

Augsburg



**ESTABLISHING SUCCESSFUL
PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE
PRIVATE SECTOR IN ORDER TO
SUSTAIN A SCHOOL'S
LONGEVITY**



HISTORY OF AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS BEFORE AND AFTER 1994

- In South Africa: Traditional Agricultural schools were established as early as 1927 and developed since 1945 from mainly practical orientated courses in agriculture to a more general approach in order to obtain a school certificate as well as university admission for students.
- In the 1950's the name of these specific schools changed to "Agricultural High Schools"
- There are two schools of thought regarding agricultural schools, and the specific school of thought that is decided upon, will determine to what extent the private sector can and will be involved:

Two schools of thought
regarding the farming
activities, size and
extent of agricultural
schools:

1. The farm must be a financially independent institution that includes all branches of farming in the specific ecological region.

2. A farm is not needed and only farming activities that provide demonstrative teaching is necessary.

BEFORE 1994



Traditionally agricultural education involved the teaching of skills through hand labor and performance of routine tasks of the different farming activities.



Demonstrative teaching complemented the above.



Costs involved in establishing and management of such schools are high and additional staff is needed for effective functioning of the school.



Financial support from the state and education departments made it possible for these schools to present a diverse range of farming activities which did not necessarily have to be financially viable on their own but only needed to be available for educational purposes.

AFTER 1994



Current situation of agricultural schools as well as the needs of education and training in agricultural sector changed dramatically in SA.



Traditional agricultural schools with a farming component have the same financial challenges as commercial farms and maintenance & input costs are substantial. Limited financial contribution from the state.



It is exactly this circumstance that caused traditional agricultural schools to form partnerships with the private sector in order to support them in the educational process.



Research have shown that career-oriented agricultural schools are currently of the most important institutions that can prepare the youth to become part of the agricultural sector of SA in the future.

THE IMAGE OF AN AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL



THERE IS A MISCONCEPTION REGARDING AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS THAT LEARNERS ATTENDING THESE SCHOOLS CANNOT COPE WITH MAINSTREAM EDUCATION OR HAVE TO GO FARMING AFTER SCHOOL OR STUDY AGRICULTURE AT A TERTIARY INSTITUTION.



THIS IS FAR FROM THE TRUTH!
AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS PROVIDE THE SAME AND IN SOME CASES EVEN MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNERS THAN REGULAR HIGH SCHOOLS.

Agricultural high schools offer:

- Admission to tertiary education at Universities and Technikons.
- General subjects as at other schools but also technical and agricultural subjects.
- Career oriented subjects.
- Practical courses for career-oriented subjects.
- Continuous practical evaluation as part of the final exams for career-oriented subjects.
- Sport and culture that is necessary for the holistic development of the child.

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

- Three different agricultural subjects are offered for learners following an agricultural career path: Agricultural Sciences, Agricultural Management Practices and Agricultural Technology.
- Agricultural Sciences is more of a pure academically orientated science, while Agricultural Management Practices and Agricultural Technology have a larger practical component.
- It is also the last two subjects that lend themselves more to the involvement of the private sector due to the nature of the content of these subjects.

Agricultural Management Practices provide education and training in:



Agricultural Technology focus on the technology used in the agricultural sector and provides exposure to:

Basic operational knowledge and correct use of agricultural implements and machinery.

Construction, erection and maintenance of agricultural infrastructure.

Maintenance and repair of farm equipment and machinery.

Planning, construction and maintenance of animal handling facilities.

Safe and efficient use of implements in the production of crops.

Planning design and maintenance of macro and micro irrigation systems, hydroponic systems, calibrations and calculations in the agricultural context.

- It is clear that these two subjects have a variety of practical courses that are presented alongside subject knowledge and this creates opportunities to involve the private sector with the presentation of some of these courses by specialists in the field.
- The courses presented allow learners to leave school with recognized certificates creating a better chance of finding employment.
- The different companies presenting these courses are also aware of the content and level of these qualifications, as well as the fact that there are students entering the world of work with such qualifications.

WHAT WORKS AT AUGSBURG?

- Over the past few years the challenge was to move Augsburg Agricultural Gymnasium's farming component from a largely demonstrative to a financially viable and sustainable farming enterprise.
- Due to limited resources, experience and labor forces the school was forced to build and develop partnerships with the private sector and WCED. With their support we managed to not only provide our learners with the necessary academic knowledge, but also to expose them to the newest technology and farming practices.
- We believe that theoretical knowledge alone is not sufficient to prepare learners effectively for the agricultural sector, therefore we create opportunities for learners who follow the agricultural course at school to attend two practical sessions of at least one hour each per week at the farm.

- It is mainly during these compulsory sessions that companies in the private sector take our hand and provide exposure and training as needed.
- Learners either visit various agri-businesses or these companies visit our farm.
- Important to note that all of these companies are also involved in some way or another with the actual farming component of Augsburg.
- Top genetic material of our various studfarm animals are offered for sale to the local farming community.

In addition to these practical sessions in the afternoons the school also provide 12 agricultural courses of which 10 are accredited:

Vine pruning course
- VINPRO

Boerbok course -
SABBA

Dorper source - DBA

Wool classification
course - BKB

Irrigation course -
SABI

Sheep shearer
course - NWGA

Rooibos production
course –
Rooibos

Animal reproduction
course - NWGA

Fencing course -
Elsenburg

Commercial &
Organized
Agriculture course –
Agri Western Cape

Labour relations and
management course
- LWO

Welding course -
Automation works



- The certificates and qualifications obtained by completing these courses in conjunction with the NSC creates an impressive CV for the learner leaving our school to either enter a career in agriculture or study further.

EXISTING PRACTICES



Your school is not an island!



There are many companies that are willing to get involved with the education of learners, especially at an agricultural school as there are so many more opportunities to do so.



Through availing the school for advertising opportunities, the use of infrastructure for auctions, hosting of sporting activities - sustainable support can be created with the extended community as well as the private sector.

Practical example...

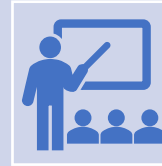
- The Augsburg-BKB woolshed and its infrastructure is used to provide a shearing service for small farmers in the community.
- Farmers bring their sheep to be sheared by the learners, the equipment used are state of the art due to contributions of the WCED and BKB.
- Through this a mutually beneficial situation is created: the learners get the opportunity to develop and practice their shearing techniques and skills, the farmers get their sheep sheared free of charge, and the private companies are exposed to the farmers as well as receiving exposure to the public and community.

**FURTHER EXAMPLES OF HOW SPECIFIC BUSINESSES CAN BECOME
INVOLVED AT SCHOOL :**

Build Career Awareness and Job Preparedness



**Offer internship or
employment opportunities
for students**



**Allow short-term job
shadowing for students**

Enhance the Learning Environment

- Participate in an after-school program.
- Provide scholarships to students.
- Be involved in school beautification or other projects or events at schools.
- Provide flexibility in work schedule, for parents and other workers to volunteer at schools.
- Serve as a judge for various school events.
- Display notices of school events, samples of student work.
- Provide educational field trips and opportunities to expose students to the private sector with current relevant business practices or methods.

Civic Organizations and Private individuals

- Provide incentive awards or scholarships.
- Serve on a school advisory committee especially successful farmers in the different specialized fields that can help the farming component of the school with advice and guidance.

Chambers of Commerce



Participate in a Career Day



Assist students with getting training in local businesses and subsequent employment



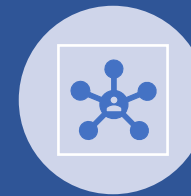
Provide workshops for teachers to update their skills



Sponsor student interns



Assist schools to obtain additional partners from the private sector



Important for the school to join the local business chamber and play an active role in the community

Financial Institutions

- Sponsor economic education projects eg. Entrepreneurship competition



PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS AND TIPS

It is of utmost importance that the involvement of any private company with the schools' main purpose is to benefit the learners, mainly by providing educational opportunities or exposure to new technology and practices.

Secondly it is as important for the company or sponsor to receive the necessary exposure, either to the learners who are the farmers of the future or existing role players in the agricultural sector and the wider community.

The way in which companies are approached is important: don't just ask for money but focus on building relationships that are mutually beneficial. There are also still companies who contribute financially and for this we are thankful!

Electing an active and functioning Junior Agricultural Society consisting of learners from the school.

The school and its farming personnel and learners must be part of an agricultural society in the community. This creates opportunity for building contacts and relationships with role players in the agricultural sector of the community.

Developing and implementing effective strategies need innovative ideas seeing as the situation of every school and the community in which it is situated differs.

The constructive involvement and individual financial capabilities of each person and company will eventually determine how realistic long term involvement can be achieved.

It is important for schools and private companies to realize that no amount of involvement is too small or of no value! Any contribution or involvement helps!

A specific person must be targeted to organize information and demonstrative sessions by private companies.

THE WAY FORWARD

AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS TRADITIONALLY CAME INTO EXISTENCE IN RESPONSE TO INSISTENCE OF THE COMMUNITIES AND THEREFORE THESE SCHOOLS MUST SERVE THE NEEDS OF SAID COMMUNITIES.



AS A COMMUNITY INSTITUTION A SCHOOL MAY NEVER STAND APART FROM THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY WHEREIN IT IS SITUATED AND FUNCTIONS.



THE SCHOOL MUST IN FACT BE A DRIVING FORCE IN A CONSTANTLY CHANGING ENVIRONMENT WITH ALL THE ACCOMPANYING CHALLENGES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE RELEVANT EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

It will seem as if the department of education realized the important role that agriculture will play in the future of SA as well as the need to train and create a love and understanding for agriculture in the youth.

Over the past few years numerous schools have started implementing a course in agricultural studies that forms part of a curriculum that serves the needs of the specific area of the school.

The agricultural component of these schools are mainly focused on demonstrative education and training and it is exactly in such situations where the private sector can be involved in order to ensure the viability of these courses.

South African agriculture is divided in a progressive commercial sector on the one hand and an emerging sector on the other.

Both of these sectors need to be developed and grow continuously and agricultural education and training can rectify divisions, build relationships and contribute to creating an internationally competing agricultural sector in South Africa.

In this aspect secondary as well as tertiary educational institutions, as well as their partnerships with private sector companies, play an important role in training and equipping students to have the necessary knowledge and skills that can help build and develop the agricultural sector in South Africa.

THANK YOU

Augsburg

