

# SAB pledges commitment to digital agriculture and inclusive practices

The South African Breweries (SAB) says it has a vested interest in sustainable farming practices and relies heavily on high-quality crops derived from thriving communities and healthy ecosystems for the brewing of its products.



Source: [www.unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com)

Zoleka Lisa, VP corporate affairs at SAB says, “At the recent SAB webinar in partnership with Food for Mzansi, our theme was unleashing the future of farming with a keen focus on empowering women and youth in the digital agriculture era.”

## Technology

Speaking at the e-event was Bavuyise Hermanus, AgriSETA manager mandatory grants and stakeholder management, Andrea Campher: Sustainability and climate change expert, Gugulethu Mahlangu: Aquaponics Horticulturist, Lineo Maqala: Small-scale farmer from Senekal, Free State, and SAB’s Director of Agriculture and Sustainability, Josh Hamman. All speakers reiterated the importance of young people preparing themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge to become sustainable farmers of the future.

Hamman added, “The youth are generally early adopters of technology and if we can get them excited about farming what better link than through the digital transformation of agriculture.”



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One prominent message was the duality of the current situation; older farmers need to actively transfer their skills and knowledge onto younger farmers, who in turn, need embrace the transformative potential of digital agri-systems.

Lisa adds, “Both female and young farmers play a vital role in driving local economic development, but in recent years little has been done to educate them on digital agricultural practices, which has harmed the growth of their businesses. Climate conditions such as drought, heavy rains and our current energy crisis have also played a detrimental role to their growth

trajectory. It is evident that we must take action and empower and upskill the younger generation. They face many challenges including having to navigate their way in a world where climate change is forcing food producers to become more sustainable and resilient. Being left behind in the digital era is not an option.”

## **More jobs**

With SAB prioritising investment in developing capabilities, competitiveness, and innovation, it is expected that the high-impact solutions will enable smallholder farmers in South Africa to become more productive, commercially viable and sustainable. “If the farmers are better equipped and successful it is a win for us both,” explains Lisa.

There is potential for creating more jobs and improving job availability along the value chain, and emerging technology could inspire the younger generation to take advantage of employment and entrepreneurship opportunities provided by agrifood systems. Bavuyise from Agriseta echoed the need for collaboration between industry and government to relook traditional farming practices and incorporate new era digital farming by changing skills development curriculum, incentivizing good farming practices and employing research and development to fast track the transition.

Through SAB’s partnership with leading agricultural platform Food For Mzansi, it intends to unlock the future of agriculture and empower women and young farmers in the digital age.

“To improve the economic circumstances of individuals, families, and communities, more collaboration is needed between businesses such as SAB, industry leaders, and farmers. The objective is to educate these farmers about agricultural support programmes, assisting them to become responsible for improving their economic circumstances,” concludes Lisa.

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