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Female Farmers Win Top Agriculture Prize

PELLA, NORTHERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA (August 30, 2018): INMED Partnerships for Children and INMED South Africa are pleased to announce that project beneficiary Pella Food Garden Cooperative was named Best Subsistence Producer by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries at this year's annual Female Entrepreneur Awards. The group also was named the Overall Winner of the provincial Female Entrepreneur Awards by the Department of Agriculture in the Northern Cape. It is the first time a contestant from Northern Cape has won a top national prize.

The Female Entrepreneur Awards were launched in 1999 to recognize the diligent efforts of women in the agricultural sector to reduce poverty through food security, job creation and economic development.

"We feel like proud parents," said Unathi Sihlahla, Programme Director of INMED South Africa, which has spent the last year working with the all-female farming co-op to install aquaponics and -

adaptive agriculture measures to help the group increase its production capacity to survive a prolonged drought.

The members of Pella Food Garden Cooperative, consisting of five women (one of whom is disabled), had been struggling to farm their land for eight years but could not generate enough income to utilize all their land or buy inputs. All the members had to rely on government assistance to make ends meet. Within one year of farming with new climate-smart techniques and aquaponics, however, the co-op increased its income from an average of R50 per month to R3000 per month.

With their newfound business acumen, the group is investing its R325,000 of prize money from the Female Entrepreneur Awards in future expansion and stipends for volunteers who help on the farm. The members also look forward to sharing more of their harvests with needy families.

Aquaponics: A Solution for Food Security, Income, Community Development & Climate Change

Aquaponics is an innovative and highly intensive food production technique that combines aquaculture (fish farming) and hydroponics (soilless crop production) in a closed symbiotic system that is easily scalable to meet the needs of smallholder farmers, schools, government institutions, commercial enterprises and even home gardeners. INMED's system produces year-round harvests despite extreme climate-change events, uses 90% less water than traditional farming, produces significantly more and better produce at a faster rate and can be scaled to fit any space in both rural and urban environments.

In partnership with Old Mutual, INMED South Africa installed a commercial-sized aquaponics system for the Pella Food Garden cooperative as well as a commercial-weight shade cloth for the group's adaptive agriculture vegetable garden. The INMED team also installed a drip irrigation system and facilitated regular training for a full year.

In addition to receiving technical training in adaptive agriculture, the Pella co-op members learned computer skills, accounting, business planning, marketing and sales via training from INMED and Old Mutual. "Our Adaptive Agriculture programme is unique in that involves the entire value chain—from technical assistance and business training to access to financing and links to ready markets for high-quality produce and fish," explained Sihlahla.

Indeed, the Pella group's reputation has spread quickly, becoming a preferred supplier to the public, local retailers, community soup kitchens and schools. Local guesthouses, such as Aggenhuis Guest House, also are negotiating with the Pella Food Garden to provide vegetables and herbs for their guests' meals.

In accepting the award, co-op leader Ester Nell said she was thankful for the help of INMED and Old Mutual and the diligence of her fellow farmers. "We had the persistence to carry on for many years, which were not very successful," she said. "But through INMED and Old Mutual, aquaponics has made a significant difference in our lives and brought interest in our project that

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we've never had before. We will continue to grow our business and provide jobs in our community.”

About Old Mutual:

Old Mutual was established in Cape Town in 1845 as South Africa's first mutual life insurance company, offering financial security in uncertain times. Old Mutual's purpose is to help its customers thrive by enabling them to achieve their lifetime financial goals, while investing their funds in ways that will create a positive future for them, their families, their communities and broader society.

Old Mutual provides financial solutions to individuals, businesses, corporates and institutions across several market segments and geographies in South Africa, the rest of Africa and other select emerging markets. Services include long-term savings and protection, investment and lending.

In June 2018, Old Mutual moved its primary listing from the London Stock Exchange to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange as part of its managed separation strategy. Now operating as Old Mutual Limited, an independent entity with a strong, strategic focus on Africa, it also has secondary listings on the stock exchanges in London, Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

For further information on Old Mutual, please visit the corporate website at www.oldmutual.com

About INMED South Africa:

Since 2006, INMED South Africa has implemented a variety of aquaponics and adaptive agriculture projects for schools, farming cooperatives and public/private initiatives. INMED's success has been its ability to work in collaboration with a wide range of corporate, foundation and government partners to improve the health, lives and opportunities of tens of thousands of South Africa's most vulnerable children. INMED South Africa, an in-country affiliate of INMED Partnerships for Children, is incorporated under Section 21 and is a registered non-profit organization (NPC/PBO) recognized by the Department of Social Development. Learn more at <https://inmed.org.za>

About INMED Partnerships for Children:

INMED Partnerships for Children is a nonprofit international development organization that has worked in more than 100 countries to pathways for disadvantaged children and families to achieve self-reliance and success. Through multi-sector partnerships, INMED builds effective systems that deliver innovative and sustainable approaches to break complex cycles of poverty and generate opportunities for success. INMED's programs in climate-smart agriculture/aquaponics, maternal and child health and economic development and have made a sustainable impact on the lives of millions of children and their families since 1986. Learn more at <https://inmed.org>.