

## **THE MAIZE TRUST**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

#### **ASSISTANCE TO EMERGING MAIZE FARMERS**

The Maize Trust, in 2007, launched a pilot project to financially assist emerging maize farmers. This proved to be so successful that it was decided to extend it to the 2008 maize planting season.

The main aims of the project are to assist emerging farmers with the cost of initial soil correction and to minimise their production risk. The assistance therefore improves the production ability of the farmers and aids them in obtaining crop input finance for the production of maize.

The Trust makes use of the Agri-Businesses to act as mentors to the farmers, so that the project can be successfully managed and the farmers can get the maximum benefit from the Trust's assistance. The Agri-Businesses submit proposals to the Trust for consideration, which are considered and approved, or rejected, by the Trust on merit.

The Trust's financial assistance to the emerging farmers is done by paying for:

- (a) the cost of lime, which includes the cost of soil analysis; and
- (b) all or a portion of the crop insurance premiums.

In addition to the above costs, the Trust is also prepared to pay a portion of the cost of extension officers, or a mentor, to assist the specific farmers. Proper reporting is done by the Agri-Businesses to the Trust and this, together with auditing systems that are applied, determine the further participation of the Agri-Business and the specific farmers involved. Physical visits by the Trust to the emerging farmers are also planned before and after the next maize production season.

Mr. Karabo Peele, Chairperson of the Maize Trust, says: "The assistance by the Trust to emerging maize farmers proved to be such a success in 2007 that we hope to expand the project in 2008. The Trust paid a total amount of nearly R3,4 million to participants in that year. Seven Agri-Businesses participated in the initiative, which benefitted a total of 228 emerging farmers. These farmers planted more than 5000 hectares and delivered more than 12 000 tons of maize"

He says: "The Maize Trust is hoping that the success of this project will eventually encourage other organisations to become involved in funding similar projects and for a partnership to develop between Government and private sector to render effective assistance to emerging maize farmers".

Interested parties are invited to contact the Administrators of the Trust:

L & L Agricultural Services, telephone (012) 333-3429; fax (012) 333-3634  
or e-mail at l-lagric@mweb.co.za.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE MAIZE TRUST ON 2 JULY 2008.**