



LANDBOUSKRYWERS
AGRICULTURAL WRITERS SA

AGR pen

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CHAIRMAN'S VOICE

SHINE A LIGHT ON AWESOME AGRICULTURE

*Dear members,
It has become so normal to refer to things like lockdown, social distancing, and Zoom meetings in everyday conversations. Yet, I feel we all yearn for the day that we can move about, visit, and meet in person again. Personally, I miss hugs, attending farmers' days and, of course, road trips to ag events such as Nampo and the Farmer of the Year Awards!*

In many aspects, life as we knew it might never completely return back to the way it was. Some of these changes and adaptations to our "normal" way of doing things are for the better, I believe. Our forced "working from home" status has changed the job market.

It has opened up the many possibilities of working remotely now and beyond the pandemic. I know that it sometimes feels like one more Zoom or Teams meeting is going to finally break you, but this, too, will probably evolve to a level where we manage our days differently.

While writing this, I could sit snugly on my bed with a warm blankie, after just having attended two morning meetings. Why drive (fuel, air pollution) to an office (rental and maintenance expense) if you can do the same work from your home (in pajama bottoms) or anywhere there is a reliable internet connection? I know the

latter can be a challenge, but most of the virtual platforms we now use almost every day did not exist two years ago, so bear with the infrastructure while it plays catch-up.

The fast-forward button was hit – big time. All of us had to learn new technical skills, and we all had to adapt to using new communication platforms. Heck, some of us are still learning how to mute/unmute and to fix the annoying backlighting issues that render you a mere silhouette, but I think we are light years ahead of where we a year and a half ago!

Sadly, the same fast-forward



CHAIRMAN'S VOICE

button is accelerating the end of an era for many printed publications. But take courage! If you are working in this sphere of agricultural journalism, rest assured that the need for reliable news and information is now bigger than ever.

We still need quality journalism, and we definitely need journalists to craft complicated information into a digestible format for a specific audience. So, whether you write for print or a digital platform, keep on churning out those articles and keep the faith!

Technology like on-demand video and audio is also a trend that is evolving much faster than before. This increasing demand for "infotainment" opens the door to many possibilities for reporters and producers to create relevant video content and podcasts for the agricultural sector.

COMPETITIONS!

Why am I going on about this? Well, you will once again soon have the chance to showcase your media talents – on whatever medium – during the Agricultural Writers SA's annual competitions. Please send your entries digitally once the official notice and entry forms are circulated.

Participating in the various competitions sponsored by Bayer, Santam, FNB, CropLife SA, and BKB will put you in the running for some fabulous cash prizes and, of course, the chance to see your name in lights.

We will send you more information on these competitions in due course via email. Please make sure that we have your updated contact information if any of your details changed over the past

year. Please visit our website www.agriculturalwriterssa.co.za in the meantime for a brief overview.

FARMER OF THE YEAR EVENT

Yes, we will host an event this year (within the prevailing government restrictions at that time). Currently we have secured sponsorships from **Bayer Crop Science, Santam Agriculture and Health Squared Agility Agri** to host the event – thank you for your support!

The !Xhariep Region will host the Farmer of the Year event at Cavalli Estate and we look forward to hosting our nominees, sponsors, and members. We will probably still be under some kind of lockdown with restricted numbers for indoor events, so we'll keep you updated in due course.

It is, therefore, also time to nominate your candidates for Farmer of the Year, Agriculturist of the Year, and New Entrant to Commercial Farming. Use your newly acquired virtual meeting skills to get into contact with your proposed candidate and confirm their participation. We will soon send you an email with the relevant entry forms and links

to the online versions but, for now, it is time to first decide who you would like to honour for their contribution to making agriculture such an awesome industry.

Remember, this is not a competition, but an award that we as the Agricultural Writers SA bestow every year to celebrate excellence in agriculture.

Go and do what you do best: shine a light on the amazing farmers, agronomists, researchers, economists, and industry leaders and send us your nominations.

Stay safe, mask up, and remember to socially distance.



Liza Bohlmann
Chairperson: Agricultural Writers SA

Please liaise with your region's committee to put forward the best possible nominees per province.

- For nominees from the Western, Eastern, and Northern Cape, please get into contact with Agricultural Writers SA !Xhariep's regional committee (chairperson: Eunice Joubert at eunice@agriexpo.co.za).
- For nominations from Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, North West and Gauteng, speak to regional committee members from Agricultural Writers SA North (chairperson: Liza Bohlmann at lizabohlmann@gmail.com).

Alternatively, you can contact Petrie Vogel at our secretariat at petrie@abevents.co.za for guidance. ■

Chairman's report !Xhariep region



LANDBOUSKRYWERS SA
AGRICULTURAL WRITERS

!Xhariepstreek het ontstaan deur die samevoeging van drie verskillende streke (Wes-, Oos-, en Noord-Kaap). Ons lede is nou op datum, met 43 betaalde lede, en ons wil graag die streek versterk en uitbrei.

Die bestuur van die afgelope jaar het ten spyte van COVID-19 werklik moeite gedoen om relevante geleenthede aan te bied en om die bedrywighede van Landbouuskrywers !Xhariep meer aantreklik en aktueel te maak (Tabel 1).

Tabel 1 Geleenthede in 2020/2021 wat deur Landbouuskrywers !Xhariep aangebied is.

Geleentheid	Onderwerp/titel	Spreker	Opsomming/kommentaar
Webinaar, 13 Aug. 2020	Western Cape Agriculture: The impact of COVID-19 and the way forward	Dr. Ivan Meyer, Wes-Kaapse Minister van Landbou	Die aanbieding het elke lid trots laat voel deur die boodskap wat oorgedra is en die besef dat daar daadwerklik aksies geneem word in die Departement van Landbou Wes-Kaap.
Webinaar, 26 Aug. 2020	Overview of South Africa's 2020 citrus season	Justin Chadwick, Citrus Growers Association, & Hannes Nel, Sundays River Citrus Company	As Suid-Afrikaners is ons almal trots op dit wat hierdie bedryf vermag wat betref aanplantings en uitbreidings, toename in uitvoere, en die aanvraag na vitamien C. Die bedryf het groot uitdagings tydens die verskillende vlakke van inperking beleef, maar bly baie suksesvol as die tweede grootste verskaffer van sitrus in die wêreld.
Webinaar, 15 Sept. 2020	Ons praat oor 2020 se weertendense	Johan van den Berg, onafhanklike landbouweerkundige	Die weer speel 'n groot rol in elkeen se lewens wat betrokke is in landbou. Dit wil voorkom of die 2020/2021 seisoen meer gunstig is vir goeie weersomstandighede, wat beteken – kort na 2021 – meer reën in die binneland.

MEMBER NEWS

Geleentheid	Onderwerp/titel	Spreker	Opsomming/kommentaar
Watch party, 13 Nov. 2020	Tribute to the heroes of agriculture 2020		Hierdie geleentheid is deur die Noord-tak en die Nasionale Bestuur gekoördineer. Die <i>watch party</i> is relatief goed bygewoon en lede het dit gebruik as 'n goeie geleentheid om te netwerk ná die isolasie van COVID-19.
Webinaar, 2 Mrt. 2021	An Industry Overview: Raisins SA	Ferdi Botha, hoof uitvoerende beampte, Raisins SA	Ferdi Botha het 'n deeglike oorsig gegee van die bedryf met sy suksesse en uitdagings.
Besoek, 11 Mrt. 2021	Groote Post Vineyards	Nick Pentz, eienaar	Die lede het 'n onvergeetlike ervaring gehad op Groote Post in die Darling-distrik. Lede kon die impak van die drankverbod weens COVID-19 hoor uit die mond van die eienaar, Nick Pentz, en die werking van 'n werkende wynplaas ervaar.
Besoek, 21 Apr. 2021	LNR-Infruitec/ Nietvoorbij		Lede is deur personeel van LNR-Infruitec/Nietvoorbij getraakteer op interessante navorsingswerk wat gedoen word op heuningbostee tafeldruiwe, rosyne, en wyn.
Webinaar, 4 Mei 2021	Weather Trends for 2021	Johan van den Berg, onafhanklike landbouweerkundige	Lede het die voorreg gehad om te luister na weervoorskattinge vir die komende winterseisoen.

Borgskappe en finansies

Die borgskap van Old Mutual is in die weegskaal en Old Mutual Insure het onttrek as borg. Nedbank bly ons staatmaker en het ook aangedui dat hul dalk hul borgskap sal verhoog aangesien dit drie provinsies dek.

Landbouskrywers! Xhariep se finansiële posisie is goed. Ledegeld word tans deur die sekretariaat ingevorder en dan aan die tak oorbetal. Ons ledetal is 43, en ons het ook tans ses korporatiewe lede.

Die korporatiewe ledegeld (R3 500 per jaar) speel 'n groot rol in ons gesonde bankbalans, so ons moet poog om meer lede te werf.

Bedankings

Die BKB Fotokompetisie is weer suksesvol aangebied onder die bestuur van Adele Engelbrecht, met 'n prysgeld van R20 000 van BKB. Baie dankie vir die tyd en toewyding om hiervan 'n groot sukses te maak. Dankie ook aan Agri-Expo vir hul hulp en ondersteuning.

Landbouskrywers Nasionaal werk deurgaans daaraan om hierdie vereniging verder uit te brei en die werk van die afgelope meer as 40 jaar voort te sit. Baie dankie aan elke lid se betrokkenheid en ondersteuning. Baie dankie ook aan elke komiteelid vir hul tyd, toewyding, en inisiatief in baie moeilike uitdagende tye. Doen so voort, want dit is alles in belang van landbou en ons toekoms. ■

IFAJ task force for professional development

New IFAJ task force to make recommendations regarding member needs

Seven agricultural journalists spanning the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists' (IFAJ) major membership regions are working together as a task force to make recommendations for education, training, and professional development programmes for the federation.

The group's first action is to create a needs assessment survey, which will be distributed to IFAJ members in the next several weeks.

The assessment will be key to informing the task force's recommendations: an update will be available at the IFAJ annual congress in August, according to IFAJ past-president Owen Roberts, chair of the IFAJ Task Force on Education, Training, and Professional Development.

IFAJ President Lena Johansson says the task force is an important initiative for IFAJ and its members. "Professional development goes to the heart of IFAJ's mission, and this initiative is an opportunity to raise the bar on the organisation's commitment in this regard," she says. "By providing member guilds with

well-designed training materials, agricultural journalists and communicators will be able to advance their skills and receive recognition for doing so."

Roberts brings his experience as a communications instructor and faculty member in the Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications programme at the University of Illinois to the role, as well as his insights as an active journalist and as one of the architects of IFAJ's global growth through the past decade. "I appreciate the opportunity to work with such a diverse and committed team of IFAJ members, who bring their region's needs to the table, to help design a plan that we can recommend to the federation," says Roberts.

"Members have continually cited professional development as one of IFAJ's key membership benefits, and the organisation has implemented several superb programmes in response. I expect our task force's recommendations to focus on strengthening the IFAJ's successes and to suggest new possibilities for the federation to consider."

IFAJ global manager Hugh Maynard will provide administrative guidance to the task force, and secretary general Addy Rossi from Argentina will be

the task force's liaison with the presidium.

The task force's regional members are:

- Farah Atyyat from Jordan, who has worked since 2004 in the *Al-Ghad Daily Newspaper* covering the Ministry of Environment and Municipal Affairs.
- Ed Cassavoy, head of content partnerships for *The Toronto Star*, Canada's largest newspaper.
- Aghan Daniel, the chief executive officer at the Media for Environment, Science, Health, and Agriculture (MESHA), a Kenya-based and registered association of science journalists and communicators.
- Northern Ireland-based journalist Rachel Martin, chair the Irish Guild of Agricultural Journalists' northern section and reporter for the digital farming news publisher, *AgriLand Media*.
- Sam Townsend, a senior writer for *The Land*, Australia's largest agricultural newspaper. ■



IFAJ–Alltech International Award for Leadership in Agricultural Journalism recipients announced



Alltech and the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) are pleased to announce Kallee Buchanan of Australia and Craig Lester of Canada as joint recipients of the 2021 IFAJ–Alltech International Award for Leadership in Agricultural Journalism.

The award recognises excellence and leadership by young agricultural journalists and was presented recently during the Alltech ONE Ideas Conference. “IFAJ shares our commitment to supporting journalists who give a voice to the farmers and producers, the innovators and change-makers, the scientists and scholars, all working toward a ‘planet of plenty’,” said Dr Mark Lyons, president and CEO of Alltech. “On behalf of Alltech, I congratulate Kallee Buchanan



Kallee Buchanan of Australia and Craig Lester of Canada were recognised during the Alltech ONE Ideas Conference.

and Craig Lester as the well-deserving recipients of the 2021 IFAJ–Alltech International Award for Leadership in Agricultural Journalism.”

This recognition honours

Alltech’s late founder, Dr Pearse Lyons, who was a passionate storyteller with a great respect for agricultural journalists. The award complements the Young Leader programme that Alltech co-founded with the IFAJ in 2005

in support of the mentorship and education of leaders who connect agriculture to a global audience. It's also an endeavour that aligns Alltech's vision of Working Together for a Planet of Plenty™, in which a world of abundance is made possible through the adoption of new technologies, better farm management practices, and human ingenuity within agriculture

"As producers throughout the food supply chain are implementing more sustainable solutions, we are in the midst of a new era in agriculture led by science, data-driven decision-making and a passionate dedication to farming with the future in mind," said Lyons.

"Agricultural journalists have the ability to share these stories, and through our continued partnership with the IFAJ, we are proud to support these future leaders."

Kallee Buchanan started her career at a regional newspaper in 2008 before joining the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in 2009, where she has worked as a radio and digital journalist, presenter, and producer, covering rural and regional issues. In 2010, she won a Queensland Media Award (Clarion) for Best Radio News Report, and in 2017, she won the radio and digital categories at the Queensland Rural Media Awards and was named the overall journalism winner. She went on to win both the Australian

and the International Star Prize for Digital Media, and she won the Queensland radio category again in 2018. In 2019, she was highly commended in the Emergency Media and Public Affairs Awards for her coverage of the 2018 Central Queensland bushfires.

Buchanan joined the committee of the Rural Press Club of Queensland in 2016 and became its representative on the Australian Council of Agricultural Journalists (ACAJ) in 2018, eventually becoming the secretary of the ACAJ in 2019 and its president in 2020. She is passionate about elevating the issues and industries of regional and rural people and supporting agricultural media communicators in that work. She is committed to developing and retaining new voices that reflect the true diversity of communities outside of the major city centres, as well as the contributions they make to a productive world.

Craig Lester loves connecting people, ideas, and resources, and he believes that there is no better place to do that than in agriculture. As president of the Alberta Farm Writers' Association, part of the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation, Lester serves in two key professional roles that are dedicated to sharing information and educating the community with local and industry information.

He is a managing editor of 660 NEWS, an all-news radio station in Calgary, Alberta, and is the co-owner of Rural Roots Canada, an agriculture media production and distribution company. In his free time, he works on the family farm in Rolling Hills, Alberta.

Lester is also very active as a volunteer in the community, contributing his time to the Calgary Stampede, Alberta Young Speakers for Agriculture, and Ronald McDonald House. He is also on the planning committee for the 2023 IFAJ World Congress, which will be held in Alberta.

With a passion for successful succession and empowering the next generation, Lester established an agricultural scholarship and travel bursary at his alma mater, Brooks Composite High School, to support a student pursuing either agricultural-related post-secondary education or an international in-person learning experience.

He is an award-winning broadcast journalist and received a diploma in broadcast news from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.

"In challenging times like these, reliable journalism and information is vital for farmers," said IFAJ president Lena Johansson of Sweden. "Alltech's commitment to professional development for agricultural journalists to promote eminent leaders within our organisation is much-appreciated and contributes to enhancing the quality of agricultural journalism — which, in the long run, benefits the entire agricultural sector." ■

For more information about the IFAJ–Alltech International Award for Leadership in Agricultural Journalism, contact press@alltech.com.



Grain SA appoints new CEO



Grain SA recently announced that Dr Pieter Taljaard has been appointed as the organisation's new chief executive officer (CEO), taking over the reigns from Jannie de Villiers from 1 September 2021.

Pieter is well known in the agricultural sector and brings a wealth of expertise to this role, having served in a number of senior leadership capacities over the past years, currently as the cereals and industrial crops go-to market strategy lead at Bayer Crop Science. He worked with Grain SA for many years in his capacity at Bayer, Monsanto, NWK and as lecturer at the University of the Free State (UFS).

Pieter obtained his PhD in agricultural economics at the University of the Free State and spent the past six years in the seed industry. He is passionate about agriculture, which has also been his hobby as a part-time farmer for the past 19 years and he has a trained background in agriculture and applied economics, specialising in consumer and production economics, econometrics as well as mathematical optimisation.

"It was very crucial for Grain SA to make the right appointment that can lead the organisation into the next era. Pieter has vast experience in the grain sector and worked very closely with farmers," said Derek Mathews, chairperson of Grain SA.

"I would also like to use this opportunity to sincerely thank Jannie for his years of commitment and hard work to bring the organisation where it is today, as he now steps down as CEO. He will not be lost to agriculture and his mentorship and spiritual journey will continue to influence the industry in times ahead. We wish him all the best of luck for the future." ■



Agribusiness Confidence Index shoots to record high



South Africa's agricultural sector has not, in the recent past, had a season as good as the current one. This is evident from the Agbiz/IDC Agribusiness Confidence Index (ACI), which in the second quarter of this year reached a record high of 75, from 64 in the first quarter of 2021. These results reflect favourable conditions for all subsectors of agriculture, with various crops set to reach record output levels. Importantly, this comes at a time when commodity prices – domestically and globally – are at relatively higher levels, mainly supported by growing demand from China, combined with dryness in parts of South America.

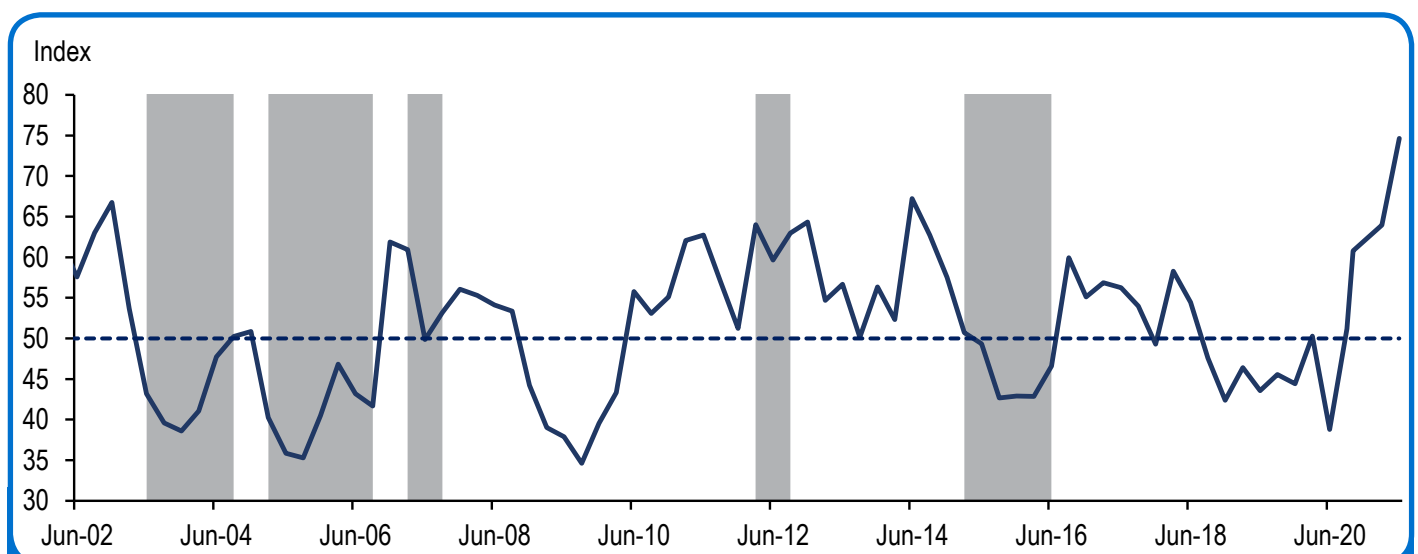


Figure 1 Agbiz/IDC Agribusiness Confidence Index¹ (source: Agbiz Research, South African Weather Service)

*Shaded areas indicate periods when rainfall across South Africa was below the average level of 500 mm.

¹The Agbiz/IDC Agribusiness Confidence Index reflects the perceptions of at least 25 agribusiness decision-makers on the 10 most important aspects influencing a business in the agricultural sector (i.e. turnover, net operating income, market share, employment, capital investment, export volumes, economic growth, general agricultural conditions, debtor provision for bad debt and financing cost). It is used by agribusiness executives, policymakers and economists to understand the perceptions of the agribusiness sector, and also serves as a leading indicator of the value of the agricultural output while providing a basis for agribusinesses to support their business decisions.



CORPORATE MEMBER NEWS

Discussion of the subindices

- The ACI comprises 10 subindices, and most of these are behind the notable jump in the composite index in the second quarter of 2021. As in the first quarter, with the exception of the agricultural insurance providers, all other agribusinesses who participated in the survey expressed higher levels of optimism about these subindices.
- The market share of the agribusinesses subindex improved by 7 points from the first quarter of 2021 to 78, the highest level since the end of 2016. This optimism was mainly underpinned by agribusinesses operating in field crops and financial services.
- The employment subindex increased by 23 points to 66 in the second quarter of 2021. One factor we continue to monitor is the impact of the minimum wage on jobs. At the time of the announcement of the increment in March 2021, there was discomfort amongst agricultural role players, especially farmers operating in the wine industry, who already faced cash flow challenges emanating from the alcohol sales ban during various stages of the lockdown.
- Another positive was the capital investments subindex, which increased by 23 points from the first quarter to 69, the highest point since 2016. Agricultural machinery sales, which have shown strong growth since mid-2020, support the rise in this subindex.
- After declining in the first quarter of this year, the subindex measuring the volume of exports sentiment improved by 22 points to 78 in the second quarter of 2021.
- The economic conditions subindex jumped by 39 points to 78 in the second quarter of 2021, its highest level since the end of 2011. This is in line with the general sentiment that South Africa is now in the recovery mode from the COVID-19-induced economic shock in 2020, although aggregate economic activity is yet to return to pre-pandemic levels.
- In the second quarter of 2021, the sentiment regarding financing costs fell by 5 points to 57, which is a favourable direction and reflective of the current environment of lower interest rates. Meanwhile, the sentiment regarding the debtor provision for bad debt increased by 7 points to 50, which is an unfavourable direction, although this subindex remains relatively low, suggesting that bad debts have not become a major challenge at this stage.
- Meanwhile, the general agricultural conditions subindex deteriorated marginally by 2 points from the first quarter to 83 in the second quarter of 2021 – still well above the 50-points neutral mark and still reflects favourable agricultural conditions.

Concluding remarks

The Agbiz/IDC ACI's second-quarter results suggest South Africa's agricultural sector is set for another year of robust performance. The underpinning driver is the favourable weather conditions that have allowed farmers to plant on time and increase area plantings for various crops.

The higher commodity prices have also improved farmers' finances, contributing to better sentiment. "We are in a good year from a production perspective. Our main concern at the moment is around the biosecurity challenges in the livestock and poultry sectors. These are areas that should be addressed to sustain the positive momentum in agriculture," says Wandile Sihlobo, Agbiz chief economist. ■



Kallie Schoeman laat hom nie afskrik deur COVID-19 nie

Die feit dat Kallie Schoeman, besturende direkteur van Schoeman Boerdery en vorige Nasionale Boer van die Jaar, COVID-19 opgedoen het, het hom nie verhoed om steeds aan die Midmar-myl deel te neem nie.

Nadat Kallie Schoeman, besturende direkteur, Schoeman Boerdery, in Januarie 2021 positief getoets het vir COVID-19, moes hy homself vir 10 dae isoleer en, volgens hom, het hy letterlik in daardie tyd die virus uitgesweet.

Sy voorbereiding om fiks te word vir die Midmar-myl het tot stilstand gekom; hy het eers teen middel-Februarie sodanig herstel dat hy weer kon oefen. Dit het hom slegs ses weke gegee om reg te wees vir die grootste oopwater swem-kompetisie in die wêreld.

Die tweede vlaag van die virus het uitbreek en die kompetisie was skielik in die weegskaal. Die organiseerders het toe besluit om die kompetisie virtueel aan

te bied. Kallie het die kans aangegryp en kon onder toesig van vroulied, Elna, en Goue-pet-Midmar-swemmer, Anton Botha, die 1,6 km in sy plaasdam op Moosrivier swem. Hy kon die afstand in sy persoonlike beste tyd van 46 min en 22 sekondes afswem.

Op die vraag waarom Kallie swem, het hy geantwoord: "Wanneer jy in die water ingaan en die gevoel van gewigloosheid en vryheid ervaar, kom jou siel tot bedaring en vergeet jy van al die

probleme op die vasteland. Ek het op ouderdom 65 swem as sport gekies omdat ek dit kan doen tot ek 100 jaar oud is.

Dit hou my gees, siel, en liggaam gesond. Sou ek nie swem, het julle dalk in die malhuis vir my kom kuier." ■



**Kallie,
Landbouskrywers SA
wens jou van harte geluk
en is trots op jou!
Swem so voort!**

BOERENUUS

New record price for Sernick Bonsmara bull



Sernick Bonsmara, part of the Sernick Group, hosted their 43rd production auction on Friday 4 June 2021, with Johan van der Nest acting as auctioneer for the 38th time.

Some 313 registered buyers attend the auction and Renier Fouché paid a hefty R800 000 for one of the top bulls. This marks a new record price for a bull at the auction. The previous record recorded was R775 000 in 2011. The average price across the attended 45 bulls on offer was R157 000 in comparison to R122 000 in 2020, R104 825 in 2019, and R101 360 in 2018

Other results were as follows:

- Stud females average: R53 471
- Commercial 3-in-1 females: R36 460
- Commercial pregnant heifers: R23 040
- Commercial heifers: R16 303 ■

An era of uncertainty

What might extra sanitising mean for our immunity? Health Squared Medical Scheme give some answers.

Heightened global awareness of cleanliness and COVID-19 preventative measures may influence human immunity, although whether these changes will ultimately benefit human health has been hotly debated.

Clinical risk management expert and medical adviser to Health Squared Medical Scheme, Dr Jacques Snyman, considers the potential unintended consequences for immunity that might arise from the large-scale move towards disinfecting, mask-wearing, and other measures to prevent the spread of illness-causing pathogens.

“It is indisputable that hygiene is essential to preventing the spread of many infectious illnesses and diseases, including COVID-19. However, we have no way of determining with certainty what the longer-term effects of this dramatic shift towards disinfecting, sanitising and eliminating germs may be,” he says. “Long before the pandemic, questions were being asked about the use of increasingly sophisticated home disinfectants and hand sanitisers. A particular area of debate was whether this constituted potentially unhealthy germophobia or served as reasonable precaution against the immediate health risks posed



by infection from pathogens and germs in general.”

According to some schools of thought, overzealous hygiene might threaten our natural defences by depriving the body’s immune system of opportunities to recognise and build resistance to germs.

“However, as with COVID-19, some people appear to be more susceptible to certain infections and are therefore at greater risk if they are exposed, while the majority of the population may experience only relatively mild illness. In many cases, the immune systems of those who survived the illness may be better equipped to defend against the same pathogens in future,” says Dr Snyman.

According to Dr Snyman, over the past year, increased awareness of infection prevention measures brought about by the pandemic have had a clear impact on public infectious illnesses.

“The 2019 influenza season was fairly brutal, with a significant number of hospitalisations and deaths globally.

However, there does appear to be evidence from countries, including South Africa, that indicates the number of influenza cases declined dramatically from 2019 and 2020.

“A recent study from the United States (US) Centre for Disease Control (CDC) found that positive flu tests declined from 20% to below 2% or even undetectable levels in some regions, while local pathology survey reports of the major pathology groups in South Africa indicated very low incidence, if any, of the influenza virus being present during the winter of 2020,” he says.

“Last year, we did not experience our typical flu season – far fewer



SPONSOR NEWS

cases were reported. It does seem as though the enhanced hygiene precautions due to COVID-19 may well have helped to stem flu infections.

Although it would take longer to reflect in the published data, it may also be possible that efforts to prevent COVID-19 such as mask-wearing and an emphasis on good ventilation could slow the spread of other diseases, including tuberculosis (TB) for instance.

On the other hand, proponents of the hygiene theory of allergies would argue that our immune systems need exposure to a wide variety of germs to make it stronger and less prone to allergic reactions to otherwise fairly harmless environmental factors such as pollen,” Dr Snyman notes.

According to Dr Snyman, COVID-19 has been particularly devastating, in part because humans have not been exposed to it before; therefore, even in genetically diverse populations like ours we had no inherent immunity.

“What we don’t know in the current situation where increased hygiene is a necessity for COVID-19 prevention, is how this

may affect our immune systems in the longer term, and those of our great-great-grandchildren. We are entering the era of the unknown”, he says.

As part of Health Squared’s sustainable, member-centred approach to healthcare funding, it was the first scheme to cover COVID-19 tests, irrespective of the result, thus encouraging responsible testing behaviour early on to help prevent community spread. ■

The scheme will also cover the COVID-19 vaccine in full for members on all benefit options.

BROKKIES

REGSTELLING:

*ARTIKEL OOR LNR-
NIETVOORBIJ/INFRUITEC
is saamgestel en geskryf deur
Clayton Swart*



Afrikelp focuses on the use of natural resources

Dr Nicole Hart, Managing Director at Afrikelp™ on World Environment Day.

Healthy ecosystems are crucial for our survival, enabling us to counteract climate change, increase biodiversity, and address the world's need for food, fibre and shelter. World Environment Day 2021 focuses on actions that can be taken to conserve existing ecosystems, but also to revive those already damaged.

Ecosystems are defined as the interaction between living organisms with their surroundings, including nature and man-made systems such as cities or farms. Sustainable agriculture implies that food and fibre production should sustain farmers, resources, communities, and the value chain. Farming and production practices that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good for communities should therefore be promoted.

The uniquely South African kelp species, *Ecklonia maxima*, is found at the southern tip of the country where they grow in the strong currents along the coastline.

The high nutrient content, clean water, and robust wave action cause the kelp, or sea bamboo, to grow rapidly and simultaneously absorb the required nutrient elements available in the sea water.



Afrikelp™ has been harvesting kelp on the western coast of South Africa since 1976. We make sure that we do not upset the ecology and that the natural population remains healthy and sustainable. In our operations, we follow ethical business practices, respect the environment, and are focused on preserving and managing the kelp populations because we know that this natural resource is vital for the health of all sea life.

The main drive behind our harvesting operations is our love for nature, the responsible use of natural resources, and our commitment towards customers to provide a high-quality product. Kelp beds are not damaged during harvesting. Only the top part (fronds) of the kelp is cut away from where they join at the stipe (stem) of the kelp. The fronds can continuously grow and regenerate.

The harvesting of kelp is heavily regulated by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF). Only a few concession holders can harvest limited annual volumes of kelp in certain areas. The concession, from which Afrikelp™ produces biostimulants from the *E. maxima* species, covers a large area in Gansbaai.

Unlike land-based plants, kelp does not extract its nutrients from the soil. The kelp extracts nutrients directly from the water around the plant. The holdfast (root) therefore only acts as an anchor but is an important part of the seaecology and provides shelter and food for various marine species. ■

Mpumalanga Santam Landbou Jong Boer van die Jaar

Baie geluk aan Kirch Muller, Mpumalanga Landbou Jong Boer van die Jaar 2021!



'n Trotse Kirch Muller ontvang sy sertifikaat van Hanlie Kroese van Santam Landbou.

Nuy Winery bottles their first Merlot

Nuy Winery, founded in 1963, is launching their first merlot under their Inspiration range. The Nuy Inspiration Merlot 2018 is a medium-bodied red wine with prominent mulberry, strawberry, and black cherry flavours on the nose and palette. It is a well-balanced drinking wine with a fruity aftertaste.

Why merlot?

“Merlot is traditionally not a cultivar that has done well in the Nuy Valley in the past in terms of growth and quality,” says Paul Burger, senior winemaker at Nuy Winery. “With the advancement in knowledge about vineyard management techniques and also more specialised winemaking methods, we have made adjustments in the management of the merlot vineyards and realised that the quality of the merlot has improved significantly and so we decided to make this very popular cultivar part of our Inspiration range.”

As the saying goes, ‘good wines are made in the vineyard’, the grapes used for the Nuy Inspiration Merlot 2018 are produced on the farm Nuwerus along the R60.

The vineyards can be seen from the veranda of the Nuy on the hill tasting room, deli, and restaurant – the perfect view to enjoy this wine.

How to enjoy Nuy Inspiration Merlot 2018

The Nuy Inspiration Merlot 2018 is a delicious wine to enjoy with friends – it pairs well with any red meat, roasted mushrooms, vegetable stew, and chocolate desserts. During the winter months, the wine can be enjoyed at room temperature (between 18°C and 20°C). In summer, the wine can be chilled slightly by placing it in the fridge an hour or two before serving.



Order your Nuy Inspiration Merlot 2018 at R72 per bottle or R432 per case, online at <http://www.nuywinery.co.za/> or email marketing@nuywinery.co.za. Orders above R2 500 qualify for free delivery within the borders of South Africa.

For more information

For more info contact Nuy Winery, visit the website at <http://www.nuywinery.co.za/> or contact AC Goodger at 023 347 0272 or email marketing@nuywinery.co.za

Join the conversation

Facebook Nuy Winery <https://web.facebook.com/nuy.winery>
Facebook Nuy on the hill <https://www.facebook.com/www.nuywinery.co.za/>
Instagram/Twitter @NUYWINERY ■

CALENDAR

KALENDER

23–25 August 2021	IFAJ's virtual e-Congress and Delegate Assembly
15 October 2021	Boer van die Jaar Noord/Farmer of the Year North
19 November 2021	Boer van die Jaar Nasionaal/Farmer of the Year National

Upcoming IFAJ congresses

2022 – Denmark
2023 – Canada
2024 – Switzerland
2025 – Israel
2026 – Kenya
2027 – Croatia

Stay safe, stay healthy, stay focused

We add our voices to that of President Cyril Ramaphosa in saying that our thoughts and prayers are with all those who have been affected by this pandemic – whether they have been infected themselves, have lost loved ones to the virus, or are caught in the midst of economic hardship as a result of ever-changing regulations aimed at flattening the curve. It's a very worrying time for all. We urge all our members to heed the President's call to be more diligent, more consistent, and more aware of our actions in order to limit transmission and bring down the rate of infection. Stay safe, stay healthy, stay focused.

"Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose." — Lyndon B. Johnson

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FOTO VAN DIE MAAND



Adriaan Oosthuysen, finansiële bestuurder van Epko.



Stuur vir ons jou stories

Alle lede word uitgenooi om bydraes vir Agripen voor die 15de van elke maand te stuur aan Magda Du Toit, magda.du.toit@outlook.com of Petrie Vogel, petrie@abevents.co.za.

Send us your stories

All members are invited to send contributions to Agripen before the 15th of each month to Magda Du Toit, magda.du.toit@outlook.com or Petrie Vogel, petrie@abevents.co.za.



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