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Land ownership needed for financial assistance

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By Marlise Scheepers

Farmers can only gain financial assistance through land ownership.

This was according to Dr Theo de Jager, chairperson of Agri All Africa.

De Jager was addressing attendees of the Transvaal Agricultural Union's (TAU SA) annual general meeting, held at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria recently.

He said that while farmers with long-term lease agreements, like a 99-year lease, could apply for financial assistance, financial institutions would only finance them for the first three years of the lease duration.

He added that the secret to South African farmers' success was the over-capitalisation of their businesses, and that ownership acted as an incentive for investment.

"Farmers will only invest in their own business and will not invest if they are not the owners of the business."

According to De Jager, South African farmers were the most successful farmers in Africa, and other African countries wanted South African farmers to farm in their respective countries.

He also said that Africa could not grow without a thriving agriculture sector, and that the continent needed to commercialise and modernise to ensure growth.