



## **Kenya-based Online-to-Offline DigiShop Marketplace Platform – Farmers Pride Gets \$ 220,000 Funding from Gray Matters Capital’s coLABS**

*Prospect of having 60 DigiShops serving 30,000 farmers by 2022 and 1,000 DigiShops over the next 6 years directly serving 500,000 farmers; increased farmer income and productivity through improved access to quality inputs and services; and doubling the income of and offering training programs to women agro-dealers are driving factors behind this funding round*

**NAIROBI (KENYA) / ATLANTA (USA), 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2020:** US-based impact investor – [Gray Matters Capital](#) has announced its funding of Nairobi (Kenya) based [Farmers Pride](#), a one stop e-commerce platform that connects village level farmers to quality inputs, services, and information through women-owned DigiShops powered by technology, under its gender portfolio – [coLABS](#).

The funding of US\$ 220,000 is aimed at helping Farmers Pride reach 500,000, mostly female, rural farmers to boost their income and productivity through increased access to quality inputs and services, insurance services, financial services, market linkages, and farming mechanization. Farmers Pride will support women agro-dealers through structured education and training programs. This will entail the funding amount to be used for agro-dealer pipeline development and launch of 50 technology powered women and youth owned village level DigiShops. The funding will also support DigiShop technology upgrade to support last mile SMS and voice powered delivery of farmer education and inputs as well as roll out a robust farmer education program to reach additional 30,000 farmers by 2022, majority of these being women and youth.

Prior to this funding, Farmers Pride received USD 70,000 grant from Kenya Markets Trust, USD 20,000 grant from the D-prize Global Distribution Challenge award, USD 200,000 grant from Climate Information, and USD 45,000 grant from the World Bank Group to support farmer education and expand access to high-quality agricultural inputs.

### **IMPROVING THE AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAIN THROUGH TRANSFORMING WOMEN SHOP MANAGERS TO SMART BUSINESS OWNERS**

“Farmers Pride’s competitive advantage and uniqueness lies in adopting an agro-dealer franchising concept and integrating that with the DigiShop technology to transform rural women-owned agro-dealer shops, support women farmers to increase their income and improve last mile delivery of agricultural solutions; thus creating prosperous futures for smallholder farmers while contributing to the elimination of youth unemployment, food insecurity, and malnutrition in Kenya and beyond, in Africa,” said Founder Samuel Munguti.

He further explains how substandard operations and management of the agro-dealer stores have significantly affected the agricultural productivity. “The majority of farmers across Kenya are serviced by village level agro-dealer stores. These stores face numerous challenges ranging from poor record keeping, lack of information, distribution, access to counterfeit



products, capital and poor management where farmers end up purchasing poor quality products at exploitative prices with limited or no extension and education support. The impact of Covid-19 has made the challenges faced by these last mile stores and farming communities worse. Modernizing these stores through digitization of their operations, addressing and breaking last mile supply chain barriers, providing them with digital trading tools, and enabling them to offer improved extension services to their customers massively translates into enhanced awareness of inclusive agricultural practices and increased access to high-yielding inputs at affordable prices by the local farming communities.”

Speaking about the funding, **Sharda Vishwanathan, Pipeline Development Lead, Gray Matters Capital coLABS**, said, “Due to the global pandemic, we had to go from being a sector-agnostic fund to focus on specific sectors that are leveraging technology to provide women and girls with solutions to weather the storm. Agriculture, with a specific focus on improving value chains and productivity, emerged as one of the priority areas. In our interactions with agri-tech entrepreneurs, we have learned that access to quality agri-inputs and technical know-how is a huge challenge which further makes smallholder farmers (80% of which are women) vulnerable to the risks of climate change. Covid-19 has only widened this gap and impacted productivity by creating several bottlenecks. Farmers Pride has built a sustainable solution that can address the looming challenges related to the agricultural last mile. By harnessing technology, Farmers Pride transforms the women-owned informal stores into micro-franchisees that can build traceability of the inputs and thus, guarantee quality. In the process, they not only help build a community of micro-entrepreneurs with improved incomes but also shift gears for smallholder farmers by increasing the productivity of their yields. We are excited to work with Farmers Pride and support their inclusive agri-tech model that serves the underserved and has the potential to create a ripple effect in the communities.”

The funding of Farmers Pride marks coLABS’ third investment in Kenya and its seventh portfolio company to be added from Africa following Rwanda’s ARED, Ghana’s Redbird Health Tech, Nigeria’s SonoCare, Tanzania’s WomenChoice Industries, and Kenya’s Taimba and Farmshine.

## NOTES TO THE EDITOR

### About GMC coLABS

GMC coLABS is an early-stage investment portfolio seeking to invest in innovative and scalable for-profit enterprises that have the potential to dramatically improve the lives of women and girls around the world. Launched in 2018, investment portfolio of impact investor Gray Matters Capital (GMC) has committed \$5 million over the next 3 years to help early-stage entrepreneurs with seed capital and strategic advisory support to scale their enterprises. GMC coLABS has so far invested in a diverse portfolio of companies across sectors ranging from civic engagement, to health, to livelihoods spanning 4 continents. The investment ticket size is up to \$250,000 per enterprise.

To know more about coLABS, visit <https://gmccolabs.com/>

### About Farmers Pride

Farmers Pride is a high growth Kenyan social enterprise offering last mile online-to-offline marketplace platform that connects village level farmers to relevant information, quality



inputs and credible agriculture service providers in local community through leveraging on technology and franchising to improve capacity of women owned agro-dealer stores to ensure increased farm production and improved family income and food security. Farmers Pride DigiShop platform creates new agriculture opportunities to village level farmers to access trusted and dependable information, inputs and services. To know more about Farmers Pride, visit <https://farmersprideafrica.com/>

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