher turnover from their farms – on average they were achieving R11,4 million in turnover before assistance, which increased to R33,5 million. Crop yields for maize, soybean and sunflower seeds also improved substantially, with a 45% increase in maize yields, 66% in soybean and 50% in sunflower yields."

Shikwinya added that through Lemang Agricultural Services, the aim is to ensure that the commercial farmers who require a partner in agriculture are understood and supported accordingly. "We want to extend the experience and record we have already established to bolster yields, crop diversity and job creation in a sector which has traditionally contributed significantly to gross domestic product in South Africa."

She concluded by saying that the path forward should ensure that the next generation of commercial farmers are catered for according to their needs, and looks forward to her new role, working alongside the nation's farmers to safeguard their success.

-Ends-



Notes to the editor:

The following graphics are available on request in high-res format.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITING COMMUNITY INITIATIVES 1,994 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES
Through the AFGRI Mentorship Programme, Girl Power Day, Raising Leaders Initiative, Mandela Day, Saturday Accounting Tutorial Classes, Sanitary Pads Initiative, tree planting and others.

FOOD SECURITY SECTOR



37
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BENEFITING
26,034
LEARNERS

By providing sustainable vegetable gardens in schools



Bangwen Primary School | Daggakraal Primary School | Die Gloria Primary School | Ekwaeni Secondary School | Elizabeth Mathemela Secondary School | Endibini Combined School | East Primary School | Gooilago Primary School | Guguluthu Primary School | Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School | Isibuthu Primary School | Isaac Mkhwanetsi Primary School | Igaba Primary School | KwaNobane Primary School | Libatisi Combined School | Madibakhele Secondary School | Makolobane Secondary School | Makwanyane Primary School | Makhebing Primary School | Marang Primary School | Makhaweng Primary School | Mkhondo Tshepo Secondary School | Nqogola Primary School | Makhakhele Primary School | Nqalatha Secondary School | Bonaeng Primary School | Siphokane Combined School | Thabazimbi Primary School | Thubathela Primary School | Tshepo ka Tshepo Primary School | Thutoyobaka Intermediate School | Uthula Christian School | Vwalu Jiyana Secondary School | Winnie Mandela Primary School | Zizobontweni Secondary School | Zizobontweni Combined School | Zizobontweni Secondary School

WATER SECURITY SECTOR



7
COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS & SCHOOLS
BENEFITING
2,818
COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND LEARNERS

By providing access to clean water to five schools in Nelspruit, and two other organisations.



Roundabout Play Schools (providing access to clean water to five schools in Nelspruit)
Uthuli Drop-in Centre | Ingqithoni Agricultural Project

POVERTY ALLEVIATION



12
EDUCATION PROJECTS
BENEFITING
1,187
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Through donations of vegetable garden implements to equip the communities to be self-reliant and sustainable



Bombazoni Youth Development | ASNAPP | Bhoathlolo Drop-in Centre | Bulibabathe Foundation | Clazweni Centre of Hope | DMT | Ingaba Children and Youth | Makhaweng Food Co-operatives | SIFCEC | Tshelo Day and Care Centre | Johannesburg Retired Teachers' Association | Nkoosobati Education Centre

EDUCATION SECTOR



4
SCHOOLS
BENEFITING
147
LEARNERS

By providing additional tuition fees, educational material, teachers annual salaries and other resources



Fundiswa Combined School | Salford Academy
The Best Movement Centre | Golden Gate Virginia Prep School

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