

WEEKLY NEWS WRAP

Kagiso Trust investment boosts emerging farmers

Kagiso Trust has taken a step towards addressing unemployment and food security in South Africa through a R3 million investment in agriculture via its Tyala Impact Fund, aimed at supporting rural farming communities.

Primarily known for its focus on education, the trust is now expanding into agriculture, recognising the sector's potential for large-scale job creation and sustainable food production.

"Education has always been our flagship programme, but we cannot ignore the multiple crises facing South Africa, including poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity. Agriculture offers vast opportunities for job creation, particularly at the entry level, and we see this as a key area for long-term impact," Mankone Ntsaba, chairperson of the board at Kagiso Trust, told *Farmer's Weekly*.

The trust's agricultural initiative aims to empower emerging black farmers by addressing critical barriers like a lack of access to markets, technical skills, and financing. "Food production remains heavily skewed towards white commercial farmers, while black farmers face numerous challenges in scaling up their operations," Ntsaba said.

A cornerstone of the trust's agricultural investment is the aggregator model, which pools resources from various small farmers and connects them to larger markets.

"We recognised that small-scale farmers struggle to meet market demands on their own. Aggregators not only help them sell their produce

but also offer technical support, which is crucial for improving their farming practices," she added.

The trust's investment is not only measured in financial returns but also by its broader social impact. Ntsaba added that transforming the agriculture sector is one of their primary goals.

"We want to see more black farmers entering the commercial space. It's essential that we level the playing field and promote inclusivity in the sector," Ntsaba said.

Kevin O'Brien, group sustainability executive at the Spar Group, said on the group's website: "The agriculture sector in South Africa is pivotal not only for food security but also for rural development. By enabling small-scale farmers to scale up, we are not only addressing unemployment but also ensuring that rural economies become more resilient."

He said the group was serious about developing an ecosystem that was not exclusive to them alone, "but one where other retailers can also benefit. This demonstrates a clear passion for small-scale and rural farmers in our country.



The Kagiso Trust aims to pool resources from various small farmers and connect them to larger markets. FW ARCHIVE

"We, therefore, urge all stakeholders to commit to buying from the Rural Hub as part of our effort to ensure better circulation of resources, particularly in the agriculture sector," said O'Brien.

"Working together with established NGOs like Kagiso Trust, we can ensure that food security is taken seriously. Our target is to develop 60 farmers by 2030."

He added: "This recognition aligns with SPAR's vision to enhance job creation, income generation, infrastructure development, skills transfer, and empowerment.

"The investment will enable our farmers to elevate their operations and contribute to food security and economic growth in their communities," O'Brien concluded. – *Octavia Avesca Spandiel*