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PHOTO: Photo: Budding agriculturists and HORTGRO bursary holders (FLTR) Lebotse Kamogelo, Faith Mokapane and Msizi Mdakiane.

HORTGRO INVESTS R2,5M IN STUDENTS

HORTGRO has invested over R2,5 million in bursaries and the development of students for 2016. At a recent cocktail event for the bursars, it was announced that HORTGRO has spent more than R20 million on bursaries over the past ten years – as an investment in budding agriculturalists. According to Anton Rabe (HORTGRO executive director) 65 students had received financial support, and were spread across institutions including the Elsenburg College of Agriculture, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, University of Limpopo, Pretoria University, and Stellenbosch University. Read the full story here: <http://bit.ly/2f8x3xY>



PHOTO: Twitter/AgriWesKaap

DECIDUOUS PRODUCERS WIN AT NATIONAL AGRICULTURE COMPETITION

André Cloete and Jacques Beukes took the big awards at Agri SA & Toyota's recent Agriculture Awards. Jacques Beukes, a pear and table grape producer from De Doorns, scooped the Young Farmer of the Year award. André Cloete, a pome and stone fruit producer from Greyton, won the New Harvester of the Year award. According to a media release from the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, the competition seeks to honour new farmers who are helping to grow the sector, as well as celebrate the successes of black farmers.



HORTGRO REPRESENTED AT RUFORUM 2016

HORTGRO Science's General Manager, Hugh Campbell was a panelist at the RUFORUM Biennial 2016 Conference in Cape Town during October. The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a consortium of 60 African universities operating within 25 countries spanning the African continent. Campbell spoke to the aspect of enhancing private sector engagement with African Universities. Find a press release about Ruforum here: <http://bit.ly/2e6kfb2> Read the event's summary here: <http://bit.ly/2eAQ2Gq>



OPTIMISM AROUND 'ORCHARD OF THE FUTURE' TRIALS

This month HORTGRO Science visited its Orchard of the Future (OoF) trial sites in Ceres and Grabouw. Dutoit Agri Research and Development manager, Willie Kotze, said that he was very satisfied with the canopy architecture and fruitfulness of the Rosy Glow trees grown in slightly better soil and under 20% net at the OoF in Paardekloof. These trees are on MM109 rootstock with an M9 interstem.

Photo: HORTGRO Science's Wiehann Steyn (left) and Willie Kotze



SOIL HEALTH UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

The first Annual Soil Health Day was held in Stellenbosch this month. Experts focused on how healthy soils, rich in biological diversity, could support food security and agricultural practices. Keynote speaker Dr Wendy Taheri, a microbial ecologist from the US, discussed how Mycorrhizae provided natural services that made cropping systems more resilient. This enables producers to farm more sustainably and in ways that supports healthy landscapes. Read more: <http://bit.ly/2eTIZWE>

Caption: Willie Pretorius (Soil Health Support Centre), Mario Ontong (Nemlab), Dr Wendy Taheri (TerraNimbus), Daymian Douglas (Nemlab).



NEMATODES: A LOOK INTO ORCHARD SOIL HEALTH

To get an idea of the condition of the soil lying beneath an orchard, growers need to look no further than the millions of microorganisms writhing around in the ground. This is according to nematode PhD researcher Caro Kapp from the Entomology Department at the University of Stellenbosch. Kapp's thesis broadly deals with "the use of various soil amendments on the nematode community and thus soil health in deciduous fruit orchards". Kapp set-out to mine information from the nematode community at the Oak Valley orchard in Elgin. Read more: <http://bit.ly/2edVpbJ>



FCM: INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

HORTGRO Science held a False Codling Moth (FCM) seminar in Stellenbosch during October that focused on Integrated Pest Management of FCM in stone fruit orchards. This formed part of a pro-active process to give feedback on the research conducted by the industry over the past five years relating to FCM risk management and control. The event was attended by about 100 industry role-players and proved an important platform to transfer knowledge.

If you could not attend the event, and would like to have access to any information, please contact the HORTGRO Science office at 021 882 8470.



Pictured here is Team HORTGRO (FLTR) Dappie Smit, Louis van Zyl, Corné Dempers and Riaan Broodryk. More photos of the day can be seen on HORTGRO's Facebook page. Photos will also be available on our website gallery soon.

HORTGRO'S FIRST REGIONAL GOLF DAY AN ACE

HORTGRO held their first regional golf day on 20 October at the Theewaterskloof Golf Club. The scalding sun made the 76 players in attendance quite eager to reach the 19th hole. The day's winning teams were Team EGV 2 (Derich Priga, Lynley Stellenberg, Noel Bastiaan, Rowen Pullen) in first place, Team Fruitways 2 (Rouw Niewoudt, Du Toit Valentine, Jaco Moelich, Wouter van Niekerk) in second place and Team HORTGRO Science (Richard Hurdall, Leolan Abrahams, Arrie de Kock, Trevor Abrahams) came in third. HORTGRO would like thank FNB, Ideafruit, DTD, IPV, Pink Lady, Tru-Cape and Hortec who were sponsored the day.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

PHAKISA – PROCESS VS PRODUCT

Having sat through some (very!) long days of the Departments of Agriculture and Land Reform's current Operation Phakisa initiative (5 weeks where a few of us have been part of a FruitSA “relay” team), I was yet again reminded of the diversity of our sector, depth of knowledge, goodwill and the ability and will of the various stakeholders to make a success of joint actions.

Operation Phakisa's aim is to develop a comprehensive strategy with clear objectives and action plans to align public and private activities to ensure lasting transformation of our sector. It was heartening to experience and the desire and intent of this diverse group wanting to work together, to find joint solutions for the complex challenges we face and to commit to a better future for the next generations.

There certainly aren't any quick fixes, but what we do now, will determine the future of those who follow us.

Hopefully the social compact within which the outcome of this process will be packaged, will conclusively ensure that the roles, responsibilities and undertaking of the various stakeholders to commit their portion of the “map”, will be clarified.

I am therefore quietly optimistic that with the correct follow-through and leadership from all key roleplayers across the sphere (political, industry, labour and civil society), a good foundation has been laid to ensure implementation. And that hopefully this time we will have the action which has been lacking in the recent past with all the plans and strategies that gathered dust. We did not have to re-invent the wheel, but re-define, re-prioritise, align and re-package what has been in place from the National Development Plan and related policies and strategies.

This time the outcome of an inclusive process might just prove to be more important than the product. This outcome will form a good foundation for the various strategic sessions for our own industry structures planned for early 2017.

These sessions will inform the actions and focus areas of HORTGRO and its related structures in the next three to five years, to continuously enhance the environment wherein our members operate their respective businesses.

"To improve, is to change. To be perfect, is to change often." - Abraham Lincoln

"We cannot solve problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." - Albert Einstein

– Anton Rabe

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