

58^{of} 100
Thubelihle
Ngcobo



Here to be Cultivating

**Sowing tech,
reaping resilience:**
 How Fuze Greens is
 reinventing South African
 agriculture.

“Everyone sees the fresh leafy greens on the shelves. Few see the early mornings, sore muscles, muddy boots, and long days behind it. Greatness isn’t built in a single harvest – it’s built through showing up every day, even when no one is watching. This is the reality of farming: consistency, patience, and hard work turning into something worth being proud of.”

For Thubelihle Ngcobo, founder of Fuze Greens, these words encapsulate the unglamorous grit required to build a modern agribusiness from the ground up. Armed with a B-Tech in Agriculture Crop Sciences from the Tshwane University of Technology, Thubelihle blends deep agronomic expertise with a forward-looking agri-tech vision,

producing high-quality leafy greens like lettuce, while pushing the boundaries of what primary farming can achieve.

Yet, turning seed into scale in South Africa's agricultural sector is notoriously challenging. Like many emerging black women entrepreneurs, Thubelihle had to grind through systemic hurdles – from capital intensity to securing access to suitable arable land and breaking into competitive commercial supply chains. Her perseverance recently paid off with the signing of Fuze Greens' first major commercial off-take agreement, a pivotal milestone that underscores her long-term viability in the market.

For Thubelihle, this landmark deal reflects a larger imperative for corporate supply chains across the country. She believes that real transformation requires bold, decisive action from corporate procurement teams to champion women-led agribusinesses and provide them with fair access to market shelf space.

Beyond the fields, Thubelihle is positioning Fuze Greens at the intersection of agriculture and modern technology. She was recently honoured to participate in the Her-AI Path workshop – sponsored by the University of Maryland’s Robert H. Smith School of Business in partnership with the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). Through this initiative, she is actively exploring how artificial intelligence can revolutionise farm decision-making, optimise crop management, and drive sustainable growth for agribusinesses.

Reflecting on her journey, Thubelihle remains passionate about shifting public perceptions of the sector and inspiring the next generation of female leaders to enter the space.

“Women are under-represented in agriculture, which is unfortunate because it is such an exciting, multifaceted field,” says Thubelihle. “When women think about agriculture, they often view it through a very one-dimensional perspective – just manual labour in the dirt, but the opportunities are vast. From primary farming to the bioeconomy, agri-tech, and high-value agro-processing, there are so many avenues to innovate. We need to actively encourage greater female participation across every node of the agricultural value chain.”

**Your
story
matters**

