

Air Products reaps first Aquaponics harvest

At an event at Carel de Wet Technical High School in Vanderbijlpark on 8 April, Air Products, as partners in an aquaponics initiative called Inmed Aquaponics, celebrated the school's first harvest. "One of the reasons that Air Products South Africa decided to get involved in this project is that we saw the potential for a profoundly positive impact on future generations from Carel de Wet Technical High School and on the wider community," says Air Products South Africa's managing director, Mike Hellyar.

Aquaponics is an intensive food production technique that combines aquaculture (fish farming) and hydroponics (soilless crop growing). It works on a closed system whereby the nutrients from fish tanks feed gravel grow beds, acting as a filter for the water. Clean, oxygenated water is then pumped back into the fish tanks.

"We see the fruits of this harvest as just the beginning of a process of positive change, an ongoing cycle of growth and regeneration, of fertility and renewal," Hellyar adds. "Air Products has a large facility in Vanderbijlpark and, with Inmed, recognised the need to develop those all-important technical, agricultural and commercial skills, not only at Carel de Wet Technical High School, but within the greater Vaal Triangle area."

Subsequent to the launch of the aquaponics unit last August, six grow beds have been managed by the school, producing a substantial crop of tomatoes, cucumbers and bell peppers,



Subsequent to the launch of the aquaponics unit last August, learners at Carel de Wet Technical High School have established six grow beds and produced a substantial crop of tomatoes, cucumbers and bell peppers

which the school has been able to sell.

"While farming may seem a long way from the world of industrial gas, we believe that it is only through education that our children can grow into socially and environmentally aware, responsible and caring citizens," says Hellyar. "This is why we chose to get involved, along with Inmed, in the Aquaponics project at Carel de Wet Technical High School. This school is the first in the country to be using the Inmed aquaponics project agricultural training programme and we are excited to be involved in this groundbreaking initiative," he adds.

"Through its vision of creating 'healthy children and bright futures', Inmed's Partnership for Children is transforming the future for hundreds of thousands of children and their families globally. We are proud to be associated with Inmed and believe that joining forces through our common focus on the needs of children, we can truly make a difference," he concludes