

PRESS STATEMENT BY SA CANEGROWERS ASSOCIATION

10 May 2021

Proudly SA joins SA Canegrowers' 'Home Sweet Home' buy-local-sugar campaign

SA Canegrowers is thrilled to announce a new partnership with Proudly South African (Proudly SA) to encourage consumers to buy local sugar. This partnership promises to give new impetus to the SA Canegrowers' *Home Sweet Home* campaign to promote the buying of locally produced sugar.

Over the past decade, the sugar industry has faced critical challenges including droughts and increasing production costs. One of the greatest threats has been the result of weak trade protections against increasing cheap sugar imports from deep-sea countries such as Brazil, and from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). These cheap imports cost the local industry more than R2.2 billion during 2019 alone.

As a result of the flood of cheap sugar imports, the local industry was forced to export domestic surplus sugar onto the over-supplied world market at a significant loss, with revenue at times below the cost of producing the crop. This scenario created an existential risk to the South African sugarcane industry, threatening the sustainability of 21 000 black small-scale growers, 65 000 farmworkers, 270 000 indirect jobs and the one million livelihoods the industry supports.

In an effort to address these challenges and revive the industry, SA Canegrowers launched its *Home Sweet Home* campaign on 9 December 2020. The campaign focuses on educating and encouraging consumers to support the local sugar industry. A critical component has been to provide consumers with information on what to look out for when buying sugar, such as the Proudly SA logo.

In his 2021 State of the Nation Address, President Ramaphosa gave another boost to the campaign when he called on South Africans to buy local, and SA Canegrowers has been heartened by the way that South Africans have rallied behind the industry.

SA Canegrowers is cautiously optimistic that initial signs of growth in the cane delivered last year means that the hard-won commitments in the Sugar Master Plan are starting to bear fruit. In 2020, the total crop delivered by all cane growers exceeded 18 million tons. In a hopeful sign for the transformation of the industry, nearly 5 million tons of this was delivered by the industry's 12 748 black growers. This 27% share represents a 3% increase from 2019 and amounts to more than R3 billion in revenue for black

growers. With support from Proudly SA, South Africa's cane growers look forward to building on these gains in this next season.

We are furthermore excited to unveil an impactful [video](#) that highlights the immense constraints under which the industry operates, and the risk these challenges pose to the South African families who depend on local sugar.

Proudly SA has an impressive track record of executing creative campaigns to promote local procurement in both the public and private sectors as well as in raising consumer awareness on the economic impact of choosing locally made products. SA Canegrowers is therefore confident that Proudly SA will bring expertise and their trademark passion to the *Home Sweet Home* campaign.

The partnership with Proudly SA can only propel the sugar industry forward faster. This hope is shared by Proudly SA CEO, Eustace Mashimbye: "The *Home Sweet Home* campaign resonates with the mandate of Proudly SA, which is to encourage consumers across all sectors of society to choose locally made products, and this, coupled with the need to grow consumer demand for locally produced sugar as per the sugar industry's Master Plan, makes this a perfect fit, and we are therefore looking forward to helping amplify and grow the reach of this 'buy local sugar' campaign."

SA Canegrowers Chairperson, Rex Talmage, echoed these sentiments: "Proudly SA has done stellar work for the South African economy since its inception. We have watched their work with much interest and are pleased to have the opportunity to learn from their expertise. We look forward to collaborating with them on our mission to revive the South African sugar industry, and we have no doubt that their contribution to the *Home Sweet Home* campaign and to the implementation of the Sugar Industry Master Plan will prove invaluable."

SA Canegrowers looks forward to a productive and enduring relationship with Proudly SA to the benefit of the South African economy, and the one million livelihoods the local sugar industry sustains.

ENDS.

Media Enquiries:

Thabi Ndhlovu

061 993 6672