



Joint media statement

Kimberley – 30 September 2021

Relief efforts in the heart-breaking wake of Northern Cape veldfires

Help is now coming from what seem to be even the unlikeliest of places in the heart-breaking wake of Northern Cape veldfires leaving widespread devastation in only a few days. And much more help is needed.

The Kimberley diamond mining company Ekapa and Northern Cape based agribusiness GWK have joined forces to provide assistance where farmers and other community members are fighting fires that in the past few days alone already left behind more than 100 000 ha of scorched earth in areas between Schmidtsdrift, Campbell, Douglas, Kimberley, Magersfontein and Jacobsdal. The fires were also raging closer to Hopetown and extended into areas of the Free State and, at the time of writing, it was still burning between Douglas and Campbell.

Ekapa and GWK have managed to build up an emergency crisis fund to the value of R2 million since the beginning of the week to provide assistance in collaboration with and through coordination by Agri Northern Cape. Much more help is still needed where the fires impacted countless animals of all sorts and people from all walks of life.

Farmers and their families, farm workers, other members of farming communities and Ekapa personnel with their fire-fighting equipment gathered to fight fearlessly against the fires and to gather food and water while they had to make plans to get animals out of danger. Motorists were trapped behind the fires where reports were received of people who had to watch burnt animals run anxiously across the N12 between Kimberley and Ritchie to seek shelter.

This follows after other recent fires ravaged large parts of the Northern Cape and Free State – it is estimated that more than 400 000 ha may have been destroyed by veldfires only in the last few months.

According to Neil de Klerk, Executive Head of Marketing and Communication for GWK, Ekapa CEO Jahn Hohne approached GWK to get involved in relief efforts. This allowed GWK and Ekapa to take hands and implement help through GWK's already existing Just One Drop-initiative that was started to support farmers in need during the drought, and is now utilised to assist after the devastating fires.

“It might seem like an unlikely source of help, but we have come to know Ekapa for the way they care about people and the environment in their immediate area. The Hohne family and Ekapa are known for their work and selfless investment in our communities, specifically for wildlife protection that is very close to their hearts. This aligns closely to how GWK and our leadership team feel about our responsibility towards our environment and communities.”



Hohne visited some of the worst hit areas around Magersfontein near Kimberley early on Tuesday morning after becoming aware of the crises. He says it is heart-breaking to see the effect on people, livestock and wildlife.

“It is impossible for us not to get involved and assist after seeing devastation on such a scale. We stand here for the animals who are standing on scorched earth bewildered as to where they will get their next meal and knowing that they have had their last supper,” Hohne said yesterday morning.

Llewellyn Brooks, GWK Group Managing Director, says GWK is truly blessed by the support of farmers and can simply not stand back and not provide assistance while being in a position to help.

“We are inspired by and stand in awe of the farmers and communities who have come together to fearlessly fight against the fires. It is an honour for us to work in collaboration with Ekapa on an initiative like this. And, together with Ekapa, we appeal to our partners, suppliers, financial institutions and the business sector in general to get involved and support Agri Northern Cape to get help to our farmers and their animals as soon as possible.”

Nicol Jansen, Agri Northern Cape President, says it is an honour to be trusted as an implementation agency by two well respected companies that have the wellbeing of Northern Cape farmers at heart.

“Agri Northern Cape will implement this project through the Agri Northern Cape Foundation, a non-profit company owned by Agri Northern Cape that is well positioned to handle disaster relief and fundraising with Article 18A certification. Other corporates, businesses and individuals are welcome to join this project to discuss value proposition options available by contribution to this worthy cause.”

A farmer’s wife from the area told GWK in a heart-breaking message about the scorched earth as far as you can see, about animals with no prospect of water and food and the tiredness in peoples’ eyes while fighting fires, cutting fences, herding animals and trying to get access to water: “We saw, we felt, we heard and we smelled the fires. We cried, but now we are standing up with admiration for the kindness of people.”

For donations of emergency feed and financial contributions contact Janine Byleveld at janine@agrink.co.za or 073 291 0557. Financial contributions can also be made directly to:

Agri Northern Cape Foundation
ABSA
Cheque Account
Account number: 409 919 4690
Reference: NNDBRANDE

ENDS



ABOUT AGRI NORTHERN CAPE

Organised agriculture is recognised by all sectors and particularly by the government of the day as a mouthpiece for the agricultural community. As part of organised agriculture in South Africa, Agri Northern Cape is a member organisation for the majority of commercial farmers in the Northern Cape Province. While understanding the critical importance of agriculture for our province and our whole country, Agri Northern Cape commits itself to promote the welfare of farmers.

www.agrink.co.za

ABOUT EKAPA

Situated in the diamond-rich heart of South Africa Ekapa is a diamond mining company that is building a sustainable future – for their people, for their communities, for their environment. They use cutting edge technology at operations in Kimberley, Northern Cape, to execute a comprehensive mining and rehabilitation programme. They mine the tailings dumps that resulted from previous mining activities, carefully backfilling the old mine pits, thus rehabilitating and completely reversing the environmental impact of the past 140 years of mining in Kimberley. And they mine some of the finest quality Kimberley SA diamonds with the unique characteristic of being entirely environmentally friendly.

www.ekapa.co.za

ABOUT GWK

GWK is a public, farmer-owned company, operating from its head office in Douglas in the Northern Cape, with offices also in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northwest, Free State, Limpopo, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. GWK is involved in grain products, specialist crops and livestock and auction services amongst others, providing farmers with the inputs they need, supporting them with the best solutions on the farm and ensuring the best channels to market for their products, locally and abroad. GWK's premium branded foods are manufactured with a plough-to-plate philosophy, linking consumers with farmers through sustainably manufactured products from the farm.

www.gwk.co.za

ISSUED FOR: Agri Northern Cape, Ekapa and GWK
ENQUIRIES: Janine Byleveld
janine@agrink.co.za
073 291 0557