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By Mike Knowles

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Jaguar empowers South African fruit farmers



Dutch company teams up with energy supplier and investment fund to create solar energy joint venture

Dutch fruit sourcing specialist Jaguar The Fresh Company has formed a joint venture to make dependable solar energy more accessible to farmers in South Africa.

The Barendrecht-based fresh produce company said the investment in Jaguar New Energies, a company formed in partnership with South African group New Southern Energy and Dutch investment vehicle ForestEffect Fund (FEF), fits in perfectly with its focus on a sustainable future.

"South African farmers face a lot of economic challenges, including the erratic supply of electricity that often leads to 'dirty electricity' from diesel generators. With Jaguar having been involved in South Africa for decades we challenged ourselves to create a sustainable solution to this economic and environmental issue," Kees Rijnhout, CEO of Jaguar TFC, commented.

"The Dutch Forest Effect Fund has outstanding experience in sustainable agricultural value chains, whilst New Southern Energies is a key player in the southern African solar energy market. Together we have excellent expertise on board to ensure that South African fruit farmers can extract solid value from this unique energy solution from day one."

According to Paulo Bello of Forest Effect Fund, solar energy has the potential to change the face of farming, offering as it does an "exceptionally reliable" source of energy, no dependence on erratic energy supply from the grid, and no operations or maintenance costs – all without any initial investment cost.

"Most farmers understand the benefits; however, cost was always an issue," he explained. "With the model of no upfront investment made possible by our fund, Jaguar New Energies enables a farmer to make an easy and clever transition to sustainable energy."

He added: "Our model also leads to socio-economic benefits, with discounted electricity being made available to farming and rural communities. With the Dutch government participating in our fund the integrity of our model is guaranteed."

Deepak John, one of the founders of New Southern Energy in South Africa, said his group has spearheaded leading commercial and industrial projects in Africa and has installed multiple power systems throughout the continent.

"We understand the unique challenges of projects in various locations and provide an end-to-end service with a single point of contact," he commented. "This means farmers do not have to juggle multiple vendors, plans and schedules. NSE manages every aspect of every project, so the farmer has a complete perspective of the process from beginning to end. The power and solutions are now – literally – in the farmer's hands."

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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