

Villa Crop Protection Enters Partnership with Land O'Lakes, Inc. of the United States

The partnership enables Villa Crop Protection to bring enhanced products and services to customers, growers and the market to increase agricultural productivity and sustainability

Land O'Lakes, Inc. and Villa Crop Protection of South Africa announced a partnership, effective Oct. 26 that will capitalise on the continuous growth potential of the South African agricultural market. The two organisations are joining two complementary portfolios of productivity-enhancing crop input products and services to help all sizes of farms sustainably improve their yields. This is Land O'Lakes' first commercial investment in Africa and reflects the cooperative's accelerated growth in its international business.

With the deal, Land O'Lakes, through its South African subsidiary, assumes a 52.5 percent ownership stake in Villa Crop Protection. The existing Villa Crop Protection management team will continue to lead the business. People and product expertise from Land O'Lakes' crop inputs business Winfield Solutions, LLC will support and assist existing operations.

"South Africa has a dynamic and growing agriculture industry, and we are proud to be entering this country with a local market leader in crop protection," said Chris Policinski, president and CEO of Land O'Lakes, Inc. "We've been in countries across the world, including parts of Africa, for 35 years through our international development efforts. This is our first major international commercial investment in Africa. We look forward to bringing proven existing products from our WinField business to the South African market and investing in the research and development efforts that will provide new products to local growers that help produce more food, more sustainably."

Land O'Lakes will bring proprietary products, services and insights delivered in the U.S. under the WinField brand to complement the portfolio Villa Crop Protection offers the South African market. The organisation will also develop new and comprehensive solutions designed specifically for the needs of local growers.

Villa's crop protection solutions are supported with a wide range of training programs presented by the Villa Academy Training Institute. The institute equips agriculturalists, producers and sales people with the latest knowledge, scientific facts and experience in the field of crop protection to help optimize their crop production using fewer resources. Villa Crop Protection plans to expand the institute's reach with assistance from Land O'Lakes and provide an even-wider range of training courses for the agricultural industry both locally and in the rest of Africa to build skills that help support the economic development of farmers and the agricultural industry as a whole.

In 2014, agriculture added 109.3 billion South African Rand (\$8.7B USD) to the country's GDP according to the World Bank. Nearly 80 percent of the land in South Africa was used for agricultural production, which amounts to more than 97.6 million hectares.

"The data is clear: Agriculture and production are critically important to South Africa," said Andre Schreuder, managing director of Villa Crop Protection. "With Land O'Lakes' investment in Villa Crop Protection and WinField's capabilities, products and people, we are even more confident entering this exciting period in our business. We are positive that this deal will enhance our capabilities, build on distinctive and complementary product offerings and bring new technologies, international insights and Land O'Lakes' years of value-added agricultural knowledge to help meet local growers' needs today and into the future."

There will be no adverse employee impacts for either organisation.

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About Villa Crop Protection

Since 1994, Villa Crop Protection has focused on the development and registration of unique commodity crop protection products aimed primarily at meeting the specific needs of farmers in South Africa. With more than 250 product registrations and nearly 900 on-farm research and development trials conducted each year, the ISO-accredited company has developed a reputation for research and new product development that results in proven solutions. Through the Villa Academy, the company provides training and knowledge on how to use products to their greatest benefit. Villa Crop Protection is based in Johannesburg, with a product formulation facility, Fountain Chemicals, located approximately halfway between Johannesburg and Pretoria. The regional head office and warehousing facility is located just outside of Cape Town in Wellington, to better serve the Cape market.

<http://www.villacrop.co.za>

About Land O'Lakes, Inc.

Land O'Lakes, Inc., a premier agribusiness and food company, is a member-owned cooperative with industry-leading operations that span the spectrum from agricultural production to consumer foods. With 2014 annual sales of \$15 billion, Land O'Lakes is one of the United States' largest cooperatives and ranks 203 on the Fortune 500. Building on a legacy of more than 94 years of operation, Land O'Lakes today operates some of the most respected brands in agribusiness and food production in the United States including LAND O LAKES® Dairy Foods, Purina Animal Nutrition and WinField Solutions. The company does business in all 50 states in the U.S.A. and more than 60 countries. Land O'Lakes, Inc. corporate headquarters are located in Arden Hills, Minnesota.

<http://www.landolakesinc.com>