

PRESS RELEASE: MAY 10, 2017

HORTGRO invests R3,7m in students

The deciduous fruit industry is dedicated to investing in South Africa's future agricultural workforce.

Over the past 14 years HORTGRO has invested close to R35 million in bursaries as contribution to a skilled and sustainable agricultural workforce.

This year HORTGRO is contributing R3,7 million in bursaries and training at higher education institutions nationwide, including Stellenbosch University, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Elsenburg, and the universities of Limpopo, Pretoria and Free State.

At a recent event for HORTGRO's bursary holders, Anton Rabe, HORTGRO executive director, emphasised that a skilled workforce is vital to expand the R11 billion deciduous fruit industry.

"Agriculture, and the deciduous fruit industry specifically, is a major contributor to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP). It is also responsible for providing many with employment. Therefore we believe it is necessary to provide support in discovering and training the best minds and developing a strong labour force."

Rabe also highlighted the importance of staying ahead with technology and "developing" people.

"We have some serious work to do in convincing young people that a career in agriculture is beneficial. The horticultural industry and technology is evolving and in the next 20 to 30 years many great opportunities await."

HORTGRO currently funds 68 students, consisting of 27 undergraduate students and 41 postgraduate students. The postgraduate students are also linked to 32 of the 108 research projects conducted by HORTGRO Science.

Dr Xolani Sibozza, HORTGRO Science fruit production researcher and guest speaker at the event, encouraged the students to keep working toward their goals.

Sibozza who grew up in a rural setting and was heading towards becoming a livestock farmer, told students he knew he wanted to further his education and persevered until he achieved his goal.

He went on to underscore the scarcity of skilled agricultural labour.

"Our current industry experts have been in the game for a while now. We need new energy in the field, young people who will take over, renew and expand our trade."

HORTGRO's bursary scheme is joint venture between the pome and stone fruit industries, Agriseta and the Deciduous Fruit Development Trust.

PERSVERKLARING: 10 MEI 2017

HORTGRO BELÊ R3,7M IN STUDENTE

Die sagtevrugtebedryf is toegewyd aan die uitbreiding en belegging in Suid-Afrika se toekomstige landbouwerkersmag.

Oor die afgelope 14 jaar het HORTGRO nagenoeg R35 miljoen in beurse belê as 'n bydrae tot 'n opgeleide landbouwerkersmag.

Hierdie jaar gee HORTGRO R3,7 miljoen in beurse en opleiding aan universiteit studente landwyd. Dié studente studeer tans aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch, die Kaapse Skiereiland Universiteit van Tegnologie, Elsenburg en die universiteite van Limpopo, Pretoria en die Vrystaat.

By 'n onlangse geleentheid vir HORTGRO se beurshouers, het Anton Rabe, uitvoerende direkteur van HORTGRO, beklemtoon dat 'n opgeleide werkersmag noodsaaklik is om die R11 miljard sagtevrugtebedryf verder te laat groei.

“Landbou, en veral die sagtevrugtebedryf, dra grootliks by tot Suid-Afrika se bruto binnelandse produk (BBP). Dié bedryf verskaf ook werk aan derduisende mense. Ons is daarom van mening dat dit nodig is om ondersteuning te bied in die ontdekking en opleiding van die beste “breins” en die ontwikkeling van 'n sterk arbeidsmag.”

Rabe het ook die belangrikheid van vooruitgang met tegnologie en die ontwikkeling van mense beklemtoon.

“Daar is nog harde werk wat gedoen moet word om jongmense te oortuig dat 'n loopbaan in landbou vir hulle voordelig sal wees. Die tuinbou- en tegnologie-bedryf is besig om te ontwikkel en daar lê nog talle geleenthede in die volgende 20 tot 30 jaar voor.”

HORTGRO finansier tans 68 studente, wat uit 27 voorgraadse studente en 41 nagraadse studente bestaan. Die nagraadse studente is ook gekoppel aan 32 van die 108 navorsingsprojekte wat tans deur HORTGRO Science uitgevoer word.

Dr. Xolani Siboz, HORTGRO Science vrugteproduksie navorser en gasspreker by dié geleentheid, het die studente aangemoedig om voortdurend aan hul doelwitte te werk.

Siboz wat in 'n landelike omgewing grootgeword het en ook met 'n beurs studeer het, het aan studente gesê hy het geweet hy wou sy opleiding uitbrei. Dus het hy volhard totdat hy sy doel bereik het.

Hy het die skaarsheid van opgeleide persone in die landboubedryf beklemtoon.

“Die huidige kundiges in die bedryf is al 'n ruk lank in die spel. Ons benodig nuwe energie in die veld, jongmense wat kan leiding neem om die bedryf te hernu en uit te brei.”

HORTGRO se beursskema is 'n gesamentlike onderneming tussen die kern-en steenvrugtebedrywe, Agriseta en die Sagtevrugte Ontwikkelings-trust.



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FLTR: Andrew van Lingen (MSc), Werner Truter (MSc), Philip Rebel (MSc), Nicholas Dicey (HORTGRO Chairperson), Dr Xolani Sibozza (HORTGRO Science Researcher).



FLTR: Dr Antoinette Malan (Stellenbosch University insect biological control researcher), Dr Nomakholwa Stokwe (Stellenbosch University nematologist), Hugh Campbell (Hortgro Science General Manager), Maryna Odendaal (MSc nematology), Deidre Odendaal (PhD nematology), Nadine Carstens (BSc Agric Soil Science) and Caro Kapp (nematode PhD researcher).



FLTR: Chad van Wyk (BSc Plant Pathology), Abdul Ghaseeb Jacobs (BSc Plant Pathology), Louis van Zyl (HORTGRO General Manager), Tatenda Kawhena (MSc Post Haverst Technology). Front: Clariza Michaels (BSc Agriculture).