

Checkers deal with Farmer Angus Eggs boosts black-owned regenerative agriculture

In a recent drive to upskill and empower his farmworkers, regenerative livestock farmer Angus McIntosh of Farmer Angus on the Spier Wine Estate in Stellenbosch, sold 85% of his egg business (51% black women-owned) to some of his former employees. This has made them instant business managers and shareholders. Now, a new supply deal with Checkers offers the new owners an opportunity to expand their model nationally.



Farmer Angus Eggs are now available from two Checkers stores in the Western Cape: Constantia Emporium in Constantia and the Checkers in Mill Street in Stellenbosch. Shoppers can pick their eggs out of Eggmobiles stationed in store, which McIntosh designed and built in collaboration with 3 Thirds.

McIntosh has vendor financed the deal with the farmworkers, which keeps him focused on making the business a success as he only gets his payout from the profits of the business.

The shareholders are McIntosh, Neliswa Mbengana, Zanele Hlabisa, Mbhekiseni Khoza, Menzi Khoza and Phello Ntlati. The directors are Thobelani Mngomezulu, Mawethu Xamle, Mbhekiseni Khoza, Thabani Lamula, Angus McIntosh and Menzi Khoza, all of whom McIntosh has known since birth as they grew up on the same farm in KZN. Based on current profits the business will be paid off in less than 4 years.

Benefits of regenerative agriculture

Farmer Angus Eggs are free-range and contain no GMO or Glyphosate. "Ninety-six percent of all eating eggs come from the caged hens," says Thobelani Mngomezulu, one of the directors at Farmer Angus Eggs.

"Our chickens are housed in Eggmobiles, which are moved daily to help fertilise our soil at the farm. We get our chickens to graze on the pastures, which are free of any chemicals, so they can lay the most nutritious eggs. They roam our pastures all day and are only locked up in the Eggmobiles at night for their own protection.

"We also feed the chickens with non-GMO food that is specially made for us. Not only are we producing the healthiest eggs, but we're also practicing regenerative agriculture which reverses climate change and is good for the soil. As someone who has a deep love for nature I believe that regenerative agriculture is how we can heal the land," adds Mngomezulu.



McIntosh started farming at Spier in 2009. He practices regenerative agriculture through the rotational grazing of animals such as pigs, cattle and chickens across the land. “The goal of regenerative agriculture is to produce nutrient-dense food, heal the earth and create employment opportunities,” says McIntosh.

A few years ago Farmer Angus achieved a world first when he was paid carbon credits for increasing the carbon content of the soil in the pastures where the cattle graze.

“With the way most farming is done in South Africa, people are not eating the best food they can possibly buy. This is due to the many pesticides and herbicides that are sprayed onto crops and fed to animals. Having a major retailer like Checkers coming on board means that consumers will finally get to eat animal protein that is locally produced and free of harmful substances that can cause damage to our bodies,” says McIntosh.



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Opportunities to scale

One of the major benefits of the shareholding structure is that Farmer Angus Eggs can access government funding, which is the only way the business is able to grow nationwide. Being able to scale this business is the ultimate goal for the new owners.

Mbhekiseni Khoza, a Farmer Angus Eggs shareholder and director, says, “Being a shareholder in a business has meant I am now able to grow as a person and I’m proud of my new role. I’d like to see more of my friends around the country being empowered in this way and through Checkers, we believe this is going to be possible.”

McIntosh concludes, “Our deal with Checkers wouldn’t have been possible without the enthusiasm and support we got from Arno Abeln (head of fresh food at Shoprite), Renaldo Phillips (head of private buying at Shoprite) and Shaun Kerr and Cobus Crafford (buyers for Shoprite). Thank you.”

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