



AFGRI commits R3 million to the establishment of the AFGRI Support Fund

Centurion, 5 March 2019 – AFGRI, a leading agricultural services company with core competencies to enhance, support and guide the growth of agricultural enterprises in South Africa and further afield, has launched a not-for-profit company to assist those in dire financial need involved in the agricultural sector in South Africa. The Fund will operate in the geographic areas of the country where AFGRI operates but won't be limited to AFGRI clients.

Tinus Prinsloo, CEO of AFGRI, indicated that, "We want to make a meaningful difference in the areas we operate in, aside from our service and product offerings, as there are times that people just need a partner who cares. We have therefore established this Fund into which we have made an initial injection of R3 million."

He went on to say that he hoped that those so inclined would also contribute towards the Fund, which has been established in order to extend financial support to beneficiaries in the agricultural sector, focusing on those operating within the AFGRI ecosystem and geographic areas. The aim is to grow the Fund to be sustainable into the future as a beacon of agricultural community support.

"The perils of farming are enormous, and to have an organisation that cares enough to lend a helping hand can mean a great deal," said Jacob de Villiers, the CFO of AFGRI.

Farming is a profession with a myriad of moving parts and possibly thousands of decisions to be made and just as many possible impacts to manage. There are times that no matter how dedicated, diligent and committed a farmer is, the elements step in and upset the apple cart. During the past two years farmers across South Africa have had to contend with drought conditions, hail, foot and mouth disease, armyworm invasions and wildfires, to name but a few.

AFGRI stepping in to help is not a recent development but has been part of the company's ethos since it was established over 95 years ago. More recently, in 2016 during one of the worst droughts ever recorded in South Africa, AFGRI donated R5 million in drought aid to farmers. It also offered a zero increase on storage fees for a period, knowing that these gestures would assist farmers caught in the grips of the drought.

Similarly, in 2017 AFGRI partnered with farmers in the Free State and the KZN Midlands, as far afield as Bothaville, Koppies, Danielsrus and Tweeling, to facilitate a process through which large-scale hay donations could be sent to farms in the Thornhill district in the Eastern Cape. The donation amounted to more than a 1 000 round bales. AFGRI Grain Producers further donated maize for trading, using the proceeds to support the project.

The AFGRI Support Fund is not a development fund or a sponsorship vehicle. "Within our service offering we have Lemang Agricultural Services, a dedicated division focusing on new-era farmer development. Our Fund will focus purely on assisting people in need, based on the merits of each case," explained Prinsloo.



De Villiers, along with Marion Shikwinya and Ross Simmonds, all senior executives within the AFGRI Group, are the directors of the Fund and will be responsible for the evaluation and disbursements of requests received. “As mentioned, the Fund is registered as a not-for-profit company, with all contributions treated in terms of the Tax Act and thus donations will be deductible,” said de Villiers.

Throughout the year AFGRI will make use of a host of events to raise money for the Fund, including golf and farmers days, as well as ad hoc opportunities, and will also be accepting contributions from external individuals and organisations. AFGRI itself has committed to an annual donation of a minimum of R3 million. In addition, AFGRI will continue to have an account into which farmers are able to donate grain for sale, the proceeds of which will be transferred to the Fund account.

When asked what drove the establishment of the Fund, Prinsloo explained that, “We know all too well the publicised issues and get asked by so many to assist. We also want to ensure that support reaches those in need as much too often donations don’t reach those who truly need them.”

“We want control and to have a focused approach,” added de Villiers, saying that the Fund will be audited and reports published, not only to AFGRI’s shareholders, but also to those donating money.

AFGRI is committed to and follows strict corporate governance procedures and the AFGRI Support Fund is no different. “Both the impact and the measurement of the difference we are making will be noted with the purpose of continual improvement to safeguard a growing and sustainable Fund.

“This will ensure that financial support is available to all involved in agriculture in the long-term. In this way AFGRI will continue to make a positive impact on the agricultural sector in our country, just as we have for the past nine decades and more,” concluded de Villiers.

Two e-mail addresses have been created for those in need of financial support to apply for funding, which are hulp@afgri.co.za and support@afgri.co.za. Please note that all requests will be subject to certain criteria, and due process. More information will be placed on the AFGRI website (www.afgri.co.za) from mid-March onwards.

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