

Aphelele Ndamase



TOP 10

Aphelele Ndamase is a 28-year-old agripreneur originally from Mount Frere in the Eastern Cape, currently based in Underberg, KwaZulu-Natal. She is the founder of **Balilethu Livestock**, a growing agribusiness operating in the livestock and poultry sector, focused on supplying quality animals to both emerging and established farmers.

Aphelele's journey into agriculture is deeply rooted in her upbringing. Growing up, she was closely involved in her father's livestock activities, where calves, sheep and cattle were part of everyday life.

This early exposure laid the foundation for her passion for farming and gave her a practical understanding of animal care, handling and the responsibilities that come with livestock ownership. Although she did not receive formal agricultural training, Aphelele is largely self-taught, building her knowledge through hands-on experience, observation, independent learning and collaboration with other farmers.

Balilethu Livestock was officially established in 2023 and specialises in the sourcing and supply of bottle-fed calves, breeding and pregnant cows, Dorper and Meatmaster sheep, Lohmann Brown layers, and day-old Ross broiler chicks. Through this work, Aphelele supports farmers across different scales, contributing to food security, sustainable farming practices and rural economic growth. Her business is known for its reliability, quality livestock and the personal care she brings to every transaction.

What inspired Aphelele to pursue entrepreneurship was a desire to live with purpose and intention. To build something aligned to her values and passion for animals. For her, agriculture is more than a business; it is a way of life that allows her to grow personally while creating meaningful impact for others.

Being part of the **Metropolitan Collective Shapers** programme has been a powerful catalyst in her journey. The programme has strengthened her self-belief, encouraged bold thinking and reignited her entrepreneurial drive. Through exposure to new knowledge, tools and like-minded entrepreneurs, Aphelele continues to sharpen her vision for building a sustainable, impact-driven agribusiness.

Looking ahead, she aims to scale Balilethu Livestock, invest in improved breeding programmes, create employment opportunities and mentor aspiring farmers, using agriculture as a vehicle for long-term community upliftment and economic transformation.



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