

Bayer SA committed to supporting smallholder farmers

Wool is one of the most profitable commodities in agriculture and for the most part, forms part of larger agriculture exported. Bayer Southern Africa, in partnership with local government, has undertaken to deliver shearing equipment to four farming community's wool production initiatives. This includes one farm in Umzimkhulu, KwaZulu-Natal and three in the Eastern Cape.



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Facilitated through a partnership with the local Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in both KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, the shearing equipment, maintenance of the shearing shed and training for the farming communities is a fulfilment of Bayer's commitment to empower and enable smallholder farmers to be active participants in their local economy.

Head of the animal health in Southern Africa, György Polgár explained the significance of the project to smallholder farming: "Having the correct equipment is critical to bolstering efficiency and production volumes for smallholder farming communities that are already pooling their resources together. We believe that we have a responsibility to navigate the 1,400 communal wool sheep producing communities in South Africa and identify those that really need our help to meet future demands that are perpetuated by a growing population.

"Through our partnership with government and local farming communities, we are hoping to help enhance efficiencies in order for the community farmers to increase productivity and become competitive."

Agriculture is an important source of employment with an estimated 990,000 households involved in livestock production. An estimated 95% of the total farming community falls within the emerging farmers' category and many lack the support and services needed so they can excel and succeed, underlining the significance of partnerships such as these.

"We are hoping that this support, in the form of time in services and maintenance in these operations, as well as our investment in the form of critical tools-of-the-trade will advance these emerging farmers. Most importantly, the sustenance of their operations guarantees much-needed employment and the promotion of entrepreneurship," concluded Polgár.

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