

BUSINESS PROFILE OF AGINFO TRADING AS

AMT PTY (LTD)



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Vision

“To be an internationally recognized centre of excellence in agricultural research and advise, and in providing objective, timely and accurate agricultural market information to the benefit and prosperity of producers, agribusinesses and policy makers”

Mission

“AMT focuses on research and on the interpretation and dissemination of domestic and international market information to enable producers, agribusinesses, consumers and policy makers to make daily, monthly and long-run marketing decisions”

Background: The deregulation and liberalization of the South African agricultural sector has brought with it many challenges and opportunities. These challenges and opportunities covers issues ranging from market development, the assessment global and domestic markets, understanding of new value chains, and international trade to issues pertaining to policy design and implementation, upliftment of the rural poor and information provision.

The aforementioned can only be addressed in a comprehensive and efficient manner by taking cognizance of the deficiencies that exist in the agricultural milieu within South Africa. These deficiencies include, amongst other, a general lack of accurate and timely information pertaining to agricultural markets, lack of specialists in the field of marketing, international trade, policy analysis and development, etc.

It was with these deficiencies in mind, as well as the challenges and opportunities that exist, that Aginfo Pty (Ltd) (henceforth referred to as AMT) was established. AMT identified its core competencies to be (i) the provision of market information and (ii) research and advise pertaining to the challenges and opportunities mentioned. The former is seen as vitally important to support the latter.

Core competencies of AMT

Provision of information:

Accurate and timely information about the marketing environment is vitally important for the success of any business in a market that is characterised by risk and uncertainty. Such information does not only provide the necessary tools to make informed decisions about business propositions, but also assist in improving the core competencies of the work force that is vital to generate profits.

The abolishment of the previous agricultural marketing boards in South Africa brought about an information gap on how agricultural markets behave at a time that information is more crucial than in the past. Producers, agribusinesses, policy makers and numerous other agricultural groupings all currently experience a need to obtain knowledge on what drives supply, demand and prices of agricultural commodities in a deregulated and dynamic environment.

Additionally, the need also exist to know what factors could in future influence agricultural commodity prices. AMT specialises in the analysis and forecasting of agricultural markets thereby answering precisely in these needs.

Undoubtedly, a lot of efficiency is lost in the work place by the fact that information is gathered in an ad hoc and fragmented manner. By providing a one-stop-shop for agricultural market information AMT provides a firm basis to make informed decisions.

Since timing and accuracy of information is vital for profit making decisions AMT publishes weekly, monthly and annual market reports. This significantly improves the efficiency of decision makers, which in turn entails that they could concentrate on the core activities of the business. AMT therefore does not only provide a sound marketing information system, but also contributes to the well being of the agricultural sector in South Africa.

Research: Research is aimed at developing an analytical framework that would assist role players, in agriculture in quantifying the effects of various agro-economic variables such as agricultural policy, technology, development strategies, regional demand, product distribution, competitive advantages and trade liberalization on the agricultural economy of the region.

Focusing on these key issues create obvious spillovers for the rest of the economy in terms of development, employment and improved living standards.

Development of capacity to analyze and direct such changes improve the situation of South Africa's community at large. Trade, if well managed, could also lead to a reduction in poverty and the upliftment of rural households.

Examples of research projects conducted by AMT which are an indication of the tacit knowledge embedded within AMT:

- ⊙ Marketing tea for Uganda's smallholder sector.
- ⊙ Economic regeneration strategy for the Welkom, Odendaalsrus, Virginia and Henneman area.
- ⊙ Unlocking of opportunities in the Eastern Cape Province.
- ⊙ Development of an agricultural strategy for the Northern Cape Province.
- ⊙ Feasibility of Floriculture Production in the Lower Orange District of the Northern Cape Province.
- ⊙ The potential of Rabbit production by small-scale farmers in the Kroonstad district.
- ⊙ Business plan for Brandfort regeneration study: Meat processing plant in Brandfort.
- ⊙ Feasibility of Hydroponic Herb production.
- ⊙ Lucerne production in South Africa.
- ⊙ Competitiveness of the primary oilseeds industry in South Africa.
- ⊙ The possible impact of the EU-SA Free Trade Agreement.
- ⊙ Towards a Rural Statistical Data Set for Investment Planning.
- ⊙ Feasibility of an Aloe industry in the Eastern Cape.
- ⊙ Regeneration of Agriculture in the Goldfields: Project prioritisation, Report 1.
- ⊙ Agricultural/Agroprocessing potential for the Northern Cape.
- ⊙ Features of Economic Growth and Development of Rural Areas.
- ⊙ The impact of liberalisation on the red meat industry in South Africa.
- ⊙ Compilation of training material on material for small-scale farmers in South Africa.
- ⊙ Pork export feasibility study.
- ⊙ Management plan for the South African Pork Producers Organisation.

Subscribers to the information system managed by AMT include the following:

- ⊙ National Department of Agriculture (NDA) and several Provincial Departments of Agriculture (PDA's); National Treasury;
- ⊙ Industrial Development Corporation (IDC); Trade and Investment;
- ⊙ Commercial banks (e.g. ABSA, FNB, Nedcor, Investec Securities, Standard Bank);
- ⊙ Auditing firms (e.g. PriceWaterCoopers);
- ⊙ Grain traders (e.g. Farmwise, Louis Dreyfus);
- ⊙ Industry organizations (e.g. Cape Wools, SAMIC, SAGIS);
- ⊙ Producer organizations: (Red Meat Producers Organisation, Dry Beans Organisation, etc);
- ⊙ Co-operatives (GWK, Senwes, VKB, OVK, MGK);
- ⊙ Various agribusinesses (AFGRI, Molatek, Foodcorp, Shoprite, Monsanto, Syngenta, Pfizer, Bokomo, Bayer, Starke Ayres, Pannar Saad, Teraso, Voermol, Yum International, Continental Oil Mills, Early Bird Farms, Enviroworld, I & J);
- ⊙ Media (Landbouweekblad, Farmers Weekly, AgriTV); and International organizations/ companies (MLA, Meatco, Meat Board of Namibia; Malaysian Palm Oil Promotion Council, Australia Marketing International, World Bank, FAO, DFID, USDA, Woolworths, KFC, USDA).



ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

AMT CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING DEVOTED PERSONNEL

Dr. Herman van Schalkwyk (CEO)

He has extensive experience in agricultural marketing, rural development and feasibility studies.

Market and feasibility studies have been conducted for various institutions and business sectors ranging from small businesses to large corporate systems.

In addition, he specializes in ensuring that AMT's clients receive relevant, timely and accurate information with respect to market trends and opportunities.

Prof H D van Schalkwyk is Rector: North West University.



Ms. Minda Bornman (Marketing & Communications Manager)

Minda heads the Marketing & Communications Department for the past 15 years and is responsible for public relations and media liaison.

She is the Programme manager for the annual Agricultural outlook Conferences. Minda organizes national farmers' days, conferences, press conferences.

She also specializes in ensuring that AMT's clients receive relevant, timely and accurate information with respect to market trends and opportunities.

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Ms. Michelle Bornman (Marketing Assistant/PA)

Michelle assists in all public relations, media liaison, and conferences, all marketing and administration of AMT's services, as well as administration of AMT web site.

Michelle ensures that AMT's clients receive relevant, timely and accurate information with respect to market trends and opportunities.

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Mr. Pieter Cornelius

(Manager: Livestock)

He heads the Livestock unit of AMT.

Piete's vast knowledge about the livestock market, which includes amongst others, cattle/ beef, sheep/ mutton, pigs/ pork, dairy and ostriches make him one of only a few experts in South Africa.

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Mr. Pieter van Wyk

(Manager: Field Crops)

Pieter heads the Field crops unit of AMT and specializes in field crop market analysis, including amongst others, maize, wheat, oilseeds, dry beans and cotton.

He has extensive experience of the domestic and international market of field crops.

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Mr. Dirk Mulder

(Manager: Vegetables & Agricultural Economy).

Dirk heads the Vegetables and Agricultural Economy unit of AMT.

Dirk has 30 years experience in Agricultural Economics of which he spend most of his time on production economics and related issues. He is responsible for the monitoring and reporting on all agricultural economic trends and horticulture.

The same is applicable to the vegetable industry, more specifically potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage and onions.

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