

Unlocking the potential of agriculture in Alexandra township | LFP's Hydro Coop

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LFP Agri, a proudly South African provider of sustainable agricultural transformation solutions, is committed to unlocking the potential of agriculture in Alexandra Township with the implementation of their incubation training programmes and Hydro Coops.



Supporting smallholder farmers to play a larger role in food production and natural resource stewardship is one of the quickest ways to elevate residents of Alexandra township out of poverty and sustainably feed a growing population, according to LFP Agri.

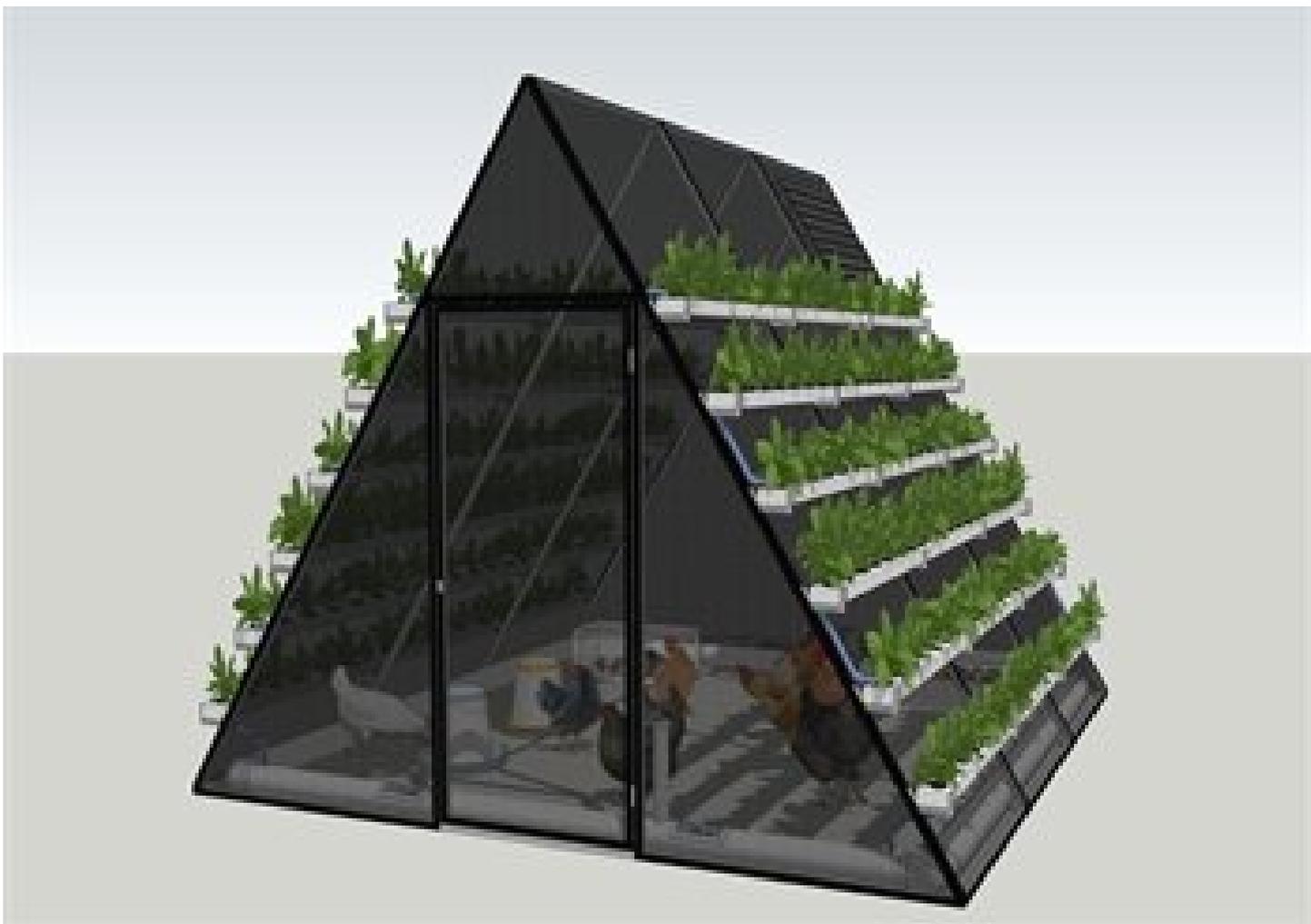
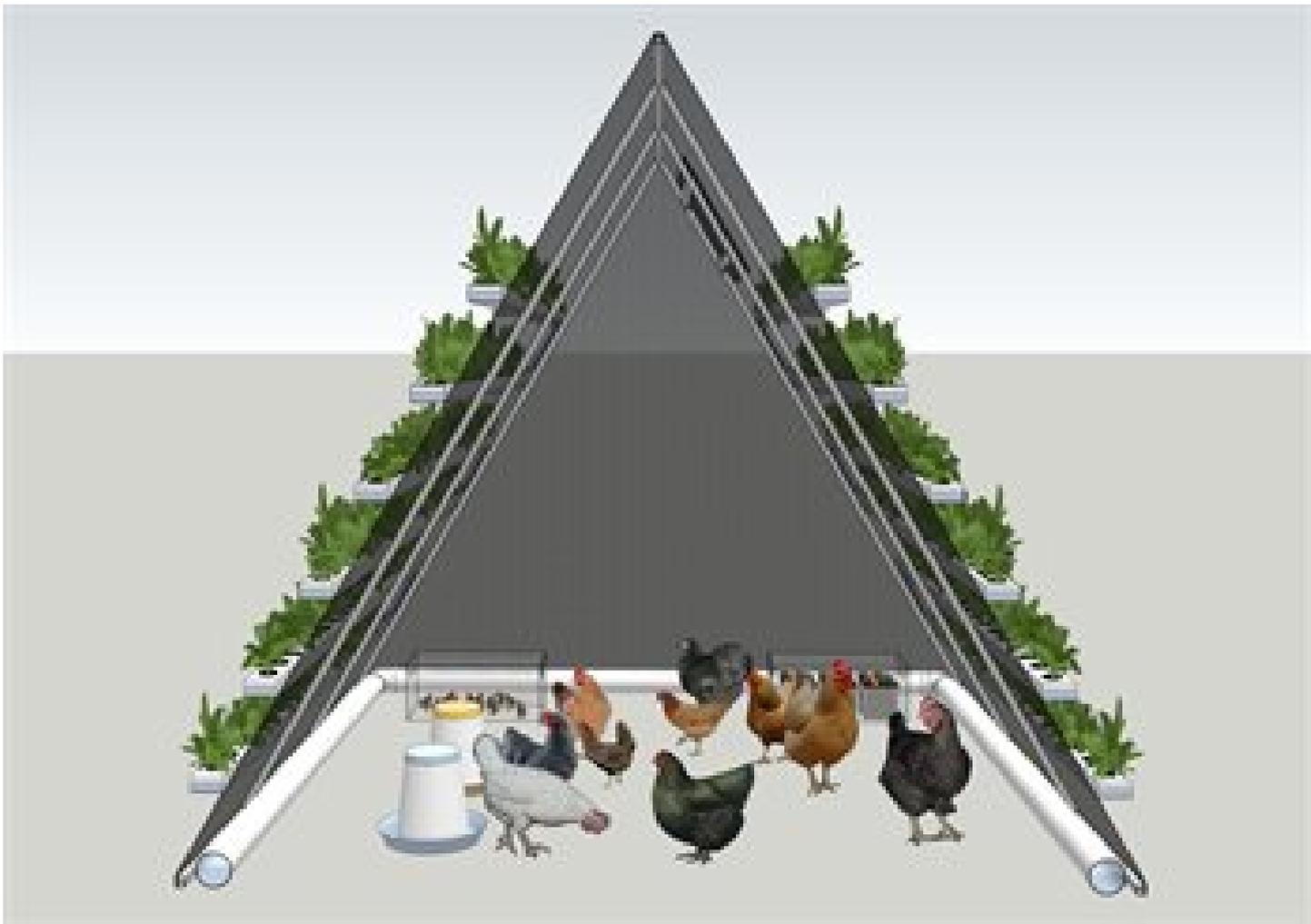
LFP Agri's Hydro Coop is a climate-smart, forward-thinking, and scalable agriculture system influencing food affordability and food security in rural and urban South Africa and Africa. The modular system is easy to assemble and

has the capacity to raise 1,100 broiler chickens and 3,600 vegetable plants and an estimated turnover of R117,818.16 annually.

Consisting of a 9m² multifunctional smart farm equipped with a 40-watt solar panel, a 40-watt submersible pump, a 150L water tank, and a water filtration system, the Hydro Coop combines necessary education, incubation, and mentorship and is aligned with 13 of the 17 standard development goals of the United Nations; it aims to reduce poverty, create sustainable jobs, and foster agriculture sector entrepreneurs.

Additionally, the Hydro Coop conforms to the South African BEE rules of good practice for enterprise development, skills development, and social-economic development.

Between 180,000 to 750,000 live in Alexandra township,¹ and thousands depend largely on agriculture for their livelihoods. These full or part-time farmers not only take care of the financial needs of their own families but contribute to food security and poverty reduction.



However, increased land fragmentation, diminished investment assistance, and the marginalisation of small farms in Alexandra township have impeded the development of this crucial contribution and left many farmers vulnerable.

Given the proper enabling conditions and focused assistance, these often-ignored farmers have the potential to ignite a new, sustainable agricultural revolution across Alexandra township.

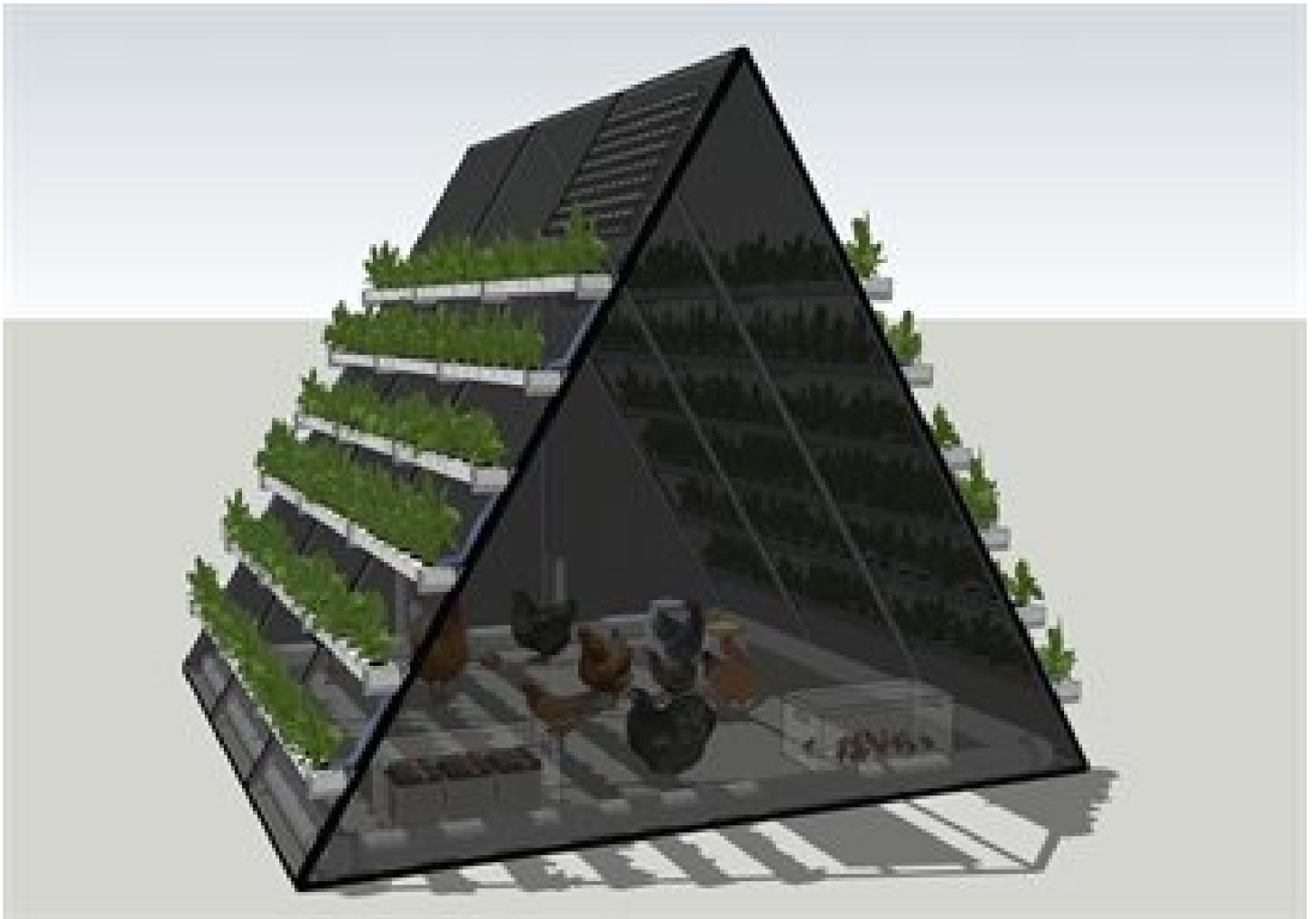
Alexandra Township is one of Johannesburg's most populous and impoverished townships. Ironically, it is surrounded by the wealthiest neighbourhoods in the nation, including Wendywood, Kelvin, and Sandton.

In February 2001, former President Thabo Mbeki announced the Alexandra Renewal Project, a project that was to lift the township onto its feet. An amount of R1.3bn was made available, and the township was to be upgraded over seven years.²

While this programme was a crucial component of the Government's approach to addressing urbanisation and housing challenges in Alexandra, it failed to achieve an even more important challenge - sustainable development.

"Decades of underinvestment in agriculture, increasing competition for land and water, rising fuel and fertiliser costs, and climate change have made it more difficult for farmers in Alexandra township to escape poverty," says Louis Pulzone, CEO of LFP Agri.





Agriculture investments are the most effective weapons against hunger and poverty. There are enormous opportunities for communities in Alexandra township to sow seeds of change. All that's needed are innovations that can drive agriculture productivity and increase participation.

"LFP Agri is positioned to play a pivotal role in developing new model agricultural initiatives, capacity building, and farmer training, enabling farmers to establish smart and traditional agricultural firms, through the implementation of LFP Agri's Hydro Coop."

Farmers face numerous challenges daily: Limited land available for agricultural activities, climate change, water shortages, loss of ecosystem services and biodiversity, dramatic increases in the cost of food and farming inputs, and the financial crisis, all of which have a disproportionate impact on impoverished people.

LFP Agri's Hydro Coop offers all people, including women, youth, and the disabled, a hand of hope: The chance to change their life in a meaningful way!

LFP's Agri Hydro Coop will allow farmers in Alexandra township to:

- Grow healthier produce, faster.
- Eliminate fertiliser burn (nutrient levels are readily checked and maintained).
- There is no need for tilling, mulching, composting, weeding, raking, excavating, or watering.
- Pesticide use is drastically reduced or eliminated.
- There is no need to be concerned about soil conditions or soil depletion.
- Less evaporation (water is not sprayed through the air).
- Completely sustainable cultivation: you can grow in the same spot.
- Saves space: one square metre can yield enough greens for a household of four.

- The system produces no waste items.
- Fewer trips to the store for commercially cultivated supermarket vegetables equals less gas consumed and less packaging discarded, lowering your carbon footprint.
- Avoid preservatives, artificial ripening agents, irradiated vegetables, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

“History has shown us what’s possible when people can grow enough food. If we want to transform communities in Alexandra township, we need to focus on raising agricultural productivity and making agriculture a sustainable business. When we conceived of the Hydro Coop as a method of economic benefit, the goal was to guarantee food and nutrition security, maintain a sustainable income, foster entrepreneurship, and advance development, and that’s exactly what the Hydro Coop is doing,” concludes Pulzone.

LFP Agri is well-positioned to play a crucial role in the development of new model agricultural initiatives, capacity building, and agripreneur development. This enables these farmers to establish smart agricultural farms, thereby contributing to global food security and job creation. Do you want to be part of sustainable change? Do you want to help fight social injustice, social and economic exclusion, corruption, poverty, malnutrition, and climate change with our unique and forward-thinking agricultural programmes and projects? Join us! Email: . Operating hours: Monday - Friday - 07:30 - 16:00, Address: 47 Kroton Street, Weltevredenpark, Roodepoort.

References:

1. Alexandra Township, Johannesburg, South Africa [cited 2022, July 14]; Available from: <http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/upgrading/case-examples/overview-africa/alexandra-township.html>. Accessed July 2022.
2. The history of Alexandra Township, Johannesburg, Gauteng [cited 2022, July 14]; Available from: <https://showme.co.za/lifestyle/the-history-of-alexandra-township-johannesburg-gauteng/>. Accessed July 2022.
3. LFP Group - Home - LFP Group [cited 2022, July 14]; Available from: <https://lfpgroup.co.za/lfp-group-agricultural-solutions/>. Accessed July 2022.

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