FEMALE FARMER OF THE YEAR: ADA beneficiaries honoured

Siphiwe Nyawo on the 200-hectare Ibuziwo Farm. Nyawo was recognised by the Department of Agriculture as the best female farmer in its Commercial Entrepreneur category.

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Nyawo is passionate about farming and has ambitious plans for Ibuziwo Farm. She wants to build a successful commercial venture out of the 200-hectare sugarcane and banana farm and her 10-member cooperative purchased with the assistance of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR).

She has faced numerous challenges on the path to this dream, including a run-down banana packing shed on the farm, an insufficient irrigation system, and costly inputs that were needed to improve the farm's yields.

"When I bought the farm, not only were the buildings just about falling apart, but we also needed assistance with fertiliser and various other inputs," she said.

Nyawo helped repair Ibuziwo Farm's banana packing shed, converting it into a state-of-the-art commercial farming facility and erecting a brand new roof on the building.

The agency installed a five-hectare irrigation system for the farm's banana plantations and enabled the planting of an additional 30 hectares of under-utilised land. ADA also helped with the purchase of fertiliser and the other critical inputs needed.

"ADA responded very positively to our needs, and understood the need to act and implement timely and, and they have been absolutely committed to helping us succeed," said Nyawo.

Nyawo is now looking to the future and has plans to produce value from the farm's banana crop by-products. In true entrepreneurial style, she is investigating options for entering the dried fruit market too.

"We are very excited about our prospects, and thank ADA for their support," said Nyawo.

Siphiwe Molafe — BBS Farming Project
Bokwane Molafe, the managing member of BBS Farming Project cc, won an award in the Small Holder category.

Established in 2008, BBS Farming Project cc is a smallholder enterprise that grows macadamia nuts, and has been recognized for its efforts to support and develop smallholder farmers.

"The project manages the entire process of growing macadamia nuts, from planting to harvesting and marketing," said Molafe.

The project has been successful in providing support and resources to smallholder farmers, enabling them to become more productive and profitable.

"We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our partners and stakeholders—the Department of Agriculture, the ICN DRDLR, Department of Economic Development and Tourism (EDDT) and COGTA— as the support afforded to commercial farmers would not have been possible without their engagement," she said.

"We are also proud of our project management team for their commitment towards ensuring that our farmers are well equipped to participate effectively in the mainstream economy of Kwa-Zulu Natal," Molafe continued.

"Through the support of ADA and BBS Farming Project cc, we encourage other smallholder farmers to continue working hard to create employment and improve lives within KZN's rural communities."