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Hortgro Awards winners. At the back, from left: Marius van der Westhuizen, Raymond and Mary Koopstad, Johan du Plessis, Georgie Hewitt, Peter Wolfaardt, Louis van Zyl and Johan Strydom. In front, Hugh Campbell, Michelle van der Spuy and Dr Ilse Trautmann.

Hortgro Celebrates Excellence at Prestigious Annual Awards 2025

Paarl — The South African deciduous fruit industry came together last night to honour excellence, innovation, and leadership at the annual **Hortgro Awards 2025**, celebrating individuals and organisations whose vision and dedication continue to transform the sector.

Directors: NDV Dicey (Chairman) - AG Petersen – CVDM Du Toit – CG Herbst – U Speirs
A Rabe (Executive Director)

The awards recognised achievements across media, science, transformation, leadership, and industry service — paying tribute to the people who ensure the continued growth and competitiveness of South Africa's fruit industry.

The 2025 Hortgro Award Winners are:

Izithelo Hortgro Media Award – Michelle van der Spuy

Agricultural journalist [Michelle van der Spuy](#) (Landbou.com) was honoured for her outstanding reporting on the fruit industry. Her work consistently connects the sector to broader issues such as export logistics, market access, and economic pressures, ensuring balanced, ethical, and insightful coverage.

Daan Strydom Science and Technical Award – Johan Strydom

Logistics pioneer [Johan Strydom](#) was recognised for a lifetime of groundbreaking contributions. His work in cold chain management, containerisation, and export technology reshaped the way South African fruit reaches global markets, securing long-term industry competitiveness.

Hortgro Transformation Award – [La Vouere Stone Fruit \(Pty\) Ltd](#)

The partnership between **Raymond and Mary Koopstad** of La Vouere (60%) and Verdun Estates' **Georgie Hewitt, Peter Wolfaardt, and Johan du Plessis** (40%) was celebrated for its successful public-private collaboration. Over the past 10 years, the partnership has demonstrated how trust, a shared vision, and strategic decision-making can deliver meaningful transformation beyond the farm gate.

Hortgro Chairman's Awards – Hugh Campbell & Louis van Zyl

[Hugh Campbell](#), with 26 years of service at Hortgro, was recognised for building and leading Hortgro Science and advancing industry research frameworks. Even in retirement, he continues to serve as a mentor and leader in agricultural development.

[Louis van Zyl](#), former Hortgro General Manager of Industry Services/CFO, was honoured for more than 26 years of visionary leadership, helping the industry navigate deregulation and establishing resilient structures that continue to serve fruit growers today.

1662 Industry Award – Dr Ilse Trautmann

Named after the first apples harvested at the Cape in 1662, this prestigious award was presented to [Dr Ilse Trautmann](#), Deputy Director General at the Western Cape Department of Agriculture. She has been instrumental in advancing agricultural research, climate change strategies, and fostering international partnerships, leaving a lasting impact on both the industry and the province.

O.S.H. Reinecke Industry Leader Award – Marius van der Westhuizen

Langkloof fruit producer [Marius van der Westhuizen](#) was honoured for three decades of leadership, resilience, and service. Known for his calm and pragmatic approach during crises such as the 2021 hailstorm, Marius has been a unifying voice for growers, promoting transformation, community development, and industry collaboration.

Speaking at the event, Hortgro Chairperson **Nicholas Dicey** said: "These awards are not just about recognising individual achievements, but about celebrating the spirit of innovation, service, and resilience that keeps our industry thriving. Each recipient is an inspiration, and their contributions shape a stronger, more sustainable future for the deciduous fruit sector."

The Hortgro Awards 2025 highlight the importance of collaboration, science, leadership, and transformation in sustaining one of South Africa's most vital agricultural industries.

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