

Majeje citrus farm expands with support from public-private partnerships in Limpopo

With backing from the Komati Fruit Group, the Motsepe Foundation, Absa, and the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Majeje Citrus Farm is on a path to fully engage in South Africa's citrus sector. Located near Letsitele in Limpopo, this venture is part of a broader initiative aimed at economic rejuvenation through targeted investments.

In 2020, Majeje Citrus (Pty) Ltd was established through a collaboration between the Majeje Traditional Authority, Komati Fruit Group, and Boela Bruwer, an agricultural economist. This partnership was initiated by the Majeje Tribal Authority to develop part of their land into a commercial citrus enterprise, with Komati providing development and managerial services.

The Majeje tribe, with a history dating back to 1840, owns approximately 69,000ha of land in eastern Limpopo. This area is utilized for various purposes including residential, cattle, and crop farming, as well as nature conservation. The citrus project, supported by blended finance from both government and private sectors, including the Motsepe Foundation and Absa, showcases the potential of such collaborations.

The project, which began planting citrus trees in 2022, focuses on lemons, Valencia-type oranges, and Star Ruby grapefruit. Plans include expanding to 457ha, with a significant portion dedicated to these crops. This expansion is supported by registered water rights from the Great Letaba Irrigation Scheme and aims to create numerous job opportunities.

Addressing unemployment, the project expects to increase its workforce significantly, providing training and skill development for the local community. The initiative emphasizes sustainable farming practices, incorporating solar power and advanced irrigation techniques to align with global environmental trends.

The project's leaders stress the importance of community benefit and long-term investment in the citrus industry. They highlight the need for patience and reinvestment to ensure the project's success and its potential to serve as a model for environmentally responsible farming in the region.

As Majeje Citrus Farm progresses, it represents a promising example of how public-private partnerships can drive agricultural development, offering insights into sustainable practices and economic diversification in Limpopo's agricultural sector.

Source: Farmer's Weekly (<https://www.farmersweekly.co.za/agribusiness/agribusinesses/public-private-partnership-a-boon-for-limpopo-citrus/>)

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