



Driving change in South Africa's agri-systems

A powerful mechanism to address poverty and inequality

The FirstRand Empowerment Foundation's vision is to reduce poverty and inequality by undertaking and/or supporting public benefit activities that result in B-BBEE. To this effect, in March 2021, FREF identified the agricultural sector as a strategic focus area given its size, scale and systemic nature. Interventions have the potential to reduce poverty and inequality, improving food security and community resilience.

Agriculture plays a fundamental role in daily life, providing livelihoods for one-third of the global population and global food security. The social and environmental urgencies of supporting agriculture are reflected across the SDGs, from 'No Poverty' (SDG 1) to 'Zero Hunger' (SDG 2) and 'Sustainable Consumption and Production' (SDG 12).

FREF's objectives for its agri-systems portfolio are to:

- **increase the number of black individuals and black-owned and -managed enterprises** in the agricultural sector in South Africa;
- **invest and increase the level of participation of black individuals** and enterprises in a competitive, growing and sustainable agricultural sector;
- **enable investment in enterprises, and identify and solve market failures and barriers to entry** for black people; and
- enable **climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience** while protecting household food security.

For the past two years, FREF has committed over **R200 million** to fund 11 organisations that operate in specific agricultural sectors.

Driving change in South Africa's agri-systems *continued*

Some initiatives supported in 2023 include:

	Background and objectives	Impact	Commitment	Footprint
Mineworkers Development Agency 	<p>The Beekeeping Empowerment Initiative centres on beekeeping and leveraging its potential to provide a multifaceted solution to empower black individuals and communities. Key objectives include establishing cooperatives and organising beekeepers, for collective actions, improving beekeepers' skills and knowledge and linking these groups to service providers and markets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in the volume of imported foreign honey. • 5 000 jobs created. • Increased awareness about the critical role of bees in ecosystems and food production. 	R14.4 million	Limpopo, Northern Cape, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng
Siyazisiza Trust 	<p>Siyazisiza Trust is a rural socio-economic development, whose mission is to work with black community farmers and enterprises to improve livelihoods, food security and the environment. The Young Farmers Development programme is designed to advance unemployed rural youth with entrepreneurial potential, to a point at which they can manage and operate viable enterprises with market linkages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of young black agripreneurs participating in the value chain and/or gaining employment in the agri-sector. • 150 youth provided with intensive training through Siyazisiza's accredited programme. 	R51.7 million	KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga
Tuli Growth Initiative 	<p>Fast-track the commercialisation of emerging Tuli cattle farmers through improved herd sizes and productivity.</p> <p>Conservation of the indigenous Tuli cattle breed for emerging farms in South Africa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved commerciality of emerging black farmers. • Developed black farmers to scale operations. • Improved cattle genetics for sustainability of breeding and stock values. 	R22.5 million	Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, Northwest and Western Cape
Milk South Africa 	<p>Milk SA aims to promote a healthy South African dairy community with a particular focus on assisting farmers in establishing high-quality permanent pasture under irrigation and to increase dairy herds to an economically viable size. Key objectives include establishing black dairy smallholder farmers and enable these farmers to operate across the wider dairy market value chain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a milk processing plant. • Established additional pasture for grazing of herds during winter season. • Purchased 302 Jersey cows to improve farmer commercialisation. 	R19.9 million	Eastern Cape and Free State
Vine Academy 	<p>The Vine Academy (a subsidiary of Raisins SA) represents raisin grape growers in the Northern Cape and Western Cape. The organisation assists black raisin grape farmers to increase their profitability through interventions such as technical support and fundraising for expansions/efficiencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased the number of black people who manage, own and control enterprises and productive assets. • Increased the number of successful women raisin grape farmers. • Supported existing farmers to expand their raisin grape farm operations. • Job creation through an increase in the number of hectares planted. 	R47.8 million	Northern Cape