

# Agriculture in good hands

## Growing the future of South Africa's agriculture sector

**AgriSETA is at the forefront of training and growth within the agriculture sector in South Africa. Not only are they changing the face of agriculture through skills development in the country right now, but the aim is to ensure that a foundation is set for generations to come so that South Africa is left in good hands as far as this significant sector is concerned.**

AgriSETA creates and promotes opportunities for social, economic and employment growth for agri-enterprises through relevant, quality and accessible education, training and development in both primary and secondary agriculture, in conjunction with other stakeholders in agriculture.

AgriSETA has a momentous outcome to reach for, and the organisation is blazing the trail to get there.

Under the new leadership of Chief Executive Officer, Zenzele Myeza, AgriSETA's focus has been to streamline processes to ensure that the operational, financial, and strategic elements cohesively attain the set targets.

"AgriSETA is perfectly placed to drive the implementation of the agricultural sector's growth strategy, which is linked to the National Development Plan (NDP). Doing this will ensure that the agriculture sector is characterised by businesses that require high-level skills and that offer great opportunities for our Youth," says Myeza.

### Harnessing innovation and developing skills

Innovation is a major factor that strengthens AgriSETA's solidarity and that adds to their competitive edge. Under the guidance of Myeza, sector interventions will be achieved by building the required pool of skills. The overall target is to ensure that the agriculture sector becomes a high-skilled business with great opportunities for inclusive growth, and also to narrow the gap between the demand for skilled labour and the supply thereof.

The plan is to tackle the state of job deployment, both internally and externally, by nurturing scarce, critical, and future skills that

both our economy and agriculture currently lacks and through such, rural communities will have a greater opportunity to participate in agricultural production and value-chains.

The agro-processing industry was identified by the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP), the New Growth Plan as well as the NDP, for its potential to spur much-needed economic growth because of its relation to agriculture. AgriSETA has been tasked with drafting a Chapter in the Presidential Agri- and Agro-Processing Master Plan which will have lasting positive implications for them and will scale up the skills development model in the district delivery model as launched by the President.

"Without looking to the future of the industry, there will be no room for growth," says Myeza. One such forward-thinking move was when AgriSETA enlisted the funding of 60 PhD

students through the Agricultural Research Council. Our strategic response to the Foot-and-Mouth Outbreak led to AgriSETA structuring a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Pretoria (Department of Veterinary Science) for research, graduate placement and the training of rural-based livestock farmers in rural areas. The impact of the outbreak was devastating and has negatively affected the sector.

### Positive partnerships

While AgriSETA is doing their best to bring about change within the agriculture sector, the reality is that they require buy-in from various stakeholders to make those changes a reality. This help will hopefully come from the Government and private sector funding. These partnerships are vital in the functioning of a strong sector and AgriSETA's goal is to



Zenzele Myeza, CEO

strengthen these partnerships in order to create the best possible outcome.

To date, the following partnerships have been concluded:

- Unemployment Insurance Fund (skills programmes).
- OVK National Wool Growers Association (skills programmes) – Training of 1000 wool sheares and classers in the rural Eastern Cape and Free State.
- RCL Foods (support to land reform and small-scale cane growers) – Emerging Land Reform and communal cane growers.
- Citrus Growers Academy (support to black citrus exporters).
- Agricultural Research Council (internships, bursaries, graduate placement).
- University of Pretoria (internships, bursaries, graduate placement)

The incentive offered by AgriSETA to potential partners aim to provide the greatest value possible, including a significant reach in terms of AgriSETA's pool and the industry itself, which in turn allows for resources to be scaled up.

AgriSETA is a vital cog in the agriculture wheel. In order for success to be achieved in all facets, the focus needs to be given to skills development, research, innovation, food security, responding to 4IR, and value chain capacity building.

AgriSETA has made it their duty to ensure a prosperous future for the agriculture sector, and with new partnerships being forged, it is clear that the targets being set, will without a doubt come to fruition.

### Transformation, land reform and rural development

Transformation is key in every industry within South Africa and it is no different for AgriSETA. In early October 2019, AgriSETA signed a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) agreement to empower black smallholders and land-reform beneficiaries. Two of the biggest partnerships were made with the Citrus Growers' Association and RCL Foods.

According to AgriSETA, these agreements will help the sector education and training authority to use skills development in land reform, rural development and economic transformation processes and the agricultural economy.

"This signing [of the partner agreements] marked the beginning of meaningful partnerships that will transform the agricultural sector through developing high-level skills

that offer great opportunities for our youth and the country as a whole," says Myeza. The strategic partnership agreements allow resources to be shared with a positive impact on the programmes. The spin-offs not only benefit a community but indeed the country as a whole.

In partnership with RCL Foods, AgriSETA supports land reform and small cane-growers to the tune of R5 million. Providing an environment in which all farmers can thrive, especially small-scale farmers, is of critical importance to AgriSETA and indeed in the best interests of South Africa.

In a crowdfunding collaboration with the Citrus Growers Academy, AgriSETA has calculated that there will be R307 270 221.00 put aside to support black citrus exporters. "This money, which boosts South Africa's efforts to grow its network of independent, commercial black citrus growers, will be channelled into training, skills development and capacity-building support for black export citrus growers so that their businesses become sustainable," says Myeza.

With the launch of the District Delivery Model by President Ramaphosa, AgriSETA entered into a partnership with Bela Bela Communal Property Association (CPA) through R 9 000 000 funding over a period of two to three years. The Bela Bela CPA are beneficiaries of the land restitution program worth over R 55 million and are a shining example of a successful land restitution plan. This initiative with assist to incubate another ten Communal Property Associations in the Bela-Bela area.

In terms of the Skills Development Act, AgriSETA is responsible for the skills development of the agricultural workforce (employed and unemployed). AgriSETA also facilitates the implementation of learning through learnerships, skills programmes, adult education and training, and tertiary studies or in-service training by allocating grants and bursaries, and it supports apprentices, interns, and mentorships.

To ensure the quality provision of education and training, AgriSETA is also responsible for accrediting sector-specific training providers and for monitoring the standard of training presented.

AgriSETA creates and promotes opportunities for social, economic and employment growth for agri-enterprises through relevant quality, accessible education, training, and development in both primary and secondary agriculture. ▲



### Who Is AgriSETA's CEO Zenzele Myeza?

Zenzele Myeza holds a BCom Accounting with distinctions in Commercial Law, Taxation, and Statistics obtained at the University of Zululand. He completed his MBA in 1993 at the University of Durban-Westville (now University of KwaZulu Natal), and also obtained a certificate in Aviation Management in 1994 at IAMTI (Canada). He obtained a certificate in Corporate Governance at the University of Johannesburg and passed with distinction in 2002. He holds a certificate in Retail Management from the University of Pretoria, a Property Development Programme certificate from UCT Graduate School of Business, various property-related qualifications, and is a Certified Real Estate Practitioner.

He has proven extensive managerial experience (more than 25 years) at senior and executive management (Board) level in substantial organisations in both the public and private sectors, leading senior and executive management teams and having well-honed ability to straddle both strategic, technical, and operational issues. Most of the time was spent in engineering or technological oriented industries such as aviation; infrastructure engineering projects; the nuclear industry (research and development as well as innovation); fluoro-chemicals and similar; and includes experience in economic development, retail management, property development, sales and management, lottery and gaming solutions, and the ICT industries.

For the majority of these years, Myeza was in charge of the full organisation's financial management, investment management, auditing, risk management, information technology, business development, operations, marketing management, property management and development, facilities management, project management, and human resources functions. He was intimately involved with these companies' transformation approaches, strategy planning, and implementation.