

Performing sustainably

Developing our people

Online Academy

It has been just over three years since we launched the online academy. We are super proud of all our employees that have used the platform to continuously hone their skills. To date we have over 268 courses completed, and another 123 courses in progress.

Crookes Brothers believes in developing our people as a core value and will continue to utilise the CBL Online academy to develop our employees.

We have aligned the online learning to the appraisal process, where it is a required development objective.

AgriSETA Funding

AgriSETA Mentorship Programmes

Through Crookes Brothers Ltd, our joint venture farms, Libro Farming and Mawecro Farming both received R100 000 to fund a mentorship programme, covering HR skills, management skills and production skills for community members, providing them with the necessary skills to manage their own farms.

CBL Skills Programme

CBL was awarded R288 000 for a skills programme. The CBL Skills programme was conducted by Toutele Agricultural College and was completed successfully. 29 employees were awarded a certificate in Agriculture Extension (SP24CB32) with 60 credits towards an agricultural diploma.



Total Males

1 597

Total Females

859

01	02	03	04	05	06
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Employment Dashboard

		Male	Female	Perm	Male	Female	FTC	Total EEs
South Africa	Libcro	59	26	85	25	24	49	134
	Mawecro	216	97	313	196	236	432	745
	CBL Coastal	14	14	28	7	18	25	53
	CBL	17	16	33	0	1	1	34
	RPD	20	20	40	4	2	6	46
	Execs	3	1	4	0	0	0	4
		329	174	503	232	281	513	1016
Mozambique	Gurue	263	34	297	163	70	233	530
	QBV	55	50	105	211	131	342	447
Eswatini		67	8	75	199	80	279	354
Zambia		34	0	34	44	31	75	109
		419	92	511	617	312	929	1440

Corporate Social Responsibility

The Group is committed to improving the lives of the disadvantaged communities in the areas in which we operate. The primary focus of our initiatives are Health, Education and Training, basic needs and social development.

Our approach is to 'Make a difference' that resonates with our employees, shareholders and stakeholders. We prioritise women, the disabled, youth and the socially destitute.

Despite financial constraints in the past financial year, R715 564.91 was spent on corporate social investment. In addition to this spend, the Group also provides resources and expertise to our communities to maximise on our social impact.

Employees

2 456

ESTATE	RECIPIENT	BENEFICIARIES	PROJECT DETAILS
Coastal	China Town/Gugulesizwe High School	1 000+ recipients	Maintenance of China Town cemetery and church and community laws/gardens and sponsor of soccer kit and meals.
Libcro	Libuyile Community	350 + recipients	Food parcels were distributed to members of the community on 14 September 2023
Mawecro	Mawewe Community	5 000+ recipients	Donation of dignity packs and uniform to high school; Sponsorship of Mawewe Cup Tournament, etc.
Eswatini	Big Bend Police Station/ Big Bend Community	500 + recipients	Food parcel cash donation contribution to the Crime Prevention Campaign coordinated by the Big Bend Police Station
Haglar Kim	Ngoma Basic School	700+ learners	Funding of teachers and janitor salaries
QBV	Centro de Saude Odete Mochiso and other community projects	1 000+ recipients	Donations to various community initiatives
MML	Gurue Police Department/ District Health Department	500+ recipients	Donation of Macadamias for exhibition at Health Day Fair; Food and fuel donation for presidential tour to Gurue; Fuel donation to Police Department.

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Employment Equity

Based on the 2024 submission

We maintain an employment equity programme aligned to the South African national requirements with regard to achieving diversity in our workforce at all levels. The equity process is aligned to the Company's vision, mission and values – all of which recognise that the Company's success is dependent on the commitment and excellence of its employees.

The Company has improved the recruitment and placement of qualified and highly suitable individuals from previously disadvantaged groups. The numbers in our higher occupational categories in CBL and our joint ventures remain steady, due to our low turnover and long tenure of our employees.

Occupational Level	Male				Female				Foreign Nationals		TOTAL
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Male	Female	
Top Management	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Senior Management	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	7
Professionally Qualified and Experienced Specialists and Mid-Management	2	0	0	9	3	0	0	1	0	0	15
Skilled Technical and Academically Qualified Workers, Junior Management, Supervisors, Foremen and Superintendents	12	6	0	13	9	1	6	4	0	0	51
Semi-skilled and Discretionary Decision-Making	90	30	1	1	55	11	2	3	0	0	193
Unskilled and Defined Decision-Making	306	55	0	0	329	18	2	0	0	0	710
Total Permanent	411	91	2	28	396	30	10	9	0	0	977
Temporary Employees	490	23	0	0	270	15	0	0	0	0	798
Grand Total	901	114	2	28	666	45	10	9	0	0	1775

Crookes Brothers commitment to sustainability and adherence to sound and balanced ESG principles remains a key component of the operations. We do not see this as an addition to our current practices, but as an integral part of the way we operate. It should not be separated out and reported, but ingrained into our day-to-day and evidenced in actions and the practices and processors of the day-to-day operations of the company. Below is some insight to key areas within this element of our profile.

Water

It goes without saying that water is the blood that runs through our operation. We have nearly 7 000ha under management of which 500ha are dryland, the rest are irrigated. This begins with access to bulk water and storage. This can be divided into two parts. The first is the legal right of access to designated water. Water rights, although an outdated term, best describe this critical asset and then actual availability of that water, the reliance of those rights. Having secured this, it is now our ability to use that water in the most efficient and effective manner.

We are comfortable with our "rights." Currently reliability and access to those rights across the group is positive. The Kwena Dam in Mpumalanga remains the only storage facility under some threat due to the growth in urban sprawl in the Mbombela region, and its impact on the Lower Crocodile River systems that use the Kwena as its primary storage unit. The rest of the group's water "rights" are strong and healthy.

The reticulation systems are being upgraded whenever possible to more efficient and cost-effective systems. There has been a general migration to drip in the cane where possible. We continuously monitor the field's performance and this investment continues to be positive both in terms of yield improvement and less water usage. It does fall away as the field ages, but remains significant positive in the early ratoons, thus delivering early improved cash flows and the resultant positive investments, IRRs and paybacks. Upgrades are done at a field-by-field level with each individual field's profile and requirements. We have to plan within the original initial bulk reticulation systems that bracket what can be done on a field-by-field basis.



Cupi Dam, MML Mozambique: March 2024

We plan for the hot, dry periods when water is required in summer for optimum growth. We hope that rain will mitigate the need to use such systems. We end up with a combination of the two that changes from year to year.

Our aim is not to use less water per hectare per se, but it is to give the plants just what they need when they need it and keep the "waste" to a minimum. This has many facets, but includes pump efficiencies, bulk water leakage, in-field leakage, runoff, leaching and overwatering. This is where we spend our focus, and is an important and continuous element in the daily life of irrigated farm management.

Energy

The twin sister to water. This is the energy needed to move that water to where we need it. Again, there is the need for continuous adherence to efficiency and consistency. This is an ongoing challenge as the systems that have been installed were done when power was bountiful, consistent, and cheap. Systems were designed around a 24/7 scheduling routine to reduce the size

and cost of the reticulation infrastructure. The plant/soil requirements have not changed, but what has changed is the cost and power supply consistency forcing us to look at ways to change, upgrade and tweak what is in play in order to find a better more cost-effective schedule.

Again, this is done on a field-by-field basis and we continue to look for ways to smooth the consistency of supply through these "load shedding" years. This involves alternate sources of power, bespoke scheduling rather than the 24/7 blanket approach where possible, and any upgrades are planned within this new normal. Variable speed drives, thermal pumps, off-peak irrigation hours, solar and diesel alternate power supply, service provider calibration are all continuous improvements that we explore, but when we need to irrigate, we irrigate. We will continue to do this as efficiently and effectively possible. The best way to reduce the power is to reduce the water requirement by being efficient when giving the fields what they need.

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Macadamia Inter-row Cover crop: Reduce mowing, reduce weeding and healthier soils

Soil improvement

The healthier your soil, the easier it is to reach the yield targets and minimise the inputs needed to be added to provide the required vigour and yield – the task being to define our profile of a healthy soil and provide the means to reach that condition. This includes regenerating degraded lands, preventing the loss of arable land, and improving soil health generally. It's about balance, carbon content, friability, drainage, compaction and micro-bio activity and balance. The three key aspects of soil health are the biological, physical and chemical characteristics. A healthy soil will have all aspects functioning well to promote optimal plant growth. Some of the specific techniques employed include uprooting of an old crop or orchard, a fallow period ensues, prior to replanting with the same material. Green manure (fallow) crops are planted to enhance soil health and fertility. Degraded soils and problematic weed control both benefit from this process. Green manure crops assist with increasing organic matter, improving soil structure and fertility, resulting in achieving desirable yields with reduced synthetic fertilisers on an ongoing profitable basis.

Carbon Footprint Disclosure 2022

We continue to do an annual formal Group Carbon Emissions report. This document is a thorough and consistent independent record that is now in its third year. It is a helpful account that provides consistent *in-situ* numbers which guides us as to how we are trending. It highlights those areas of our operation where we need to focus to make any meaningful inroads to the footprint. The report is divided into two basic components, the first being Scope 1 & 2 and the Scope 3. Scope 1 & 2 deal with actual operations and Scope 3 is "indirect" number-driven from the procurement of materials. The bottom line is that our numbers are largely driven by two factors. The use of nitrogen fertilisers that impacts Scope 1, 2 and 3 and the source of power that scores high numbers in Scope 1 & 2, particularly in South Africa where the power is largely sourced through coal burning power generation. We get caught twice for nitrogen in use and procurement, but it is a core ingredient in horticultural commercial agriculture.

What can we do to improve? Continue to monitor and record. This is a basic requisite of management. As mentioned above, the

continuous improvement of our irrigation system will assist in managing this number, as it will impact electricity usage and more effective fertilising practices. This in turn will reduce the quantum of material needed to be applied. We need to put more pressure on the fertiliser manufacturers and distributors to produce better formulations and processors to reduce their respective footprints, and then by association the Group's numbers in Scope 3. We need to look for effective ways to fertilise and sustain our soil with less synthetic and more natural bio-friendly fertilisers and soil management practices. It is many things, but ultimately it is a way of operating that sits within the sustainably aware fabric of the organisation that's needs to be acknowledged, supported and nurtured.

Climate change

Climate change is an unfortunate title. As a title it brings connotations and views that range from gloom and dystopia to cynicism as to whether it is anything at all. What we at Crookes Brothers look at, under the banner of climate change, is the extent and occurrence of extreme weather and climatic events. Storms, early and late rainfall, extreme temperatures, both hot and cold, droughts, cyclones, and the average weather mean trends.

It is a subject where we encourage discussion and debate at all levels of management. Not so much on the causes of these changes, perceived or otherwise, or who is to blame, but about how we can mitigate the impacts of these events. Discussions around irrigation reticulation, drainage, hail protection, where to plant to reduce the impacts are also a critical components in long-term planning. If we believe that we are in a long, drier trend we need to plan out bulk water availability. We need systems that can better manage the changes or at least plan for the changes to come. Again, it goes to the fabric of our understanding on how best to sustain our primary agricultural assets in the 21st century.

Environmental management

Crookes Brothers Group sustainable management systems are based on assessment of estate/operational risks and occupational health and safety guidelines embedded within a suite of compliance legislations associated with commercial agriculture. Global GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) SUSFARMS endeavours (Sustainable Sugarcane Farm Management System) Accreditation system initiated by the South African Sugar Research Institute are all accreditations and actions. Global GAP is an international best practice standard designed to minimise the possible detrimental environmental impacts of farming operations and promote responsible use of chemicals. Global GAP have also introduced GRASP which is Global GAP Risk Assessment that measures the responsible approach to Good Social Management Practices. These accreditation systems comprehensively address the challenges of sustainable food systems and recognise the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet.



Usuthu River, Big Bend: Eswatini 2023

Operational risk management and the various accreditations are audited every year in a Group Sustainability Report, which is reviewed to assess the efficacy and robustness of the systems. This review includes ESAPS (Environmental and Social Action plans) that are included in our annual sustainable system objectives and are re-assessed on an annual basis.

Conservation of flora and fauna

In order to promote the establishment of indigenous plant species, bush lines, riparian zones, undeveloped and non-arable areas are excluded from production and are kept free of invader species. Weeds and invader species, categorised according to the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 are identified and systematically eradicated, in conjunction with the rehabilitation of indigenous plant species. The clearing and restoration of these areas improves water purification and retention, and ultimately dry season flows. These zones are managed as conservation areas and are

progressively rehabilitated to encourage fauna and flora species indigenous and endemic to the area. In the interests of promoting conservation, large scale unsustainable exploitation of natural resources from the conservation areas is restricted. The maintenance of natural species and rehabilitation of indigenous flora assist with conservation by creating safe and natural habitats for animals and birds. Hunting is not permitted on any estate and poaching is controlled by security patrols.