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Agriculture key to future

“Agriculture holds the key to the future of this country. It has the potential to resolve and unlock many of our most pressing problems, such as land reform, food security, job creation, and how to manage climate change, to name but a few. Therefore, I believe you are in the right place at the right time.”

This was the message from Hortgro Executive Director Anton Rabe to agriculture students last night. Rabe was speaking in Stellenbosch at a function held by the deciduous fruit industry for bursary holders.

“Agriculture as a collective can change this country for the better, that is why we invest in our youth through bursary schemes and by creating opportunities for our students to plug-in to openings created by the industry,” he said.

“Agriculture cannot change South Africa alone, and the Government also has a role to play to ensure a stable policy environment and sustainable economic growth opportunities via improved market access and free trade agreements, thereby creating opportunities for agriculturists to do business in. The rest is up to us. We need to link you to a job as soon as possible and ensure that you gain experience.”

Hortgro currently supports 31 undergraduate students and 59 post-graduate students with a bursary scheme and research projects valued at R5 m. Over the past six years 406 under- and post-graduate students benefitted from the scheme at a cost of more than R21 m to the industry – of which R15 m was allocated to post-graduate students linked to the industry’s research programmes. The bursary funding scheme forms part of the industry levy, with additional support from AgriSETA and the Deciduous Fruit Industry Development Trust.

Rabe said that the deciduous fruit industry has a proud track record of students ending up in the industry in “one way or another” thereby creating much-needed human capital that is needed to ensure the future of the deciduous fruit industry.

Landbou hou sleutel vir toekoms

"Die Suid-Afrikaanse landbousektor hou die sleutel vir die toekoms van ons land. Dit het die potensiaal om van ons mees indringendste probleme, soos grondhervorming, voedselveiligheid, werkskepping en hoe om klimaatsverandering te bestuur, op te los en te ontsluit. Daarom glo ek julle is op die regte tyd op die regte plek."

Dit was die boodskap van Hortgro se uitvoerende direkteur, Anton Rabe, gisteraand aan landboustudente. Rabe het by 'n funksie in Stellenbosch die sagtevrugtebedryf se beurshouers toegesprek.

"Landbou as 'n kollektief kan die land verbeter, daarom belê ons in ons jeug deur beursskemas en deur geleenthede te skep vir ons studente om in die bedryf te werk," het hy gesê.

"Landbou kan egter nie alles alleen doen nie. Die regering moet ook sy kant bring deur 'n stabiele beleidsomgewing en volhoubare ekonomiese ontwikkelingsgeleenthede te skep via verbeterde marktoegang en met vryhandelsooreenkomste. Sodoende word 'n gunstige omgewing vir landbouers geskep om sake in te doen. Die res moet ons doen. Ons moet seker maak dat julle so gou moontlik ervaring en 'n loopbaan in die bedryf kry."

Hortgro ondersteun tans 31 voorgraadse studente en 59 nagraadse studente met 'n beursskema ter waarde van R5 miljoen. Oor die afgelope ses jaar het 406 voor- en nagraadse studente voordeel getrek uit die beursskema teen 'n koste van meer as R21 miljoen aan die bedryf - waarvan R15 miljoen ondersteuning aan studente was wat navorsing vir die bedryf doen. Die beursbefondsing maak deel uit van die bedryfsheffing met verdere bydraes deur AgriSETA en die Sagtevrugtebedryf-ontwikkelingstrust.

Rabe het gesê die sagtevrugtebedryf het 'n trotse rekord van beursstudente wat "op een of ander manier" weer in die bedryf beland en sodoende broodnodige mensekapitaal vorm om die toekoms van die sagtevrugtebedryf te verseker.

- For further information and photographs, please contact: carne@hortgro.co.za