

AGRI SA COMMODITY AND FARMER DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

COTTON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**KATOEN
SUID -
AFRIKA**



**COTTON
SOUTH
AFRICA**

SMALL-SCALE FARMER PROJECTS

- **Small-scale cotton farming as a rule not conducted on a project basis but has historically comprised of individual farmers (mainly dryland farmers).**
- **Commercial gins previously financed and managed small-farmer irrigation cotton projects, but these gins have all closed down.**
- **Only current project is at Taung on 120 irrigation hectares with Mafisa funding and with the active involvement of the local farmer gin as well as Cotton SA technical support.**
- **Future Plans: to grow the above to 800 ha in rotation with other crops in next 2 years and to revitalise old cotton irrigation schemes in the Limpopo and KZN Provinces .**

GROWING PAINS / BOTTLE-NECKS

- **Access to finance problematic - relative high risk as most small-scale cotton farmers do not own land.**
- **Financial institutions reluctant to provide funding for cotton projects unless cotton gins act as intermediaries and manage and administrate projects.**
- **All current gins are farmer owned and do not really have the capacity to manage small-farmer projects of any significance.**
- **Lack of proper infrastructure & equipment.**
- **Lack of commitment from small-scale farmers.**
- **Lack of skills to farm cotton.**
- **Majority of small-scale cotton farmers are dryland farmers.**

LESSONS LEARNT / CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

- **Irrigation projects ideal approach but should not comprise of too many individuals.**
- **Dependency on government grants not conducive to sustainable production.**
- **Small-farmer finance schemes such as Mafisa should be easily accessible.**
- **Continuation and expansion of cotton skills training and mentorship programs.**
- **Gins involvement as intermediaries to manage projects, supply inputs, marketing arrangements, etc. essential.**
- **Organisational structures on national and local levels crucial.**

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

- Cotton is a highly suitable crop for small-scale farming as it is labour intensive & therefore provides numerous job opportunities on farm level (1 worker per ha - small-farmer potential hectares est. more than 70 000.).
- Cotton is often the most economic and viable crop in marginal dryland production areas.
- Cotton therefore contributes to the social upliftment of people and assists in rural development and the elimination of poverty (1 farmer on average has 5 dependents).
- Cotton is a cash crop which impacts positively on the households of rural communities in terms of food security and income levels and can be regarded as a major vehicle to empower small-scale farmers.

A close-up photograph of a cotton plant. The image shows several clusters of white, fluffy cotton bolls (seeds) attached to green stems and leaves. The bolls are in various stages of maturity, with some showing the dark brown seed pods. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a healthy cotton field.

THANK YOU