

Mentoring alliance with emerging farmers

Background

One of the government 's main objectives is to make land available for previously disadvantaged South African citizens to enter the agricultural sector (Grondherforming). A lot of land was purchased in 1994 by the state and made available to former emerging farmers. Unfortunately, a large percentage of the settlement process of emerging farmers was a total failure. These failures can be traced to two reasons, namely : Little or no support from the state after the allocation of land and a lack of expertise and experience.

Yet there where a few success with the establishment of emerging farmers. One of these successes is in the Carnarvon district in the Northern Cape province. The reason for this success is the fact that the Department of Agriculture and commercial farmers joined hands and acted as mentors to the farmers to provide the opportunity and support to transfer of expertise and training.

Today, after seven years , this group of farmers are ready to farm independently as commercial farmers.

The group of four farmers is farming under the name of JAGPAN VENNOOTSKAP BOERDERY.

How does the recipe

1. The right farmers have to be identified regarding:

- Farming background/experience
- Other income
- Sober habits
- Must be able to work together as a team
- Honest and trustworthy
- Have a love for farming
- Ideally read and write
- Are not a pensioners

2. A proper business plan should be drawn from the following:

- Clear goals, Short - Medium-and Long-term
- Responsibilities of the parties involved
- Training programs
- A code of conduct
- Strategy on how achieve the goals
- Guidelines for the evaluation of the business plan

3. Exposure

- Expose the group to all possible events in agriculture and let them participate in agricultural activities
- Rotate the farming functions under the group.
- Talk about their successes and failures.

4. The Mentor

- The mentor must be able to work with people without being bossy
- He must have good practical farming experience
- He should have direct interest as a partner in farming, like a portion of the stock is owned by him
- Where possible he should try to make available equipment, tools and vehicles as needed.
- He must be in regular contact with the group
- He must bring expertise from outside when necessary
- The mentor's compensation must come from farming
- The mentor must coordinate and provide direction as needed

5. Partnerships

- It is important that the group of farmers under a partnership or Close Co-operate with one bank and Co-operative account.
- The mentor in turn, is in a partnership with the farmers' partnership.
- The livestock that are being farmed with should be farmed as a unit thus the livestock is owned by the partnership and not to an individual. The proportion of ownership of the livestock must be described.
- If the farmers do not own livestock, the mentor can make cattle available over a surtain period agreed upon, where after the farmers should buy the livestock

Successes

The Jagpan partnership farming started in 2006 and the following successes was achieved.

- a. In 2009 they won the trophy for best financially managed by Landcare awards nationwide.
- b. In 2010 they won the best group of 3 lamb carcass and the second place in the single lamb carcass in national slaughter lamb competition for emerging farmers.
- c. In 2011 and 2012 they won the group of 3 lamb carcass and also the single lamb carcass nationally for emerging farmers.
- d. In 2013 they won single lamb carcass the second highest of 99.86% in the country of emerging and commercial farmers.

Training

The following courses were attended by the group, namely:

- Junior Dorper selection course
- Two of them pass the senior Dorper course
- Pasture management course
- Financial management course
- Problem Animal Control course
- Livestock management courses
- Labor-management course

Comments

The first seven years was not just moonlight and roses. There where huge losses suffered with Rift valley fever outbreak in the 4th year. Fortunately, it was outlined in the business plan that 10% of their profits had to be invested annually and these savings carried them through the difficult years.

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