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CONTENTS

- Young entrepreneurs show they are not just pretty faces at #YAFF awards
- Meet the winners of the 2019 #YAFF awards
- Promoting the conservation and preservation of indigenous seeds
- Ceres growers head to Sutherland to support drought-hit farmers
- Farm attacks rise with 60% this past decade

Editor: Piwe Mbiko, Email: piwem@daff.gov.za, Celnr: 060 973 2440



Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries



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Young entrepreneurs show they are not just pretty faces at #YAFF awards

By *Jamela Nkanyane*

Today's youth are often associated with fashion, beauty phrases such as 'brows on fleek' and other trendy social statements.. However, do not make any mistake to think that is all our youth are capable of. The hashtag Youth in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Awards (#YAFF) became the showground of young people showing beauty and farming skills.

Case in point is 25 year-old Siphesihle Kwetana, who had the audience in awe with her beauty when she ascended the stage to receive the award for Agriculture Excellence in the Smallholder category. She was awarded during the #YAFF awards ceremony hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape in June. Kwetana received R100 000 sponsored by Macadamias South Africa (SAMAC) and said she would use it to grow her business.

Speaking at this excellence awards ceremony, Deputy of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mcebisi Skwatsha said government would like to see more of the young entrepreneurs in this sector graduating into commercial farming

because the matter of food security is very important.

He further said, "I appeal to all role-players to multiply their efforts to attract and create an enabling environment for our youth to participate in the sector."

The #YAFF awards were launched in 2016 with the vision to encourage youth participation in the mainstream sector; provide a framework for networking opportunities between the aspiring young producers and key stakeholders in the sector, and to create an enabling environment from which different role players in the sector can establish synergies to support youth initiatives.

The awards recognises top young achievers in the production value chain, namely livestock and poultry production, crop production, fisheries or aquaculture production, forestry and agro-processing. The #YAFF award programme serves as a crucial barometer of the progress in youth economic empowerment and development across the sector.

For the rest of the article send an email to: jamelan@daff.gov.za or phone 066 084 6355

Meet the winners of the 2019 #YAFF awards

By Jamela Nkanyane

AGRICULTURE EXCELLENCE AWARD: COMMERCIAL CATEGORY

Wayne Mansfield is the sole owner of Fruitfield Farming located in Paarl, Stellenbosch in the Western Cape. This 34 year old farmer started out as a fruit hawker; buying second grade fruits from local commercial farmers and reselling them. Realising that the business was no longer yielding enough profit, Wayne's passion and need for growth drove him to negotiate a piece of land with one of the farmers in the area.

AGRICULTURE EXCELLENCE AWARD: SMALLHOLDER CATEGORY

Siphesihle Kwetana is a 25 year-old sole owner of Siphe Development and Capacitation Agency (SIDECA) located in Shawbury, Tsolo under the Mhlontlo Municipality in the Eastern Cape. The business has been operating for four years producing a wide variety of vegetables which yield a harvest of about 12 000 bunches of spinach, 10 000 heads of cabbage and 6 000 kg of green peppers a month within a given season.

THE FORESTRY EXCELLENCE AWARD: LARGE-SCALE CATEGORY

Sonwabile Bushula is a 30 year old entrepreneur and the sole owner of SA Fine Tuned located in Stutterheim, outside East London in the Eastern Cape. He currently serves as the Chairperson of Amahlathi Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development and is also the Treasurer of Amathole Charter of Youth in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. He has been operating on 2000 hectares of leased land since 2013. He has a range of land use agreements such as short-term agreements, harvesting permits and caretaker agreements with the Amahlathi Local Municipality.

THE FORESTRY EXCELLENCE AWARD: SMALL-SCALE CATEGORY

Thabiso Sithole, is the co-owner and Director of Red NS Holdings. This is a livestock and forestry business operating on 45 hectares of land ;out of which 20 hectares is for wattle and 25 hectares for gum tree. This 28 year old BCom graduate, together with his business partner, started the business in 2015 and have since then produced 2 000 tonnes of wattle on average of 500 tonnes per year and 1 300 tonnes of gum tree on an average of 320 tonnes per year depending on the season.

THE FISHERIES RECOGNITION

Meet the winners of the 2019 #YAFF awards

AWARD: SMALL-SCALE CATEGORY

Morena Khashane, a 32 year-old entrepreneur, is the sole owner of MK Enterprise Fish Farming located in Rooigrond, Mahikeng in the North West. The business has been operating on leased land since 2006. He underwent training in Aquaculture at the Stellenbosch University, China and Malawi. He is a member of African Farmers' Association of South Africa and also sits in the executive committee of Tropical Aquariums.

THE AGRO-PROCESSING RECOGNITION AWARD: SMALL-SCALE CATEGORY

Molatelo Kgarose is the sole owner of Kgarose Kgaros located in Itso seng Business Centre, Polokwane in the Limpopo Province. This 29 year-old IT and Marketing graduate realised his passion for entrepreneurship and started the business which produces healthy sweet potato yoghurt in apricot, strawberry and banana flavours; making it the first of its kind in South Africa. The company currently produces 385 bottles of yoghurt per day, which is packaged and distributed to different stores around Polokwane.

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE GRADUATE ENTREPRENEUR

Reatlegile Seleke, a 27 year old farmer, is the sole owner of Kaelo Farming Project located in Longaneng Village, in Taung in the North West Province. She attained her National Diploma from Potchefstroom Agricultural Training Institute. The farm was given to her by her father in 2011 with just five cattle. She purchased 20 pregnant heifers, 14 pregnant ewes and one ram using a loan she received from the Land Bank.

YOUTH LIVING WITH DISABILITY

Godfrey Mathebula, a 32 year-old farmer didn't let the inconvenience of having his arm amputated stop him from realising his dreams, he owns Macelakuomile farm located in Plange Village, Malamulele, in the Collins Chabane Municipality in the Limpopo Province. He started his mixed farming business of cash crops and small stock in 2007 operating on a 3 hectare land where he produces a variety of vegetables ranging from dry beans, tomatoes and green pepper.

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Promoting the conservation and preservation of indigenous seeds

By Rony Moremi

The Genetic Resources Directorate of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development working in partnership with North West Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development (READ) handed over a community seed bank in Jericho, North West on 12 June 2019. The community seed banks were established in 2013 as a way of conserving and preserving traditional seeds. When the process of establishing community seed banks started, the department collected 20 different indigenous seeds from communities that were preserved at the national seed bank.

Jericho community seed bank is one of the four community seed banks established in the country— with others in Sterkspruit, Joe Ncabi District Municipality in the Eastern Cape and Gumbu village in the Mutale Local Municipality, Limpopo. South Africa ranks among the 50 countries in the world that have community seed banks. Dr Rony Vernooy of Bioversity International praised South Africa as the only country that has a national gene bank.

Julian Japhta, Chief Director, Plant Production and Health said the community seed bank will help to promote food security in the community. He said it is also a real time evidence of the role that the community and farmers can play as custodians and protectors of the resources and should work together with the department to ensure that the seed bank becomes successful. He said he hopes the community seed bank will be included in the local development plans.

Vice chairperson of the Jericho community seed bank, Magdeline Mabiletsa said she started working at the seed bank in 2017 and has learnt a lot about the importance of seed preservation. She said the bank will promote planting of indigenous seeds in the community and the consumption of indigenous food crops.

For the rest of the article send an email to: rincertm@daff.gov.za or phone 066 084 6192

Ceres growers head to Sutherland to support drought-hit farmers

Forty-five farm workers from Ceres made the journey to Sutherland on May 25 this year in a show of support to the hardest hit growers in the drought-ridden Karoo.

As part of Patmos, an inter-church alliance offering spiritual and life-skills guidance to farm workers, Wilhelm De Kock, a Tru-Cape apple and pear grower and part of Ceres Fruit Growers, decided to make their annual outing one which would also help those in need. “We took six large trucks of grain to the nearby Williston to help farmers maintain starving sheep and then we shared 20 tons of food with the greater Sutherland community,” he says.

According to Francois Malan, Ceres Fruit Growers’ managing director, the Patmos choir sang for the Williston community whilst 25,000 apples, 300 packets of beetroot, 300 punnets of mushrooms, 5000 tins of Ceres Fruit Juice, four bins of pumpkins and 300 bags of potatoes from the Ceres community were shared. “We also donated four bins of cauliflower, 400 bags of onions, four crates of spaghetti squash and 150 hampers of spices and kitchen essentials,” De Kock says. Malan says that this was the Ceres

community offering support: “In addition to the generous produce offering, wives and children of growers were also involved in assembling sweets and lucky-packets for the children of the Sutherland community.” he says. De Kock adds: “We were also pleased to share 200 blankets and 100 bibles with the community. Wow, it was a very emotional day. We know other growers are also helping with funds to install a borehole there.” he says.

Another gift of animal feed included hay bales and feeding corn. “Despite their hardship, the community prayed together, danced and sang together with us. We continue to pray for rain and show gratitude for the generous spirit that exists among our communities.” De Kock ends. Tru-Cape Fruit Marketing is responsible for selling the fruit from Ceres Fruit Growers. Tru-Cape managing director Roelf Pienaar says that the company considers itself responsible for the livelihoods of over 15,200 people who rely on Tru-Cape to achieve the best prices for South African apples and pears.

For the rest of the article send an email to: medialiason@daff.gov.za

Farms attacks rise with 60% this past decade

Farm attacks rise with 60% this past decade – TLU SA presents bi-annual agriculture crime statistics. These statistics were announced during the organisation’s presentation on farm attacks and murders.

According to TLU SA’s official Incidents Report updated since 1990, 1 125 farm attacks were reported between 1990 and 1999. Between 2000 and 2009 an increase of 22% - 1 407 attacks – were reported and in the past nine years from 2010 to 2019 a rise of 60% - 2 616 attacks – were reported.

During the corresponding time farm murders increased from 637 (1990 to 1999) with 22% (799 murders) between 2000 and 2009. In the next nine years until 2019 there were 586 farm murders.

“These statistics are shocking. But for TLU SA these are not just statistics,” said Maj-Genl Chris van Zyl, deputy general manager of TLU SA. “It is 2 022 members of our farming community murdered since 1990. It is 5 148 times families and farmworkers feared for their lives during a farm attack.

TLU SA is aware that crime across the country is out of control with 56

murders taking place every day. According to Dr Johan Burger of the Institute for Security Studies the past six years saw an increase of 17% in murders and more than 20 000 people murdered during 2017/18.

Dr. Burger today shed more light on the extent of crime in South Africa with a focus on the brutality of these crimes.

In light thereof it is important for the farming community to know when and how to act during a farm attack and what the consequence of the act would be. Dr Llewellyn Curlewis, law expert from the University of Pretoria shared the reasonable person’s behaviour relevant to the common law.

The farming community should further focus on using technology, communication and information; and the use of contingency plans as implemented by TLU SA already.

For the rest of the article send an email to: medialiason@daff.gov.za