Minimising Risk of Farm Unrest in Turbulent Times

In light of rising financial pressure and political discontent, producers would be prudent to create strategies to prevent and effectively manage unrest on their farms. This is a particularly sensitive topic in the run-up to the local elections in August this year. Glenneis Kriel investigates ways in which producers could minimise unrest risks. Read more here: http://ow.ly/4neb2v

Indonesia Grants South Africa ‘Country of Recognition Status’

Asian export ties were recently strengthened when the Indonesian Quarantine Agency granted South Africa ‘Country of Recognition Status’ for its food safety control system. This recognition means increased export potential for SA’s deciduous fruit. SA now has more certainty surrounding market access, as well as the use of the Jakarta port and direct access to Indonesia’s main market. Read more here: http://ow.ly/4n3GUn

Multi-million Rand Fund for Emerging Farmers

Emerging Western Cape fruit farmers are set to receive R120 million in funding to boost their businesses. The Deciduous Fruit Industry in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and National Treasury launched a Jobs Fund project to support 24 black deciduous fruit producers over the next four years. The funding will be utilised to renew and expand orchards, and for production equipment and farming infrastructure. Read more here: http://ow.ly/4n3QU3
Robots Can Help Pollinators in the Orchard

A project aimed at building a robot which could work autonomously in orchards, had the unintended side effect of helping pollinators, like bees, do their work. Australian researchers were set the task of developing a robot that could map and navigate an orchard without human help. Although originally designed to navigate an orchard and map its environment, it inadvertently identified an issue with pollination instead.

Read more here: http://ab.co/1Vm9lRp

Pierre du Plooy Appointed as New Fieldmens Chairperson

Pierre du Plooy has been appointed as the Fieldmens Association’s new chairperson. Du Plooy, a well-established horticulturist, says it’s a privilege for him to contribute the association in his new role. Du Plooy brings vast experience to this role, as he’s no stranger to the fruit business and is involved with industry funded research through involvement with HORTGRO Science, as a member of various work groups and committees.

Read the full story here: http://ow.ly/4n6rmh

Fruit Sector Acknowledged

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Mr Senzeni Zokwana, is very happy with the progress the Fruit Industry Value Chain Round Table (FIVCRT) has made over the past year. The department wrote in a letter to Dr Konanani Liphadzi, CEO of FruitSA, that it “graciously appreciates the continued dedication and collaboration in ensuring that the SA fruit industry continues to claim its competitive position on the global stage”.

Read more here: http://ow.ly/4n6qPa

SIZA Takes Sting Out of Auditing

The fruit industry’s ethical trade programme, the Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA), not only allows fruit growers to remedy weaknesses in their labour practices, but also to prove their fruit has been produced in an ethically responsible way. Support for the programme is growing steadily under leading retailers across the world.

Read more here: http://ow.ly/4n43of
DURBAN MARKET UPGRADED

The Durban market’s 8 bulk cold rooms were recently upgraded at a cost of over R7 million to meet industry standards. An additional R8,6 million has been allocated to upgrade the remaining four bulk cold rooms. An additional 22 cold rooms were erected on the sales floors to assist in maintaining the cold chain, and for ease of produce removal by buyers. A temperature monitoring system upgrade is underway and is estimated to take 4 months to complete. For more information contact the Durban Market’s helpline: 031 311 5100.

ENTRIES FOR ‘FARMING BY SATELLITE PRIZE’ NOW OPEN

Entries for the European GNSS Agency and the European Environment Agency’s ‘Farming by Satellite Prize’ for students and young farmers are now open. The competition is about how to use satellite technology in agriculture to improve efficiency and to reduce environmental impact. A special Africa prize of €4,000 is up for grabs. Enter and find info here: http://bit.ly/1SanxtZ

HORTGRO IN THE PRESS

- The deciduous fruit industry was in the spotlight when SA was granted Country of Recognition Status' by Indonesia. HORTGRO’s Jacques du Preez explains it here (skip to 30:00): http://ow.ly/4n6Dr2
- HORTGRO played a major role in securing a Jobs Fund of R120 million for emerging farmers: http://ow.ly/4n6Csq
- Agri’s got Talent, HORTGRO and the VinPro Foundation’s skills project for farmworkers, featured on Netwerk24: http://ow.ly/4n6CE6

WITZENBERG PALS POWERING AHEAD

The Witzenberg Partnership (PALS) - a radical land reform initiative, tipped to create 12 000 new jobs, with a training college, housing, community and educational projects - that came to fruition in the Western Cape last year, is powering ahead despite serious challenges. Although PALS has been hailed as a ‘blue-print’ for land reform in South Africa, and receives government support at the highest level, many challenges such as access to energy and water remain. Read more on this here: http://ow.ly/4nek47.
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S DESK

Die eerste winterreëns van verlede week wat redelik wyd in die winterreënvalstreek geval het, het ’n onmeetbare bydrae tot die kritieke na-oes periode vir ons wingerde en boorde gemaak en is ’n goeie eerste stap tot ’n suksesvolle 2016/17-oes in die produksiestreek. Ons hoop en vertrou dat dit tot ’n bo-normale reënvalpatroon sal lei wat ons besproeiingsdamme en grondwater sal aanvul. Met die skrywe hiervan word verdere koue fronte, selfs met sneeu vir die Wes-Kaap voorspel – dus, verdere goeie nuus in die opsig. Ongelukkig is die watersituasie in van ons noordelike produksie streke, veral in die Vrystaat, steeds kritiek. Ons vertrou dat vroeër lentereëns in daardie gebiede uitkoms sal gee.

’n Goeie nat en koue winter sal ook die peste en plae kompleks wat die afgelope warm en droë somerseisoen gedy het, ook weer in die bek ruk aangesien verskeie uitdagings op die fito-sanitere front besig is om na vore te tree. Slegs goeie area-wye gekoördineerde aksies sal die risiko’s op dié gebied suksesvol kan aanspreek.

With the stone fruit season virtually done and dusted, it can be described as a successful season despite challenges faced due to the severe heat and water shortages experienced. Although some areas and growers were more severely affected than others, the total stone fruit volumes were good, and fair to good prices were also realised. The pome fruit season started earlier, with larger volumes exported compared to previous years.

With the pome season now in full swing, the African market is expected to be an especially challenging one due to weak currencies and the effect of the low oil price on the economies of many countries.

Tough times never last, but tough people do. - Robert H. Schuler

– Anton Rabe

HORTGRO’S TALE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

HORTGRO uses social media to build and maintain relationships. It’s an efficient and cheap way to inform and interact with our stakeholders. By creating conversation, we stay in touch with your needs and wants. Our Facebook page is currently at 942 likes and the HORTGRO Science page is at 354. Our Twitter following on @HORTGRO tallies at 635. Help us spread the word and share information the social way. We are here to help grow your Fruit IQ. Read more on our social shenanigans here: http://ow.ly/4n6A1g

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