

Training the farmers of the future

In its commitment to the development of local agriculture through sustainable food production, skills development and job creation, Bayer has joined forces with The Future Farmers Foundation as a key supporter of the Future Farmers initiative based in Howick.



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Future Farmers' main focus is on facilitating training, mentoring and apprenticeships for young South Africans who have a passion for farming and would not otherwise easily have access to a sustainable career in agriculture. The programme allows participants to gain real-world experience on local commercial farms for a period of between two and five years in order to ensure that they have a full understanding of what farming entails.

Once ready, trainees are given the opportunity to hone these skills through international mentorship opportunities or share back their knowledge within their communities to transfer skills, boost agricultural productivity and promote a system of sustainable food production. Finally, Future Farmers usually go on to have successful commercial farming careers.

Sustainable production high on the agenda

"Bayer is committed to the development of the agricultural industry in South Africa, and this partnership will enable us to contribute to the sector in a meaningful way. Supporting the Foundation's vision to develop commercial farming skills for sustainable food production not only helps to create jobs but also enables opportunities for skills transfer and development of the overall industry, which could ultimately contribute to increased farm output by using Africa's agricultural resources more effectively," says Tasniem Patel, head of communications at Bayer Southern Africa.

"Sustainable production of high-quality food should be a top priority on the development agenda for Africa to not only to meet the needs of our growing population but also our economic trade commitments and growth potential. Further, if we consider the current state of the agricultural sector which is under immense pressure in the context of the current drought - it points to the increasing need to not only utilise resources more efficiently but also the need to protect crops and increase yields. Education, skills development and conversations around modern agriculture are, therefore, critical."

Tackling challenges in modern agriculture

Founder of the Future Farmers Foundation, Judy Stuart explains: "Future Farmers is about skills development but beyond

that, it is about job creation, sustainable community development, self-sufficiency, and ultimately, development across the broader agricultural sector in South Africa. Our apprenticeship programme is flourishing with more and more future farmers placed on farms each year. Having various industry mentors and opportunities that the partnership with Bayer provides will go a long way to expanding on the work we do."

"Addressing some of the major challenges in modern agriculture requires fresh answers and we are committed to helping tackle these challenges through our expertise and partnerships. Fostering an environment of collaboration across different disciplines is critical to these conversations, and skills development initiatives to safeguard the future of farming cannot be overlooked. We are pleased to be able to join forces to grow the skills base locally and we believe that the Future Farmers in partnership with Bayer initiative will do exactly that," concludes Patel.

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