

Tiger Brands boosts smallholder farmers

By [Ursula Human](#)

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Tiger Brands has launched its enterprise supplier development fund to support smallholder farmers, processors and distributors in the food-processing value chain.



According to Mary-Jane Morifi, chief corporate affairs officer at Tiger Brands, the fund provides for two aspects of supplier development, namely primary production and post-harvest.

The fund comprises two separate funds to support these two functions. The first fund is called Balimi, which means farmers in Sesotho and Tswana. It assists farmers with loans to support primary production activities and inputs. The second fund, Depumo, focuses on post-harvest processes.

Morifi says the agro-processing giant established the fund to open the supply chain to smallholder farmers. By signing contracts with these farmers to secure a market for their produce, Tiger Brands hopes to help them develop into commercial farmers. Smallholder farmers are often able to supply produce but they sometimes do not have access to markets to sell it, which means that the future of inclusive supply in the value chain could depend on off-take contracts such as these.

A bountiful harvest

With so many products and brands within Tiger Brands, the company is interested in a wide variety of commodities. For example, some 58 small-scale farmers from the Western Cape and North West supply Tiger Brands with wheat.

Those who do not produce on a large enough scale to meet the company's requirements take part in aggregate projects in which distributors collect the harvest of several farmers and deliver it to Tiger Brands. Other commodities include, oats, non-GMO maize, tomatoes, chillies, fruit and white bean.

The oats are used as a rotation crop for wheat farmers to ensure sustainable production. The tomatoes are used for products such as All Gold tomato sauce. Tiger Brands assists farmers with the technical support and know-how such as determining which is the best cultivar to grow and when to harvest.

Various fruit are sourced from the Western Cape and used in their various canned fruit products. The company is always in need of African Birds Eye chillies and they also run a special project to increase their intake of this hot commodity, which is used in a variety of products.



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Unlocking future potential

Morifi said Tiger Brands will hopefully also be launching a project that focuses on groundnut production and negotiations for a partnership in this industry is already underway. This industry also holds the opportunity for small-scale farmers to process their harvest before delivering to Tiger Brands, which increases the product's value.

Shelling, peeling and grading can be done on small-scale farms. The female farmers who grow white beans for the Koo baked beans brand sort and grade the beans on-farm.

Tiger Brands also has a high demand for citrus crush (pulp) and this unlocks another opportunity for farmers to process their product before delivering it.

Morifi also said that much more potential can be unlocked in the small-scale processing industry. For example, pectin is a by-product of the fruit industry and is made from fruit peels. It is used to thicken jam and there is always a need for this specialised product. Tiger Brands will keep rolling out more projects that help build a more inclusive value chain.

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