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IMPACT MADE FROM USAID-FAMU-SA PROJECT with SOUTH AFRICAN LAND REDISTRIBUTION for AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (LRAD)

Direct outcome aligns FAMU’S “Excellence with Caring” motto

From Stellenbosch, South Africa (Special Submission)—Clearly, change is a constant occurrence of life and the United States Agency for International Development-Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University-South Africa (USAID-FAMU-SA) is committed to and involved with that reality. The South African Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) is just one would-be aberration that has become actuality for some of the residents of the Western Cape of South Africa. This is due in large part to a grant funded by the USAID through FAMU’s Center for International Agricultural Trade, Development Research and Training (CIATDRT) Office of International Agriculture, where Director Harriet A. Paul is the principal investigator and project director.

From the panoramic view of the Cape Town city bowl of the waterfront to Table Mountain, the mother city or the Tavern of the Seas lives up to its motto of: Spes Bona (Latin for “Good Hope.”) The NEW! South Africa has a vision of hope and prosperity for all of its citizens. Looking into a bright future through an open window of opportunity, the USAID-FAMU-SA Farmer to Farmer (FTF) Program is striving to enhance entrepreneurship and economic empowerment through capacity building. The BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) initiative has indeed been instrumental in allowing the farmers/producers who are working the land to see their benefits increase as they actively share in the full, hands-on experience as a shareholder through South Africa’s LRAD.

Diverse and related agricultural projects are established in five (5) venues of South Africa: Hands on Fish Farmers Co. (Department of Genetics, University of Stellenbosch, SA); Reach for Gold/Hex Rivier (yes, Rivier) Valley (home of the Simonsig Vineyards); Wupperthal Rooibos (Tea Cooperative), Wupperthal, SA; Fair Packers Limited Factory (tea distributors), Stellenbosch, SA; and Rennie Farms (Growers
and Packers of Quality Vegetables), Paarl, SA. It was an humbling, life-changing experience for me to interface with all these members of humanity, new-found friends of many colors and hues—friends for life, about 10,000 miles away, just across the Atlantic Ocean—truly amazing! We all have something in common—economic empowerment and self-sufficiency with dignity, strength training and sustainability.

“Nothing breeds success like success; nothing excels like qualified competence which yields a quiet assurance of productivity!”

Truly, there are many success stories that marry South Africa’s LRAD and the USAID-FAMU-SA initiative. Conquering the challenge of people’s false expectations to experience overnight success—overcoming any and all obstacles with opportunities—turning stumbling blocks into stepping stones are where commitment and involvement merge in these processes. Humanity has been underdeveloped long enough universally, and there is none like one who’s had enough disparity and is ready, willing and able to be about progress through process, and then promotion to facilitate a difference that lasts. One’s mindset must be changed and willing to change, in order to accomplish what lies ahead and beyond the majestic mountain ranges of South Africa and her neighboring countries, and the world at large!

Forward thinking and moving swiftly—always, is the apparent and necessary mantra as South Africa’s LRAD and USAID-FAMU-SA move onward and upward! Yes, we can peacefully co-exist—there’s more than enough to go around, if we but will give peace a real chance; with anticipation and admiration, let’s watch what happens, just on the horizon. Stay encouraged and encouraging; do it now!!

-end-

FAMU, an historically black college/university believes in the importance of serving an underrepresented and traditionally disenfranchised population globally. Known as Florida’s opportunity university, FAMU has worked in the developing world for more than 35 years to improve the quality of life of underserved citizens. Through funding from the USAID, FAMU has taken on a new agricultural development program in South Africa focused on building the necessary skills to promote entrepreneurship and to build sustainability among previously disadvantaged groups.