



INSIGHTS ON SUSTAINABLE FARMING

AGROPRENEURS:
THE FUTURE OF
FARMING



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SCARCITY OF WATER RESOURCES

The importance of water in sustainable farming practices is immeasurable. You need water to grow crops and raise livestock. And because of South Africa's variable water resources, issues around water remain some of the biggest challenges in sustainable

farming. The availability, cost and quality of water are the precursor to growing a farming business, and the increase in production requirements adds to the uncertainty of water resources, which are over-extracted and heavily polluted.

SCARCITY OF ENERGY RESOURCES

The energy sector has a direct link to sustainable farming and should not be seen as a separate silo, but should rather be seen holistically with the food, water and energy crisis. Failing power grids, unpredictable power outages and escalating oil prices put pressure on the energy sector. And, with energy being essential for the production, processing, packaging and transportation of food, it has a direct effect on the agricultural sector, resulting in rising food prices and posing a great threat to the country's poor.

LAND AND SOIL FERTILITY

According to the WWF's investigation into agricultural facts and trends in South Africa, approximately 12% of the country's land has fertile soil, and less than 3% is considered as high-potential land. This impacts the size of the farming footprint and farmers are expected to invest in improving or restoring soil fertility in order to grow high-yield crops. Farmers are then faced with the challenge of using synthetic fertilisers to improve fertility. And while it helps with plant growth, synthetic fertilisers can also affect the environment, with chemicals spilling into rivers and polluting the air. Additionally, inappropriate land use and land degradation have slowed down growth and increased environmental stress.

The agricultural sector has contributed to this through the use of outdated methods of farming.



BIODIVERSITY

Human activity has affected and changed ecosystems and caused the collapse of certain species and landscapes. The agricultural sector has contributed to this through the use of outdated methods of farming, which has resulted in deforestation and the threat of

species collected for medicinal or horticultural needs. In addition, the invasion of alien plant and animal species, using already compromised water resources, should also be taken into account.

TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

While most farmers welcome the concept of using technology to meet production needs, there is limited funding available to advance knowledge about technology geared towards the improved management of natural resources. Outputs are often too small to justify investing in precision farming technologies.

AGROPRENEURS – THE FUTURE OF FARMING

Emerging agricultural business specialists, or agropreneurs, understand that farming is the backbone of the economy, and move forward despite the challenges they face. These game changers will relook the challenges of sustainable farming and present innovative ideas to address them.

If you're a farmer of the future, contact a designated agribusiness banker on 0860 555 333 or **agriculture@nedbank.co.za**.

REFERENCES:

**Contact us to find out how our
specialist teams can assist you.**

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