

**MEDIA RELEASE BY DR IVAN MEYER
WESTERN CAPE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
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STUDY ON GENDER EQUITY AIMS TO IMPROVE MARKET ACCESS

The Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA) in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture has completed an exploratory study into the representation and treatment of women within what many believe to be a male dominated agricultural sector.

The primary objective of the study was to determine the number of women employed in the agricultural industry and how they experience the working environment.

A secondary objective was to ascertain whether women are treated with dignity at all levels of the industry and to identify barriers which hinder gender equality in agriculture.

According to SIZA, the focus on gender equality and dignity of all people is becoming ever greater across the globe, and people and businesses alike are realizing the value behind the dignified treatment of all employees.

Commenting on the report, Minister Meyer said:

“My main priority is to grow the agricultural economy and create jobs. I have set a goal for the Provincial Agricultural Sector to increase its exports by at least 5% over the next five years. To do so, we must position the sector in a way that responds to the requirements of the export market. World markets are placing a greater emphasis on ethical issues relating to the production and distribution of agricultural products. Our partnership with SIZA provided the opportunity to explore these issues and, where necessary, begin to respond in a way that promotes market access and job creation.”

Retha Louw, CEO of SIZA, highlights that an increasing number of export markets require information on gender representation.

Louw: "Export markets are, as part of their ethical standards, requiring more information from their suppliers on gender representation within businesses. This research provides stakeholders with a glimpse into how women are represented and treated in South African agriculture, the extent to which women have been liberated, and identifies areas of improvement."

The study includes both a quantitative and qualitative research component.

After the initial data collection, interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders within various industries.

The data was compiled in a research paper, and the interviews can be viewed on YouTube.

The research paper can be accessed at <https://siza.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Women-in-Agriculture-Research-Report-2020-Print-version.pdf>.

Interviews can be viewed on <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLo9T0F31nAPmllew1eCHI7QfRbCv8dVwT>.

Lowu continues: "Women have an important role to play in the future of agriculture worldwide. Although the role of women in agriculture enjoys more recognition than a few years ago, much more can be done to support women in the industry."

"The research aims to improve market access for our producers. Gender equity makes business sense" concludes Meyer.

END

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