



MTN IoT

Agri Seminar

On 1 June 2022, one of South Africa's giant mobile telecommunications company MTN, hosted the first ever Internet of Things (IoT) Agri Seminar.

According to MTN, the webinar was hosted to promote best practice sharing and collaboration in the Agricultural Science and technological communities.

"The IoT Conference is one of South Africa's flagship future technologies and innovation summits. It has established itself as the largest and most significant IoT platform on the African continent and brings together some of the top IoT experts in the country."

For MTN, the time was ripe for small, medium and commercial farmers to engage and utilise available IoT to boost their knowledge.

"This is about Intelligent Farming, Delivering Real Value. Transforming the way decisions are made, the skills required, the rules of engagement with workforce and community, and how resources are optimally utilized."

The private sector had incredible progressed in the IoT in agriculture. For example, Mezzanine, an ICT company developed IoT features for farmers and traders to transact and interact online.

With the agricultural landscape changing at a rapid pace, there was a need for farmers to begin embracing Agriculture IoT. As early as 2020, Microsoft had conducted a digital skills study, which discovered that plenty of rural farmers in South Africa were digitally illiterate; i.e., unable to use smart phones.

The Agricultural Research Council was South Africa's agricultural technology lead and had developed over 30 Agri Tech IoT. Another was the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) which has developed innovative satellite technologies to reduce costs.

The National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) was invited to provide policy perspective on agri-technology, especially now that the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan has been signed. "We support such initiatives undertaken by MTN, to bring Agriculture IoT closer to those that require it. From a policy directive, shall we broaden this scope to be included in the Master Plan" said the Chief Executive Officer of the NAMC, Dr Simphiwe Ngqangweni.

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