

SIBLINGS TURN FAMILY LAND TO A COMMERCIAL FARMING OPERATION



Investments in agriculture are the best weapons in fighting hunger and poverty. The key lies in supporting a large number of smallholder producers and providing them with support to turn their farming into successful operations.

Integral to the strategic objective of our Agriculture focus at Thebe is the development, facilitation and the integration of black farmers and agroprocessors into established and profitable supply chains.

One of our successful farmers is Korema Farm. Owned by siblings Refilwe and Kobela Mokgohloa, situated in Winterveldt North of Pretoria CBD in the Gauteng Region. Refilwe shares their journey of growth with the support of Thebe Investment Corporation's (TIC) which has impacted not only their business but also the community within which they operate.

Their commercial cucumber farming operation operates on 8.5 hectares of land with 25 hydroponic tunnels. There is a strong workforce of 22 fulltime staff members and six seasonal workers. With financial backing from Thebe, Korema Farm's growth project is underway which includes constructing an additional 40 tunnels to grow more cucumber. This will help the business grow exponentially.

FARMING HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUR PASSION

It was destined for us as a family to get into farming. Our parents inherited an Agricultural piece of land in the early 1950's. They were subsistence farmers before and I together with my siblings elevated the business to commercial farming operation it is today.



CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS COMMUNITY UPLIFTMENT

Firstly, for us, it is important that we run a successful business, for it is when we are successful that we are able to contribute towards the growth of our employees and their families. 95% of our workforce is made up of local Winterveldt residents. Our aim is to improve the livelihoods of people around our sphere of influence first before we extend to the wider community. We are currently privileged to work with mostly young workforce. We are currently putting efforts on our expansion programme, which upon completion, will further add to our contribution in the community.

One of our current trainee farm manager is one of our success stories. She was unemployed with a matric certificate. No farming background but was eager to learn. We have trained her from scratch, enrolled her at various institutions when we got opportunities, took her to driving school so that she can be versatile both at work and in her personal capacity. She is definitely our icon.

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THEBE



Through our partnership with Thebe, Korema Farm has grown and able to attract new customers. Today we supply clients such as Massmart and Tshwane Fresh Produce, simply because the funding support from Thebe enabled us to grow our business. Further to funding, the focus was on assisting us with skills to better run our business. The Business Management course came in handy in empowering us to the move forward in understanding the management side of farming.

"Korema Farm has potential. We are blessed with the professionalism, commitment and zeal the family is conducting the business." commented Mokgethi Tshabalala, Head of Agriculture.

"For our farmers to grow we need to enable them with access to modern farming techniques or machinery, as well as the knowledge on how value chains work, this will contribute immensely on our farmers increasing their output and positioning them to supplying more and more clients," he added.