

## **Two KZN pensioners continue to supply the Shoprite Group - a relationship 30 years in the making**

- Two pensioners from KwaZulu-Natal have continued their family tradition of farming in the La Mercy region.
- The married couple have supplied a wide range of high quality produce to the Shoprite Group for the past 30 years, a relationship they describe as having been a “pillar of strength”.

A married couple from KwaZulu-Natal, both of whom are pensioners, have continued a family farming tradition with their inherited farm in La Mercy - and have been regular suppliers of high quality produce to the Shoprite Group for more than three decades.

Balamani Govender inherited the farm from her parents, who were among the first successful farmers in the region. Together with her husband Krish Naidu, the pair have continued working the land well into their late 60s and early 70s.

Today the couple continues to exclusively supply Shoprite with a variety of vegetables grown on their small scale farm. They produce coriander, mint, watercress, herbs, and spinach - but it's their specialisation in Cherry Belle radishes that has garnered the two the most attention.

The choice to farm these radishes, a common addition to a traditional French salad, was a logical one, explains Naidu. “Cherry Belle radishes grow throughout the year, and the weather and soil structure on the farm is very conducive for its growth. It has quick returns from seed to harvest.”

“In order to supply Shoprite we had to meet certain requirements, follow a growing programme, and most importantly follow a food safety programme for which we get audited annually.” Naidu says this has further enhanced their business.

“First grade produce will produce first class sales. My experience tells me that once the products are of good quality, Shoprite will sell more - which has always been the case. I solely supply Shoprite, and business with Shoprite has been great and this allows me to expand my farming and create more employment,” says Naidu.

As with most farming it is seldom easy and straightforward to regularly supply high quality produce to a leading supermarket chain. But central to their success is the “tremendous relationship” they have built with Shoprite over the years.

Naidu and Govender continue to work hands-on at one of the region's most successful small scale vegetable farms, describing the supermarket group as a “pillar of strength for the business”.

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