

SAB and Moletele Community bears fruit in lime farming partnership

A lack of local supply of limes was affecting South African Breweries' Corona beer's authentic drinking ritual. The solution was a novel opportunity to invest in lime farming and in boosting local production, emerging farmers and their communities were significantly empowered.



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SAB's Corona beer is inherently linked to lime - a wedge of the citrus is traditionally served as part of the drinking ritual. Yet, as the beer became popular in the country, it encountered a severe shortage of limes. The business saw an opportunity to address that issue in a truly meaningful way that delivered value to people, the business, and the environment.

While limes are grown in South Africa, other citrus fruits are far more profitable. Of the over 90,000 hectares of citrus orchards in the country, less than 10% of the land is dedicated to limes. As a result, consumers either end up paying for expensive imported limes or substitute them with lemons, which present a vastly different flavour profile. The opportunity, therefore, was to increase local production of limes to ensure that they were available to consumers, and at a lower cost than the imported crop.

The solution was a partnership between SAB, the Moletele Communal Property Association (Moletele Community) and Komati Fruit Group, in a Community Private Partnership (CPP), to establish and run a farming operation that would ensure reliable local production of limes.

The Moletele Community made available one of their farms, Richmond Kopano Farm about 25km from Hoedspruit, which was on lease to the Komati Fruit Group. The CPP, which was entered into in 2020, saw SAB provide financial support to the tune of R19m, while Komati Fruit Group brought in farming expertise and skills development, and the Moletele community contributed the land.

All parties to the tripartite partnership are equally and actively involved, and that dedication has made Moletele Corona Limes, as the fruit is called, not only a reality, but also a benchmark for lime farming in South Africa.

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