



## Agriculture & Rural Development

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Agriculture and Rural Development  
North West Provincial Government  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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## MEDIA STATEMENT

**Att: ALL EDITORS**

**Media Houses**

**Date: Tuesday, 27 August 2019**

### BRITS BASED PRODUCERS ON CITRUS EXPORT MARKET

**BRITS** – Batlhako Temo Services have successfully entered the export market, making them the first black owned citrus orchard in the North West province to enter the global market. The Brits based company will see their products going to Middle East areas as well as Taiwan.

Having started the project in 2012 on a farm leased from the now Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform, the enterprise partner Issac Moilwa says the journey has not been easy. The 5 members' cooperative started in 2012 by sunflower producers at that time. After the first difficult two years which saw the passing away of two members and a loss on production, the remaining members decided to introduce citrus.

The 61,5 hectare farm currently has 16 000 citrus trees. Of this only 21 is under production. Although in around 2014 until 2017, the production was in teething stage, their dream was slowly gaining momentum. The North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development assisted the business on two occasions with at least R800 000 of each of those years. With the funds, the cooperative improved their irrigation system and structure their office space and other logistics.

"We placed in irrigation system and from there we never looked back. We have been receiving technical advice from the department and we are comfortable of the strides we have from such assistance," Moilwa said. They are also part of the Citrus Growers Association which generally supports members to be globally competitive.

To date the company has employed 10 workers permanent and over 70 seasonal. The seasonal workers are divided into the local and export market workers. Their workforce includes a seasoned

farm manager whom the cooperative commissioned to create a structure for the company and take it to international platforms. Their journey was faced with challenges however they did not despair." We were ready to export in 2018 but we could not get a pack house so our products ended in the local markets including SIR Fruit and Magalies Citrus Company. We were determined to break through and as such we did manage to get a pack house. So far we have managed to deliver seven containers and we hope to deliver more the end of the harvest season.

Much as this is a milestone, this family cooperative have big dreams in as far as developing their business is concerned. They would like to increase on the exportable trees in their other available land. They would also like to own a pack house which they believe is a need. "Pack-house will cut a lot of costs and eventually lead to us employing possibly over 200 people. We would like to make that great contribution to job creation and that is what many companies are looking forward to these days.

North West MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Desbo Mohono remain impressed by the orchard after visiting in the past few weeks. She has encouraged the team to work even harder and grow their global market. Mohono said she would wish to see many farmers tapping on the same knowledge and expanding their territories.

Despite the water leak challenges that are in the their current space as well as transport to their leased pack House, Batlhako Temo is determined to make it big in the industry. The fact that they are first to enter the market makes them prepared to work and share ideas with other famers. They are due to host a famer's information day in November this year as part of their effort to share ideas with other farmers.

**## ends ##**

**Issued by the Communication Services Directorate**

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