

SA Harvest calls on logistics industry support to reduce food waste, hunger

SA Harvest, a South African food rescue and hunger relief organisation, has highlighted the significant role of logistics in reducing food waste and alleviating hunger. Approximately 10.3 million tonnes of edible food is wasted annually in South Africa, while 20 million people experience food insecurity.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

The organisation is working to address this issue by rescuing surplus food from farms, manufacturers, and retailers, and distributing it to those in need.

SA Harvest urgently needs the logistics industry to help transport 68 tonnes of citrus fruit weekly from Nelspruit to Johannesburg or Durban, following a generous 1,000-tonne donation from Indigo Fruit Farming. Ozzy Nel, COO of SA Harvest, emphasises that transport is a critical piece of the food rescue puzzle, and calls on industry players to support their mission of reducing food waste and hunger. The organisation has already secured initial support from Unitrans, Maersk, and HelloChoice, but still requires weekly transport and return of agri bins between June 5 and August 28.

Nel explains that the bulk of food loss and waste in South Africa is associated with processing and packaging, with 49% lost, followed by 19% lost during the post-harvest handling and storage phase, and 18% at the consumer/household level. Cereals contribute half of the overall losses and waste, followed by fruit and vegetables (19%), milk (14%) and meat (9%).

SA Harvest works with food donors such as manufacturers, farmers, and retailers to rescue this food and redirect it to beneficiaries who convert it into nutritious meals.

The organisation relies heavily on logistics to carry out its food rescue operations, from collaborating with food donors to collecting and transporting surplus food to distributing it safely and efficiently to local charities and community organisations. The organisation operates a fleet of refrigerated and other vehicles from its warehouses in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and Lusikisiki.

Scaling operations

To enhance its logistics capability, SA Harvest is building a proprietary technology platform that will enable knowledge and data sharing with NGOs and other stakeholders, facilitating collaboration in finding solutions to the problem of food waste in South Africa. This platform aims to empower the organisation to scale its operations effectively and make the industry more efficient in the long run.

SA Harvest receives support from logistics companies like Meridian Logistix, Maersk, Waterford Carriers, Time Link Cargo, Unitrans, and Bulldog Hauliers to transport and redistribute surplus food. The organization is grateful for the logistical support, but is currently seeking additional assistance from the logistics industry to aid in reverse logistics and transporting surplus food to their warehouses.

Nel urges transport companies with vehicles of all sizes to register with SA Harvest as logistics partners. "By registering with us, transport companies can provide much-needed logistical support and transport when their capacity allows. This will allow us to rescue even more surplus food and get it to those who need it most."

Logistics companies interested in partnering with SA Harvest can contact Margolite Williams at 079 495 4433 or margolite@saharvest.org. "Any assistance with our immediate need for transport between Nelspruit and Johannesburg or Durban will be of enormous value in ensuring that the generous donation of citrus fruit from Indigo Fruit Farming reaches the people who need it so desperately," concludes Nel.

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