



WITZENBERG MENTORSHIP: MARK BOERLAGE AND STEVEN VERSFELD ABOUT 'GIVING BACK'

Mark Boerlage farms on the 40-hectare Sparrenburg farm, with a small team, but he is doing significant work in mentoring. Next door, his brother-in-law, **Steven Versfeld**, the custodian of Achtertuin, a small farm and packhouse, along with production manager **Anieta Solomon**, are also staunch believers in mentoring new talent into the agricultural sector. Read more about Mark [here](#) and about Steven and Anieta [here](#).

WHEN IN DROUGHT, INNOVATE

The R62 Growth Initiative Strategy (R62G) project, with five weather stations donated by Hortgro, illustrates how the agricultural sector utilises microclimate weather data to understand and mitigate climate change in the Klein Karoo.



KEY DECIDUOUS FRUIT STATISTICS

The report provides comprehensive data on South Africa’s deciduous fruit industry covering cultivation area, production volumes, economic indicators, and export market distribution across stone, pome, and dried tree fruits for the 2024 season

[Download>>](#)

JULY UPDATE: PEST CONTROL OPERATOR APPLICATIONS

Hortgro recently joined other agricultural stakeholders in a meeting with the Registrar to discuss, among other issues, the licensing of pest control operators (PCOs). The Registrar confirmed that there will be no extension regarding the implementation of the regulation or a phased-in approach. It has been confirmed that there is currently no timeline for a decision on the acceptance of prior learning. It is also not clear how the acceptance of prior learning will be implemented. Read the latest information about PCOs [here](#).

[More info>>](#)



HORTGRO SUPPORTS SCIENCE: ADVANCING ENTOMOLOGY AT THE 24th ESSA CONGRESS

Hortgro was well-represented at the 24th ESSA Congress through the participation of several of its entomologists and postgraduate students, many of whom presented research funded by Hortgro. [More info>>](#)

FRUITFLY AFRICA PROTECTING FRUIT EXPORTS

South Africa's fruit industry is continuing its fight against fruit flies with a world-recognised best practice tool in its pest management arsenal: aerial baiting. The Fruit Fly Africa (FFA) team's 2024/25 aerial baiting programme is part of a broader Area-Wide Integrated Pest Management (AW-IPM) strategy to protect the country's fresh fruit exports.

[More info>>](#)



GEMEENSKAPSWERKSWINKELS BOU WAARDIGHEID EN SELFVERTROUE

Die Koue Bokkeveld Opleidingsentrum (KBOS) het weereens 'n waardevolle bydrae tot gemeenskapsontwikkeling in die Witzenberg-streek gelewer deur die aanbieding van Nutsman/Vrou-werkswinkels; tekenend van 'n gesonde burgerlike

FIFTEEN QUESTIONS TO LIZA AMBRAAL

This is the **New Roots** column, where we find out more about our peers in the deciduous fruit industry. What makes them tick? Our next player is Liza Ambraal, shareholder and packhouse manager at Dwarsberg in Witzenberg near Ceres.

[More info>>](#)



BALANCING NOW AND NEXT: PROGRESS OF HORTGRO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The journey of economic development through industry-led support programmes continues to deliver meaningful impact toward building a more inclusive pome and stone fruit sector. The focus remains on leveraging incremental gains to meaningfully measure progress and long-term impact.

[More info>>](#)

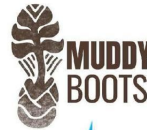


Short Course 2025

Pome and Stone Fruit Industry Short Course



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PROPHYTA SHORT COURSE

This six-day short course is designed to provide an understanding of the horticultural processes involved in tree growth and development, scientific irrigation management, nutrition, and the execution of good soil health and soil science practices.

[Download information here>>](#)

LAST CALL TO ENTER AGRI'S GOT TALENT 2025

This competition isn't just about showcasing the talent of our agricultural workers—it's about recognising their immense contributions to our sector and our nation. Agri workers, we salute you. Get ready to shine on stage. WhatsApp your voice entry to 082 372 1557 today.

[MEER INLIGTING>>](#)



**STEP INTO THE
SPOTLIGHT, UNLOCK
YOUR POTENTIAL!**



AGRI'S GOT TALENT

2025

AGT is a platform empowering agricultural workers in the fruit and wine industries to showcase their singing talents, develop life skills, and make a lasting impact on their communities.

Entries close 31 July 2025!



**ENTER BY SENDING US A WHATSAPP ON
082 272 1557**

IMPORTANT FRESH NOTES

- [Summary of actions for export of apples – to the Kingdom of Thailand \(March 2025\)](#)
- [Restricted agricultural remedies and implementation of pest control operator \(PCO\) regulations \(April 2025\)](#)
- [Feedback of a Packhouse Action Group \(PAG\) \(March 2025\)](#)

NEW! HORTGRO SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PLATFORMS

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

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

According to my good “friend” Chat GPT, *corruption undermines trust, weakens institutions, and hampers development. At its core, corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Addressing it requires a firm grounding in ethical principles, adherence to moral standards, and effective consequence management.*

This is what is expected of public and private officers – to do their jobs to the best of their ability, without any strings attached, and without self-enrichment or involvement in corruption.

As a nation, we have somehow become used to having very low expectations and stumbling from one crisis to the next. Nothing surprises or shocks us anymore!

In this context, the latest spate of allegations against the SAPS and security institutions in general, followed by the announcement of yet another Commission of Inquiry, still comes as a nasty shock, as it destabilises the very core of our justice, safety and security system.

Sort of “Who should police the police” when we expect (and expected) them to protect us by doing their job? And, unfortunately, the private sector is not squeaky clean either, where morals and reputations are often tested and fail, with regular incidents

being reported.

The fight against corruption begins with a strong foundation in ethics. Integrity, transparency, accountability, and fairness are central principles. Public servants and the private sector are expected to act in the public interest and/or the interest of their shareholders, uphold laws, and avoid conflicts of interest. Ethical governance demands that decisions be made openly, with honesty and impartiality, ensuring that no individual is above the law.

This applies to everybody and all institutions, including those like Hortgro. Not doing or behaving in some special way, or thinking you are doing anybody a favour, but to do your job to the best of your ability.

If not, there MUST be consequences to deter further wrongdoing or temptation because someone got away with proverbial murder.

No more; we should demand a reset in our public and private spaces!

As my AI "friend" concludes: Combating corruption is not just a legal matter but a moral obligation. Upholding ethical principles and managing consequences effectively ensures that corruption is discouraged, punished, and ultimately prevented. Societies that value integrity build stronger institutions, promote justice, and foster sustainable development.

Public officers are entrusted with serving the interests of the people and managing public resources. In fulfilling this duty, they are expected to uphold the highest standards of ethics and integrity. These expectations are crucial for maintaining public trust, promoting good governance, and ensuring transparency and accountability. Ethics and integrity are non-negotiable in public (or private) service.

Indeed. Every one of us has a moral obligation to hold public and private officers accountable and ensure that the vast potential of our nation is achieved, not stolen from us and future generations.

Until next time.

Anton Rabe

While we are free to choose our actions, we are not free to choose the consequences of our actions - Stephen R. Covey.
The reputation of a thousand years may be determined by the conduct of one hour - Japanese proverb.

Note: Written with the aid of Chat GPT as indicated in italics in the text

→ HORTGRO UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Hortgro Awards**, 12 September 2025

→ HORTGRO PUBLICATIONS

- **Timely Hints**
 - [August 2025](#)
- **Fresh Notes**
 - [220 Implementation of pest control operator \(PCO\) regulations](#)
- **Hortgro News**
 - [All previous issues](#)
- **Fruit South Africa**
 - [Transformation Summary](#)

→ INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

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

→ HORTGRO YOUTUBE

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



EDITORIAL TEAM

Elise-Marie Steenkamp - elise-marie@hortgro.co.za
Sylvester Moatshe - sylvester@hortgro.co.za
Alisa Farr - alisa@hortgro.co.za

CONTACT US
021 870 2900
www.hortgro.co.za

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