

# Eastern Cape farmers gain hemp cultivation skills in innovative training initiative

Training Force and Cheeba Cannabis Training recently partnered to equip a diverse group of 100 Eastern Cape local farmers with hemp knowledge, from cultivation to the value chain surrounding the production of industrial hemp. The training, which took place at the Fort Cox Agriculture and Forestry Training Institute in Middledrift just north of King Williamstown, was funded by the Eastern Cape Rural Development Association and delivered in partnership by Training Force and Cheeba Cannabis Training.



Source: Supplied

The comprehensive course covered the agricultural element of hemp cultivation, including the various industrial applications of hemp and how to harvest and process the plants. It also incorporated areas such as the legal framework of the hemp industry, how to produce several products from the hemp plant, taking the products to market, and various other elements in the hemp supply chain.



## Cannabis and Hemp Training Academy launches in Eastern Cape

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"Hemp has so many different applications, from textiles, paper and food to construction, cosmetics, energy production in the form of biofuels, and more. It also supports efforts to decarbonise, as it can even be utilised as a biodegradable plastic alternative and has multiple environmental benefits, including carbon sequestration, prevention of soil erosion and

improvement of biodiversity. However, growing hemp is only part of getting this burgeoning industry off the ground in South Africa," says Linda Siboto, director and co-founder of Cheeba Cannabis Training.

## **Empowering farmers**

"Together with Training Force, we developed and delivered a comprehensive programme that included a significant practical component. This covered how to plant hemp seed and manage fields as well as low tech applications for the hemp plant, such as hemp bricks, cosmetics, hemp milk and manual decortication to make things like basic fibres like rope. The course also included a module aligned to the AgriSETA National Certificate in Plant Production. This unique programme is a first in the country and will empower the farmers to develop both the value and supply chain around industrial hemp production," he adds.

South Africa has an ideal climate for hemp cultivation, and the industry represents a significant opportunity for economic growth, rural development, community upliftment and carbon reduction. Globally, it has been identified as a massive growth sector, and it aligns with numerous United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. While agriculture is a catalyst for hemp production, it spreads to so many different industries and could provide significant employment opportunities across the value chain.

"We have worked in partnership with Cheeba Cannabis Training for the past year, combining our industry training knowledge with their expertise in hemp, to leverage opportunities across the country where we have resources to uplift the agricultural sector. This strategic endeavour not only elevates the prospects for local farmers but also contributes to the diversification and sustainability of South Africa's agricultural landscape. It empowers local farmers with the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to take advantage of the opportunities presented by this young and growing industry," concludes Daniel Orelowitz, MD at Training Force.

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