MEDIA RELEASE FROM ATTERBURY TRUST

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***Ploughing back with real impact***

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought hardship to many South Africans, but it has also resulted in an outpouring of care and many heart-warming charity initiatives.

Terugploeg, which means “ploughing back” in Afrikaans, is one such idea that has now really come into its own. According to Lood Bester, co-founder of Terugploeg, the concept was born out of a conversation he had with friend Herman Marx of Vibro Bricks.

Bester says that during the lockdown, they became aware of enormous food shortages within specific Afrikaans-speaking communities where there was no access to relief. “We wanted to help. We started buying food, which we distributed ourselves in some of these communities close to us. Later, we shared our ideas with our farmer friends, who all immediately agreed to donate food. Now, we can send one of Herman’s trucks to a donor’s farm, and they load it with between three and eight tons of vegetables or fruit. The produce is offloaded at Vibro Bricks in Pretoria where the food is divided into smaller portions, loaded on to bakkies and distributed to the old-age homes, children’s homes and schools that we have been able to identify as experiencing food shortages.”

Terugploeg is a network of benefactors whose donations are managed responsibly, primarily to provide food to vulnerable Afrikaans communities and fight hunger. But there is also a bigger vision for the project – to make it sustainable so that it can provide work for people from these communities and with employment renewed hope and reignited dreams of a better future. After all, hope, respect, skills and opportunities are extremely important to those in need.

According to Zahn Hulme, executive trustee of Atterbury Trust, the Terugploeg initiative complements the other charity projects managed by the trust. “About a month after Lood and Herman launched the initiative, they came to an agreement with Atterbury Group’s CEO Louis van der Watt for Terugploeg to be managed through the Atterbury Trust, which benefits from more than two decades of experience in charity project administration. Atterbury Trust has all the infrastructure necessary to manage social responsibility projects effectively and has built a proud reputation for reliability and transparency.”

As a result of its rapid growth, Terugploeg has outgrown its current resources. “We soon realised that we needed a well-equipped and easily accessible site so that we could receive large quantities of food at once, process it if necessary, and store it until we wanted to distribute it,” explains Bester.

“We have found that when it comes to nutrition programmes, consistently being able to provide a plate of food every other day is much more effective than delivering a whole load of food to someone who lives in a Wendy house that isn’t equipped with a refrigerator. When a farmer donates cattle or venison, we can make their donation go further when we have the facilities to process it into minced meat, which can be stored and then delivered where and when it is needed.”

Faan and Dirk van der Walt, the founders of WeBuyCars, have cleared the way for the project’s growth and sustainability by making eight hectares of land available to Terugploeg in the east of Pretoria - on the N4 highway, close to the Rayton off-ramp. “We have been given the free use of this site to establish a head office for Terugploeg,” says Bester.

Besides a food processing facility and cold storage, there are plans for a fruit and vegetable garden as well as a clothes bank. Bester reports that they also intend to cut braai wood and package it for sale.

“All these jobs require hands to take care of the gardens, process the food, pack loads of wood, and to sort, wash and iron the clothes we get in. In this way, we can create employment for people from the communities we serve,” he says excitedly.

There are also plans to set up a lecture hall in the new building, and present courses and talks to inspire children and adults alike with practical advice and training, enabling them to improve their circumstances.

Construction for the new Terugploeg facility is ready to kick off in January, with its opening scheduled for May 2021.

Terugploeg was officially launched at the Atterbury Theatre in Pretoria this week in collaboration with media partner GrootFM 90.5. The event was attended by about 200 commercial farmers, potential donors and business people, with offers of support already pouring in.

**How the public can help**

With the construction of the Terugploeg Building beginning soon, donations of construction materials are welcome, including bricks and cement, roller shutter doors, carpets, air conditioners, kitchen equipment, and meat processing machinery, among other items.

Cash donations are also welcome.

All donations qualify for an 18A tax certificate from the Atterbury Trust, which makes them tax-deductible.

If you can help or want to know more about Terugploeg, contact Lood Bester on 082 925 1118 or Jani Doms on 076 313 7212 or email them at lood@terugploeg.co.za or jani@atterbury.co.za.

For cash donations:

Account: Atterbury Trust

Nedbank: 1497004187

Branch code: 149745

**Terugploeg statistics:**

Organisations helped: 25

Food donated: 67 ton

Meals served: 272 000

**Current donor list:**

Boela Bruwer Boerdery

CPJ Erasmus Boerdery

Eskort

Meletse Breeders

Fontis Ontwikkelaars

GoGo Groep

GROOTfm 90.5

Kairos

Mahela Boerdery

Miami Canners

Morgan Group

Rossgro Boerdery

Silverton Sign-A-Rama

Tiaan Kruger Boerdery

Van Huyssteens Prokureurs

Velile Tinto & Associates

Vibro Bricks and Paving

WeBuyCars

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