

Mondstuk van die Suid-Afrikaanse aartappelbedryf • Mouthpiece of the South African potato industry

CHIPS

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BESPROEINGSBESTUUR VIR OPTIMALE AARTAPPELPRODUKSIE

Die ekonomiese
impak van 2020 op
varsproduktemarkte

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE AND THE POTATO INDUSTRY

Oranjeville en Ceres
kultivar-evaluasies
onder die vergrootglas

Sebenzangamandla
on its way to reach
commercial status

Sebenzangamandla: Reaping the harvest

By Louis Pretorius

Sebenzangamandla is a Zulu word that means 'work hard'. The name is a true reflection of the aspirations of the three directors of Sebenzangamandla (Pty) Ltd, an agricultural business with operations in Mooi River, a small town situated in KwaZulu-Natal.

The company commenced operations in 2018. Prior to that, the farm belonged to the government, which acquired it in 2008. After numerous attempts at becoming viable with the assistance of multiple stakeholders proved unsuccessful, the directors of Sebenzangamandla decided to start farming independently with the assistance of the Upper Midlands Agricultural Transformation Initiative (Umati).

Sebenzangamandla commenced their farming operations on a

The quality of the current crop is exceptional due to excellent farming practices. The most important factors that were considered to achieve this include:

- A good crop rotation system for potatoes.
- Using the best quality seed potatoes and cultivars as required by customers at the Durban market.
- Precise moisture management using centre pivots.
- Optimal fertilisation.
- Good chemical spraying programme.

positive note as the farm was acquired with all the machinery, implements, and structures in good working condition. Another valuable contribution was a willing and available mentor who offered his assistance. As the project's mentor, Graham Armstrong is responsible for providing technical advice on all aspects of the business, including marketing of produce, financial as well as human resource management, and production.

Producing a good-quality crop

Sebenzangamandla initially produced vegetables and grain crops on a rotational basis but has since branched out to potatoes and other varieties of vegetables. They envisage expanding the scale of potato production (currently standing at 18 to 30ha), diversifying into multiple enterprises, and implementing sound crop rotation.

The project has been part of Potatoes SA's (PSA) Enterprise Development for two years. Harvesting of their second-year crop started in January this year, with produce being sold at the Durban Fresh Produce Market.

Lending a helping hand

PSA has managed to link up the project with funding from the



Sebenzangamandla potatoes being prepared for the market.

Kagiso Trust. This funding will ensure that the project does not run into cash flow issues and that it expands in future. The loan funding received from the Kagiso Trust over and above the grant funding from PSA, guarantees that the second season runs smoothly, and that all inputs are available at the right time.

Sebenzangamandla has shown tremendous growth in a very short space of time. There is no doubt that they will reach commercial status in the next few years. 🍅

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Bheki Nene, one of the directors of Sebenzangamandla, with project mentor Graham Armstrong.