



Hortgro appoints Jacques du Preez as new CEO

Industry veteran steps up as founding leader, Anton Rabe retires after decades of



Industry battered by storms

Severe flooding and storm winds that struck the Western and Eastern Cape in May 2026 have caused an estimated potential R6.3 billion in damage and production losses to the pome and stone fruit industry, according to preliminary assessments compiled in the immediate aftermath of the storm.

The disaster affected orchards, fruit on trees, farmland, housing, dams, packing and cold storage facilities, and transport, electricity, and water infrastructure across the two major producing provinces, with potential total losses of approximately 26% of the combined deciduous industry's gross production value of R24.6 billion.

Hortgro donated R250 000 for humanitarian aid to help people in our industry affected by the recent floods.

[Read more about the preliminary storm damage assessment here](#)

[Lees addisionele beriggewing oor die storm hier](#) en van ons produsente se reaksie **[hier](#)**



Transforming Agriculture in the Free State through Apple Farming

Remmoho Investments in Agriculture is a unique example of BEE that works. What should new entering BEE growers know about the challenges and opportunities in apple farming in the Free State? Gerrit Rautenbach recently joined Remmoho's information day.

[Read here>>](#)

The Verdun Story

Verdun in Prince Alfred Hamlet is home to some of the South African stone-fruit industry's foremost August Red blocks, according to an analysis by the agricultural economics company FruData of metrics such as yields and pack-outs. Meet the brother-and-sister-team that makes the magic happen.

[Read here>>](#)



The real cost of an apple

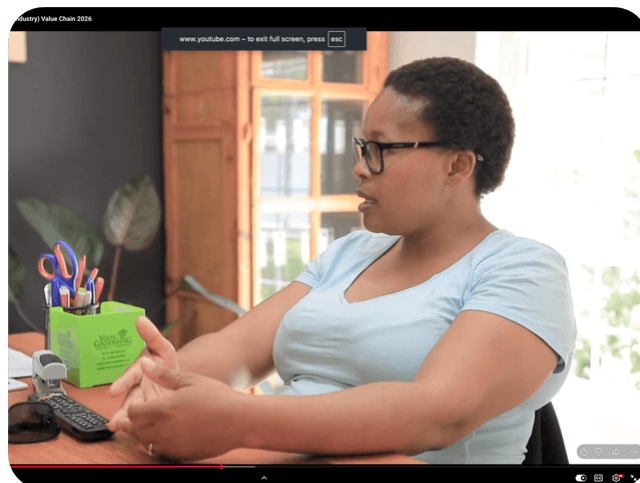
You pick up a bag of apples at your local supermarket, glance at the price, and think: seriously? It's just fruit. But that reaction overlooks a surprisingly complex story that begins months earlier on a farm and winds its way through cold rooms, packhouses, trucks and regulatory compliance before it ever reaches a shopping trolley.

[Read here>>](#)

WATCH: Hortgro (the South African Deciduous Fruit Industry) Value Chain 2026

The Hortgro Value Chain 2026 refers to the end-to-end system that supports South Africa's deciduous fruit industry, from production to global markets—focused on growth, sustainability, and transformation.

[Watch here>>](#)



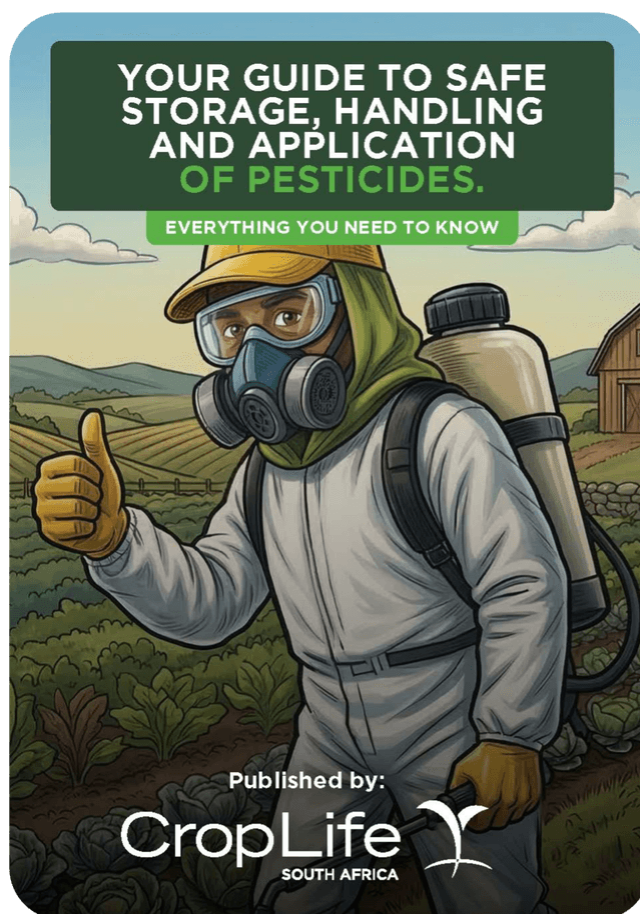
Your Guide to Safe Storage, Handling and Application

Safety starts before the spray. From proper storage and PPE to safe application and recycling, every step matters when working with pesticides. Protect yourself, your farm and the environment by following best practices every time.

[Download English version here >>](#)

[Laai die Afrikaanse weergawe hier af >>](#)

[Landa inguqulo yesiZulu lapha >>](#)



Promotion: Get your own pest guide

This easy-to-use booklet can be picked up at the Hortgro Science office (Welgevallen Experimental Farm) for R150 (vat incl.).

For more information, contact

marno@hortgro.co.za or minette@hortgro.co.za

UPCOMING EVENTS



Apple replant disease (ARD) seminar - 10 June at 2026 (EGVV) and 11 June 2026 (Ceres)



Agri's Got Talent 2026

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Resource Management & Sustainability (RMS)

I have recently been told by a producer that we, Hortgro, should not involve ourselves with “nonsense” such as climate change. My reply was that sustainability is not (just) about climate change, but a much wider topic which includes people and financial sustainability too (after all, people + planet + profit = sustainable development). I have not heard from him again!

Be that as it may, this will not go away, and issues such as carbon and water footprints, carbon trading and credits, carbon taxes and sequestration within the CCC (Confronting Climate Change) space, and the use of the industry-developed carbon calculator; ESG matters (Environmental, Social and Governance) - compliance and risks; Food, Paper and Packaging waste management; Good Agricultural Practice (GAPs), Food Safety, MRLs, chemical use and alternatives; Water and Water Quality; Soil health and regenerative agriculture; and Biodiversity. And yes, Climate Change adaptation & mitigation too!

There is literally not a day that goes by without some matter in this field coming across my desk. Fortunately, we have included sustainability and resource management in Hortgro's current 4-year strategic framework (period 2022/23 to 2026/7), and the Hortgro Pome and Stone Boards and Producer Councils had the foresight to approve the creation of a position for a Sustainability Manager, including the establishment of a Hortgro Sustainability Advisory Committee (H-SAC) to guide the RMS programme.

The role of the H-SAC is to provide leadership, strategic direction and support for the sustainability programme for Hortgro Pome and Hortgro Stone, and to coordinate and align sustainability and regenerative activities of the Pome & Stone industries. It also provides guidance, strategic direction and support to ensure the establishment of liaison structures, networks and advocacy; facilitates and coordinates sustainability responses and awareness campaigns; identifies funding sources and project motivation/applications; administers

sustainability projects and programmes, and reports and communicates to the industry and related stakeholders.

The Hortgro sustainability manager therefore also participates in the FruitSA Sustainability WG, the Fruit Value Chain Resources WG, and AgBiz, working with colleagues in the other fruit industries, as well as in the SFA (Southern Hemisphere Fruit Alliance), Freshfel, and GlobalGap working groups to ensure that our pome and stone fruit producers and packhouses are informed.

This is a complex arena, and producers and packhouses are encouraged to empower themselves in this space using the range of information available on the Hortgro website (Footprint: <https://www.hortgro.co.za/footprint/>). A range of webinars is also held throughout the year, and they aim to spotlight sustainable practices, mitigations, and risks in the SA deciduous fruit industry.

This cannot be a one-way street. Every producer and packhouse must participate and equip themselves with the required knowledge to proactively address the range of challenges and the ultimate compliance requirements, which are increasing. Being resilient, or becoming resilient, in the face of these challenges is what the Hortgro RMS programme aims to assist with.

Until next time.

Anton

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children - Native American Proverb

We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it – Barack Obama

→ HORTGRO UPCOMING EVENTS

- [Apple replant disease \(ARD\) seminar - 10 June at 2026 \(EGVV\) and 11 June 2026 \(Ceres\)](#)

→ HORTGRO PUBLICATIONS

Timely Hints

- [June 2026](#)
- [March 2026](#)
- [February 2026](#)

Fresh Notes

- [229 | Critical water shortages Irrigation Guidelines for Deciduous Fruit Trees](#)
- [228 | Restrictions on the Use of Plant Protection Products on Deciduous fruit for 2025/26](#)

Hortgro News

- [All previous issues](#)

Fruit South Africa

- [Transformation Summary](#)

Fresh Quarterly

- [March 2026 Issue 32](#)
- [December 2025 Issue 31](#)
- [September 2025 Issue 30](#)

New Roots

- [New-Roots Volume 11 March 2026](#)

→ HORTGRO SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PLATFORMS

- **Hortgro Science Research Library.** Find it [here](#).
- **Hortgro Science Climate Change App.** Find it [here](#).
- **Post-harvest Website.** Find it [here](#).
- **Phyto Application.** Find it [here](#).
- **PSHB.** Find it [here](#).
- **Fresh Quarterly.** Find it [here](#).

→ 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 video's nou beskikbaar in [AFRIKAANS](#), [XHOSA](#) en [ENGELS](#)



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