

# Santam, Sanlam donate R3m to alleviate impact of drought on farming communities

Santam, South Africa's largest short-term insurer, and Sanlam, Africa's largest non-banking financial services business, have collectively donated R3 million towards aid relief for farming communities. The donation will assist commercial and emerging farmers currently impacted by the devastating drought that has hit large parts of the country.



From left to right: Lizé Lambrechts, CEO of Santam, Omri van Zyl, CEO of Agri SA and Tembisa Mushi, board director for Sanlam and CE of Sanlam Group Market Development.

The donation of R3m was presented to Agri SA, which is coordinating relief efforts for farmers in the country. The drought has afflicted two provinces in particular, the Northern and Eastern Cape. According to Agri Northern Cape, the drought has affected 15,000 farms in the province and reduced livestock by as much as 50%.

## Sustainability and food security

The agri-sector is a critical segment for Santam which holds the largest market share in the sector. Santam views the sustainability of the farming community as important for food security and employment. The company, therefore, feels committed to assisting farmers during the current drought crisis.

Agricultural experts believe this is the worst drought in living memory, with the drought in the Eastern Cape being dubbed as the worst in a thousand years. Many farming towns, including Graaff-Reinet, Bedford, Makhanda and Adelaide, have experienced water shortages.

It is expected that both donations will assist the Agri SA Drought Disaster Fund to acquire fodder, humanitarian aid for farmers, farm workers and rural communities.

Sanlam has a longstanding vision to build a world in which people are able to live the best lives possible through financial resilience and prosperity on an individual and societal level. The group prioritises sustainability as one of its core pillars and has donated a significant amount towards water security through its twelve-year partnership with the WWF.

Through this partnership, Sanlam and the WWF South Africa have mapped and raised awareness around the 'crown jewels' of South Africa's water resources, created the WWF South Africa Water Risk filter tool, founded the Water Balance project in George; and developed a teaching resource to promote responsible water stewardship among learners and teachers.

Santam is closely involved in the agri market as an insurer. Its R1,5 million donation is in addition to a R300,000 contribution by Santam in April 2019 towards the Agri SA Drought Disaster Fund. The insurer further supports various Agri unions and fundraising events and remains actively involved with drought relief initiatives throughout the country.

## **Retention in the value chain**

Lizé Lambrechts, Santam Group CEO, says the donation is intended to assist all farmers impacted by the drought. "A contribution of this nature will help with retention in the agricultural value chain as we might lose fewer farmers and associated businesses, as a result of factors such as foreclosure.

"More importantly, Santam is a proudly South African company, and we could not stand by and do nothing. As an active South African corporate citizen, we see it as our duty and responsibility to support during times of such devastation. This effort also assists to guarantee food security for our country," she said.

Temba Mvusi, board director for Sanlam and CE of Sanlam Group Market Development, says: "Sanlam has always prioritised our people, our continent and creating a legacy we're proud of. We are absolutely interwoven in the fabric of the communities in which we operate. Right now, the drought in South Africa is placing thousands of our farmers in dire straits. We hope that our donation will play a part in helping people to secure their livelihoods, put measures in place to become future-fit, and foster food security for our nation.

"Water security is a serious issue in South Africa and one that Sanlam is committed to sustainably solving. We cannot do this alone. It will take collective will and ongoing action. We urge others to partner with us on this journey."

## **Bringing hope to all involved**

Christo van der Rhee, deputy executive director at Agri SA, says Agri SA welcomes the support from Santam and Sanlam. "Farmers and farm workers are extremely grateful for the financial contribution and as such the support not only brings immediate relief, it also brings hope amidst all the despair.

"Agri SA also calls on all other corporates to join hands with Santam and Sanlam in order to strengthen the agricultural sector's efforts to overcome the devastating impact of the continuous drought and ensure food security for all of our people. With a partner such as Agri SA, you can be assured that all efforts in this regard are channelled towards our farmers and farm workers at grassroots level and bring relief to those in real need."

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