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SOLAR ON THE WATER, A DAM GOOD IDEA

To counter the problem of load shedding and encourage sustainability, farmers are going solar, which is good...but solar on the water is even better. Three years ago, Boplaas 1743 Landgoed began solar energy on their farm by placing the solar panels over the farm's dam. Read **Gerrit Rautenbach's** article [here](#).

Pictured here: Carl van der Merwe, managing director of Boplaas 1743 Landgoed.



SA PEARS ARE FINALLY GOING TO CHINA

The process started many moons ago...After many years of dedication and hard work by an industry team and Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development officials, market access was finally granted for South African pears to China. In 2021, 22% of SA pear exports were destined for the Far East. Read more [here](#).

Picture: Soon Chinese consumers will be adding pears to their pome fruit baskets.



HOW WELL IS TRANSFORMATION DOING IN THE LANGKLOOF?

The Jobs Fund Initiatives started in 2016 and aimed at graduating smallholder farmers to commercial status. Hortgro and the DFDC-SA recently visited the Langkloof to see how seven farms are faring, one year after the project ended. Read more [here](#).

Pictured here: Representatives of Hortgro, the DFDC and Standard Bank on Anhalt farm.

NEW DFDC DIRECTOR FOR LIMPOPO



Dibesho Serage, Managing Director of Groundstone Group and a successful producer, has been appointed as the new director for the DFDC's Limpopo cluster. Read story [here](#).



CERES FRUIT GROWERS HONOURS BEST PRODUCERS OF 2021

Ceres Fruit Growers held their annual prize-giving in November last year. Aurora farm cleaned up the competition, walking away with five awards. Read more [here](#).

Also, read an article in the **Farmers Weekly** about **Wakkerstroom's Fourie Zulch** and how they profit from apples.

Caption: Back row, from left to right, Francois Malan (CFG), Mario du Plessis (Aurora), Willie Muller (Fairfield), Johan Kruger (Erfdeel 2), Petrus Muller (Die Eike), Sakkie Hanekom (Slagboom), Jaco le Roux (Slagboom), Charl Pretorius (Aurora), Jacques (Jakkals) Rossouw (Alhambra), Frederick Odendaal (CFG). Front row, from left to right, David Malherbe (Agterfontein), Raymond Hose (Klein Vlakte), Fourie Zulch (Wakkerstroom), Hannes Hanekom (Welgemeen), Christo Coetzee (Esperanto).

WATCH: HORTGRO STONE UK CONSUMER CAMPAIGN 2022



LATEST MARKET AND TRADE NEWS

- [South African Apple and Pear 2022 Export Crop Estimate](#)
- [Situation at Cape Town port.](#)
- [Excellent plum eating quality as SA consumer campaign targets UK market.](#)
- [PODCAST: Justine Drake talks stone fruit on Cape Talk FM](#)



PROVAR FRUIT TASTING 2021 RESULTS

Provar recently released the results of the 2021 pome fruit tasting exhibitions. Find it [here](#).



INTERNAL HEAT DAMAGE IN LAETITIA

Laetitia is the second-largest plum cultivar in South Africa according to 2020 figures. Unfortunately, it is also at high risk of heat damage because it matures late in the season. Read **Anna Mouton's** full article [here](#).

STATUS UPDATE ON G.969 FROM SAPO TRUST

G.969 – The semi-dwarfing rootstock is currently under evaluation in South Africa and this article is aimed at providing the South African pome fruit industry with an update on the rootstock's current status and experiences. Read it [here](#).

HORTGRO TECHNICAL SYMPOSIUM RETURNS

After a two-year drought, we are happy to report that the Hortgro Technical Symposium will take place this year, from 6 to 10 June, as a hybrid event (in-person/digital).

We have several overseas speakers, among them tree fruit physiologist, **Prof Lee Kalscits** (USA), and biotechnical and horticultural consultant, **John Driver** (USA). Local experts lined up in our stellar programme include political analyst, **Prof William Gumede**, hydrogeologist, **Julian Conrad**, and economic analyst, **Wandile Sihlobo**. You can also look forward to a panel discussion on **What's next for plums** during the stone fruit day.

6 June, Business Strategy Day

7 June, Pome Fruit Day

8 June, Stone Fruit Day

9 June, Pome Fruit Field Day

10 June, Stone Fruit Field Day

Our team is busy finalising the programme and finding the right venue. Information will be shared in due course.

Therefore, save the dates and don't miss out on our flagship event. Online registrations will open in March

2022. Anyone interested in sponsoring the event please contact Lindy Sigonyela lindy@hortgro.co.za or Elise-Marie Steenkamp elise-marie@hortgro.co.za for more information.

TRU-CAPE HERITAGE ORCHARD OPENS FOR GUIDED WALKS

Heritage apple and pear varieties that are no longer in commercial production are being saved for future generations in the Tru-Cape Heritage Orchard on Oak Valley Estate in Elgin. Once a year, the orchard opens for two guided walkabouts. Read more [here](#).

INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

D6/Hortgro24 Information app.

[Stone fruit app](#).

E-mail info@hortgro.co.za for more information.

HORTGRO PUBLICATIONS

[Key Deciduous Fruit Statistics](#)

Hortgro Stone: [Timely Hints/Tydige Wenke: January/February 2022](#)

Fresh Quarterly: [Issue 15](#)

Fruit South Africa [Transformation Summary](#)

Transformation Times: [December Issue](#)

HORTGRO YOUTUBE KANAAL

Vind ons videobiblioteek vol bedryfsinligting [hier](#).

PLUS: 36 Boordopleiding video's nou beskikbaar in [AFRIKAANS](#), [XHOSA](#) en [ENGELS](#)

FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Out with a Bang/In with a Bang

2021 concluded with a bang driven by the highly contagious Omicron Covid mutation. Many people, including yours truly, got sick. Luckily most of us got through it fairly unscathed. Although, more than a month later, I still feel some lingering effects. Hopefully with an ever-larger number of people who have contracted the disease (and survived!), increased vaccinations (albeit extremely slowly), aided by booster shots in the coming months, we will be able to approach some normality in our working and private lives.

2022 (some refer to it as 2020 too!) started with an equally loud bang. This time with the Cape Town port which experienced unacceptably low levels of productivity that led to a huge backlog on exports. Although some of the factors leading up to this state of affairs (wind, fog and some impact of Covid-19 and the fire in Cape Town knocking out electricity supply), many other aspects could in my opinion have been prevented, such as better maintenance of equipment, replacement of equipment, better scheduling of leave and more aggressive management response to labour absenteeism. Transnet's CEO, Ms Portia Derby, vowed that this would never happen again.

From an industry perspective, those responsible should be held accountable and carry the consequences of the huge monetary losses to our producers. As a global supplier, RSA will take years to recover from the resulting reputational damage.

Be that as it may – the proverbial bottom line is that we experienced the worst December and beginning of January in the history of the Cape Town port. Ongoing and pro-active engagement on the operational level between industry and port operations, have identified the critical bottlenecks and agreed on corrective actions. Some improvements in key productivity parameters are starting to come through, but we can expect the backlog to continue for some weeks if not months to come.

The outcry from industry stakeholders is fully understandable and I can only re-iterate that the strong joint focus on the short-term crisis on both operational and strategic/management levels between Transnet and the industry bodies will continue for as long as it is required.

It seems fairly clear that the only medium/long-term solution would be a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to split the roles of landlord and port operators. Transnet has confirmed its willingness to work with the private sector to develop such a solution which (in my view) also holds an excellent opportunity for BEE. The parameters for such a structure will be agreed soon whereafter we will assess what resources and support could be channeled via FruitSA and Agbiz in order to ensure that the fruit exporting collective needs and requirements are addressed in a new dispensation.

Unfortunately, such a PPP will take time to materialise hopefully with some consortium of private sector investors ensuring that international best practice and productivity norms could be instituted in re-equipped ports. Until then, the ports remain our #1 priority - and risk!

Until next time.

Anton

In the middle of adversity, there is great opportunity – Albert Einstein



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