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## Hortfin: A financial game-changer transforming the deciduous fruit industry

Hortfin, the pioneering blended-finance scheme established to drive economic development in South Africa's deciduous fruit industry, celebrated seven years of "meaningful impact" at a recent event in Paarl. Read more [here](#).

**WATCH** a short film about producers sharing their Hortfin stories [here](#).

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## From Wellington via Italy to Kromco

**Maréze Smit** (pictured here) is a great example of how Hortgro invests in human capital to ensure a better future for deciduous fruit in South Africa. But making it happen is also about recognising opportunities and being in the right place at the right time. Read more about Maréze's journey [here](#).

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## Remaining relevant in a world of changing trading standards

**Dr Ilse Trautmann** graciously shares the keynote address she recently delivered at a CropLife event. Dr Trautmann is the Deputy Director General: Agricultural Research and Regulatory Services, Western Cape Department of Agriculture. Read it [here](#).

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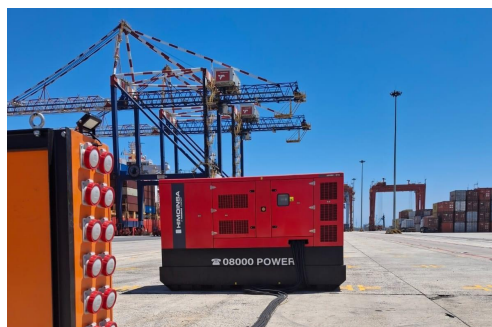


## Hortgro Footprint Webinar | Green Financing Part II

In February, experts discussed green financing and how it can shape our future. Hosted by **Michael Brinkhuis** (Hortfin

CEO), the panel consisted of **Kyle Durham**, **Campher Serfontein**, and **Ralph Opperman**, who brought their varied experience and knowledge to this crucial topic. [Watch it here.](#)

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## Collaborative effort to enhance capacity at the Cape Town Container Terminal

**Hortgro** and other stakeholders in the export-orientated fruit value chain, together with the Western Cape Government and Transnet Port Terminals, announced the installation of two additional 500kVA generators at the terminal with 60 reefer container plug points each at the Cape Town Container Terminal (CTCT). [Read more here.](#)

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## Centre of Excellence strengthens pest monitoring

The fight against invasive pests has just intensified with the launch of the groundbreaking **Centre of Excellence for Pest Monitoring**. This initiative by the South African deciduous fruit industry organisation, Hortgro, aims to safeguard the industry's future and ensure a competitive edge for its producers. [Read more here.](#)

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## Additional invasive pest pamphlets

- [Frequently asked questions about PSHB \(English and Afrikaans\).](#)
  - [All about surveillance of PSHB and SWD.](#)
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**Charl Stander | Vrugte-proe en kultivarseleksie**



Steenvrug ekspert, **Charl Stander**, verduidelik die rol van vrugte-proe in kultivarseleksie.

Kyk gerus na Charl [hier](#).



## Hortgro Annual Review 2024

**Hortgro** proudly services the South African deciduous fruit industry via 10 strategic programmes. Find out more by downloading your copy [here](#).





## Hortgro Research Showcase 2025 (3,4 June)

Every second year, industry stakeholders get the opportunity to gain perspective about the research projects that are taking place to safeguard and improve our industry. For this purpose, Hortgro Science created the Research Showcase focusing on pome and stone fruit research. Most producers do not realise how much work is being done and how many people are involved, and the Showcase creates an opportunity to give context about Hortgro Science's role in the industry. It is also easier to listen to a presentation rather than read about a research project. Find more information, the programme and registration options here: [Hortgro Research Showcase](#)

## Hortgro Post-harvest Symposium 2025 (5 June)

The biennial Hortgro Post-harvest Symposium brings together industry experts, researchers, and practitioners to advance the science and best practices of post-harvest fruit management. The 2025 symposium will showcase innovative technologies, cutting-edge research, and strategies to enhance fruit quality and reduce losses. Delegates will gain valuable insights through engaging presentations and networking opportunities, with a focus on optimising the impact of pre-harvest factors on post-harvest fruit quality, managing post-harvest diseases and pests, and exploring emerging technologies in the post-harvest handling chain.

Find more information, the programme and registration options here: [Post-harvest Symposium](#)

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## NEW! Hortgro Science technology transfer platforms

- **Hortgro Science Research Library.** Find it [here](#).
- **Hortgro Science Climate Change App.** Find it [here](#).

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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

### Lots of noise

We have been exposed to a lot of noise in the past few weeks and months. In some cases, it is a bit more serious than just noise, but we should not overreact. Cool heads are required to navigate spaces which are mostly out of our

direct influence sphere.

The world in which we operate has, however, fundamentally changed with a few clear lines that have been drawn in the sand. Continued ideological rhetoric will however get us nowhere. As a country, we must adapt and find compromises and middle ground based on common sense and **economic** realities.

This noise started with lots of global elections last year – including our own – with a fundamental global shift back towards protectionism. This was taken to the next level by Trump's MAGA and his recent presidential dictates. However, some controversial pieces of local legislation recently signed by President Ramaphosa did not help, including the irrational invitation from the USA to Afrikaner "refugees" and vague references to "bad things happening in South Africa".

The resultant opportunistic responses from both the left and the right justifying their actions and accusing each other of all sorts of things should surprise no one.

The latest VAT increase bomb which led to the postponement of the Budget Speech in Parliament is a clear sign of a volatile environment.

The geopolitical tectonic plates have shifted quite dramatically and as a country, we will pragmatically have to deal with this with cool heads, logic and common sense or be washed aside as immaterial flotsam in the wake of the global giants. The world doesn't need us, but boy, do we need them!

If SA is kicked out of AGOA (which I believe will happen), it will have serious economic implications in several sectors, including agriculture. The short-term impact on our industry will be small, although every cent counts. The ±R6 million we will pay more in additional duties is immaterial in the bigger scheme of things, but the diplomatic fall-out would be major.

Somehow, we will have to broker an alternative trade deal, to the benefit of both SA and the USA. The reality is that trade with the USA is not a one-way street. Both countries will be poorer without some or other win-win trade agreements in place.

Closer to home, the postponement of the budget speech has already led to a lot of outcries, claims and counterclaims, and that the GNU is in tatters. My personal view is that as a country we cannot afford the GNU to fail as the alternative would be the final straw that breaks our country.

I believe the parties and leadership in the GNU realize this and that compromises are indeed required going forward. It is crystal clear: **We desperately need growth of the economy, less intervention, a smaller and more competent government, and more private investment and participation.**

This **will** lead to new jobs.

For this, we need good policies and legislation within a stable and rational political space. Not only locally, but also globally. Unfortunately, local and global politics will no doubt be in turmoil for quite some time to come. As a country, we must make sure we don't come out on the wrong side of that process.

In the interim, all we can do is not overreact to the noise and opportunism. Luckily, our beloved country, with all its warts and complexities, has an uncanny knack for coming out of these dark places into a better space.

Ons as burgery en burgerlike diensorganisasies sal moet wakker wees. As deel van die stille middelgrond moet ons ons deel doen om die waansin aan weerskante van die politieke spektrum in die bek te ruk! Hopelik is daar

voldoende leierskap en genoeg mense wat bereid is om op beginselvlak saam te werk én hier en daar bietjie *humble pie* te eet om middelgrond te kry.

Dit gaan beslis nodig wees om uit die hoek te kom waarin sommiges hulself geverf het.

Tot volgende keer.

Anton

*If you're going through hell, keep going* - Winston Churchill

*Compromise is the best and cheapest lawyer* – Robert Louis Stevenson

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## → HORTGRO PUBLICATIONS

- **Freshly Quarterly**
  - [Fresh Quarterly-Issue 27 Dec 2024](#)
- **Timely Hints**
  - [March/Maart 2025](#)
- **Fresh Notes**
  - [214 Presence of spotted wing Drosophila & 215 MRL Notification](#)
- **Hortgro News**
  - [All previous issues](#)
- **Fruit South Africa** [Transformation Summary](#)

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## → INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

- All of Hortgro's online platforms in one place, click [here](#)
- E-mail [info@hortgro.co.za](mailto:info@hortgro.co.za) for more information

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## → HORTGRO YOUTUBE

- Vind ons videobiblioteek vol bedryfsinligting [hier](#).
- PLUS: 36 Boordopleiding video's nou beskikbaar in [AFRIKAANS](#), [XHOSA](#) en [ENGELS](#)





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