Wêreldvoedseldag
gevier met nuwe kompetisie
vir Dysseldorp

Worms that work
accessible organic waste management

Wintergraan inligtingsdag
The Department of Agriculture, Western Cape had many highlights throughout the year, but there is one that is arguably the cherry on the cake – our annual Farm Worker of the Year competition – also the only one in the country! This year was no exception when Christo Somer of Riebeek Kasteel Cellars walked away with the coveted award.

Although I have only been with the Department for a couple of months, I was awarded the honour of being part of the adjudication process. It was certainly one of the most humbling experiences of my life listening to the farm workers talk about the sterling job they do to help put food on our tables. I wanted to make each one of them a Farm Worker of the Year. I also had the privilege of being present when the Prestige Farm Worker Forum (all the previous winners) asked the honourable Premier, Ms Helen Zille, to be the keynote speaker at the event and it was at this meeting that I heard that farm workers never go on strike! As the Western Cape Province, we can be so proud of our farm workers and we should do everything possible to develop and empower them.

Another highlight was our own Farm Worker Choir competition between all the Department’s research farms. Again, I had a front row seat as a judge and their willingness, commitment, discipline and beautiful voices just blew me away. Oudtshoorn Research Farm was crowned as the winner, but if any of the choirs ever brought out a CD, I’ll be the very first to buy it.

This edition of AgriProbe is absolutely filled to the brim with highlights ranging from a very successful World Food Day in Dyeyseldorp; farming with earthworms to embracing needy children at the Anna Foundation. I think it is very apt to end the year with such warm and encouraging stories, reflecting not only on our industry, but also on the hard working and dedicated staff of the Department who make all these wonderful achievements happen.

Cheers to an amazing year in agriculture that was and lift your glass to an even more exciting year that awaits.

Petro Van Rhyn
Head of Communications
Department of Agriculture, Western Cape
Message from Gerrit van Rensburg, Western Cape Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

It is the end of yet another year in agriculture. This is a good time to reflect on the year gone by, but also to look forward to a well deserved holiday and time with family and friends over the festive season.

2010 was an eventful year for agriculture. In the Western Cape we had to face up to a crippling drought in the Southern Cape; we had to continue with the challenges of empowering and assisting our new farmers on their journey towards sustainability; and we had to contend with a very lean budget, which was the aftertaste of the economic meltdown the world experienced in 2008.

But when I reflect on this year, I am proud of the Department of Agriculture, and by implication, all the staff dedicated to serving the agricultural sector. It was your individual and collective contributions that enabled us to face up to all the challenges of the past year. And there were several highlights, of which I will only mention a few: the Department was able to assist Southern Cape farmers with drought aid distribution. The Department hosted a successful symposium on equity share schemes, which was a precursor to the National Symposium on equity share schemes, where the moratorium on these schemes was lifted. It was agriculture that took the lead in promoting a meeting between the Western Cape Cabinet and the agricultural sector in our Province.

Another highlight for our Department was being acknowledged as the number one government department for female empowerment at the annual Top Woman Awards. Our Department was the only provincial department competing against national departments in the top four positions, making the victory all the more special.

So to all the men and women in agriculture - have a blessed festive season and come back in 2011 refreshed and invigorated for yet another year in agriculture.
WHO ARE THE REGIONAL LEADERS?
On 30 January 2002 the leaders of a number of sub-national regions met in Munich, Germany to discuss policies that will result in sustainable development over generations. These regions were Bavaria (Germany), Quebec (Canada), Shandong (People’s Republic of China), Upper Austria (Austria) and the Western Cape (South Africa). The leaders experienced the discussions so valuable that they agreed to regular biannual meetings, during which two topics of relevance will be discussed. Subsequent meetings took place in Quebec (2004), Upper Austria (2006) and Shandong (2008). Sao Paulo (Brazil) joined the Forum in 2006 and Georgia (USA) became a member in 2008.

At the time the leaders of these seven regions arrived in Cape Town for their 2010 meeting, they represented more than 173 million people (2.5% of the world’s population) - living on five continents in both hemispheres of the globe. The combined Regional GDP of these regions is more than US$ 2 380 billion and the regions characterise a very interesting spread, ranging from highly developed to developing areas. In the richest region the per capita GDP was US$ 46 752 (± R328 863) per person in 2009 and in the poorest it was only US$ 5 411 (± R38 062). (The comparable Western Cape figure was approximately R61 698.) This means that the average person in the poorest region has to live from only 11.6% of the income that his or her peer receives in the most well-off of these sub-national areas.

The interesting and inverse fact is that, during the recent financial crisis, the economic growth rate in the richest region dipped to a level as low as minus 5%, while in the case of the poorest region the economy happily chugged along at a healthy 11.6% growth rate. Unemployment in the regions ranges between the extremes of 10.6% and 3.4% with, interestingly enough, the poorer regions showing the lowest rates of unemployment.

The implication is that these regions provide a very good cross-section of the realities the world is currently facing. In other words, it represents a micro-cosmos of the world or a laboratory of reality. It follows that the lessons learned and solutions being developed within this environment can be up-scaled to have a wider impact and hence the drive to formalise the relationship between these sub-national entities. Within this context the two topics for the 2010 Summit was food security (both household and provincial) and integrated transport.

RELEVANCE TO AGRICULTURE
Despite the differences between the regions, it is significant to note that the Agricultural Sector plays an extremely important role in the economies of each of them. The Agricultural Sector of a region is either an important part of the national Agricultural Sector (up to 24% in the case of Upper Austria and the Western Cape) or it is an important contributor to the regional economy (up to 15% in the case of Georgia). The implication is that most of the regions are surplus producers of food and hence net exporters of agricultural products. Nevertheless, especially in some of the poorest regions, household food security still remains a problem.

More significantly, each of these regions does have very specific qualities of interest to the Agricultural Sector of the Western Cape Province. Bavaria has a long history and is quite successful in not only building its regional image, but also in using that image to market its products locally and abroad. This, in turn, forms an integral part of its rural development strategy. At the same time it is probably one of the global leaders in on-farm renewable energy; a phenomenon we will have to master if we want to maintain our presence in the markets of the developed world.

The main event on the calendar of farmers in the Organic Sector world-wide (BioFach) take place annually in Bavaria.
Do not make a mistake - although they do maintain good neighbourly relations, there is significant competition between Bavaria and Upper Austria. The Austrians are as strong in the fields of on-farm renewable energy, rural development and the marketing of regional products and they have experience in the field of farmer support and agricultural schooling that they want to share with us.

Very few people realise that the Agricultural Sector contributes 15% to the economy of the State of Georgia in the USA; that is why it is called the “Peach State”. Of special importance for us is the fact that they have succeeded in establishing an Agricultural Innovation Centre and for a number of years a database of farms and farmers are quite successfully maintained. Furthermore, SPS matters and stewardship of land programmes form integral parts of their programmes.

Most people know that it gets extremely cold in Quebec in winter and that it is a French-speaking region on an English-speaking Continent. However, they are also world leaders on food security and, given their French roots, a potential significant market for South African wines.

With the current financial instability in the developed world, everybody is focussing on China as a potential market. Yet, it is much more appropriate to focus on a specific part of this immense country. Shandong is the third largest economy in China and indisputably their leader in the field of aquaculture and viticulture. Furthermore, Shandong is also the home to one of the biggest agricultural machinery producing facilities in China.

Brazilian agriculture is definitely one of the upcoming commercial farming success stories in the world. Sao Paulo will host the 6th Regional Leaders Summit in 2012. As Brazil also has a number of challenges mirroring ours, it has interesting solutions pertaining to urban agriculture and organic farming.

It is clear that each region do have very specific agricultural characteristics of importance to the Western Cape. We, of course, also have some things of interest to them. For this reason a Declaration (with an Agricultural Chapter) was signed at the end of the 5th Regional Leaders Summit. This Declaration makes provision for multilateral and bilateral events and, who knows, perhaps we will get an exchange of young farmers going under the auspices of this Forum.

WHAT NOW?
All seven of the regions forming part of the Regional Leaders Forum is often considered by their compatriots to be somewhat daring regions; they are not that keen to always diligently toe the line. Yet, when combined, they do have a significant presence on the global playing field and each of the regions do have a very specific quality or skill of interest to the Agricultural Sector of the Western Cape Province. The principle to exchange these features was cemented in the Declaration signed at the end of the 5th Regional Leaders Summit and the Province has already developed a plan to achieve the maximum benefits out of its participation in this initiative. Please watch the press to see how the plan comes together! AP
Deelname aan die Riversdal Boeredag.
(Met erkenning aan Amelia Genis van Landbouweekblad vir die foto)
O p 2 September 2010 het die Riversdal WINTERGRAAN-bedryfskomitee ‘n Inligtingsdag by die Jouberts op Uitkyk gehou.

By hierdie geleentheid het Dr Ilse Trautmann, Direkteur: Tegnologie, Navorsing en Ontwikkelingsdienste van die Departement Landbou Wes-Kaap, die noodsaaklikheid van vennootskappe in die navorsing baie ernstig beklemtoon. Sy het die Komitee geloof vir die werk wat reeds in samewerking met boere, die Departement (Professor Mark Hardy en Dr. Johann Strauss en hulle spanne), die LNR en privaatinstellings, gedaan is.

Prof. Mohammed Karaan ‘n insiggewende voorlegging aangebied oor die toekoms. Hy was ernstig oor “Wat wag vir ons kinders”. Hy bekommer hom oor hoe kapitalisme besig is om homself te vernietig – soos misbruik van water (n skaars item), die oorontginning van ons myne, misbruik van ons grond sonder om terug te sit wat uitgehaal is, ens. Hy het die belangrikheid beklemtoon van die platteland in die vasstelling van waardes en wys dan op die manier waarop die VSA en Europa eenvoudig hulle boere subsideer om die platteland lewend te hou.

In sy referaat het hy telkens verwys na sy verbintenis met Francois (sy klasmaat op universiteit en 'n boerseun van Riversdal) en wat hy daaruit geword het. Hy het ook die opmerking gemaak dat die boerseun studente, aangename studente is as die stedelinge. Die boerseun het ‘n wye visie, terwyl die dorp/stadskind vierkantig groot geword het en ook so dink (vierkantige kamer in huis, TV, ens).

Hy het afgesluit met ‘n insiggewende verwysing na die opkoms van Brasilië as wêreld-moondheid op landbou en ekonomiese vlak en hoe hulle dit gedoen het, om dit te bereik.

Nadat al die borge en andere bedank is, is met ‘n koeldrank verdaag om die proewe te besigtig. Die 8 persele was elkeen vir 20 minute deur die betrokke verantwoordelike navorsers en tegniese adviseurs toegelig. Die besoekers was toe in vier groepe op bekware wyse deur comitéleden vergesel. Hierna was afgesluit met ‘n heerlike middagete.

Vervolgens ‘n samevatting van die evaluering, asook enkele opmerkings oor die dag.

Sprekers – aanbieding: 97% ervaar die sprekers as goed of onverbeterlik

Venue: 97% ervaar die “venue” as goed of onverbeterlik

Spyseniering: 100% ervaar die spyseniering as goed of onverbeterlik

Proewe: 100% ervaar die proewe as goed of onverbeterlik

Ander opmerkings op die evaluasievorm:

- Maak weer so in 2011 – Verbreek evaluering van 0-5 ipv 1-4 tans.
- Gaan so voort. Bedryf het dit nodig. Onmisbaar
- Hou so aan.
- Waar is moutgars?
- Waardevolle geleentheid vir oordrag van inligting en kommunikasie.
- Baie aangenaam. Het baie geleer. Kan hierop bou
- Sal graag paar garsproewe wil sien en Superdan en Supergrazer. Baie goeie dag.
- Moet weer kom.
- Gasspreker was interessant en insiggewend.
- Sprekers baie goed. Kos en tee heerlik.
- Graanaanbieding goed. Alles goed voorberei.
- Proewe baie interessant. Daar baie geleer.
- Dit was baie innoverend verrig.
- Goed gereël en bestuur.
- Goed! Ek sal graag weer wil kom.
- Dit was baie goed.
- My gunsteling boerbedag. Proefbesigtiging besonder goed georganiseer.” >

Basie Malherbe (Samesteller van die boeredag verslag)
An outstanding example of a successful research partnership that promotes on-farm research aimed at supporting sustainable farming systems in the rain-fed grain production regions of the Western Cape. The following report, written by Mr Basie Malherbe, former chairman of the Riversdal Wintergraan Bedryfskomitee, summarises his experience of the most recent information day. It must also be said that, as chairperson of that committee, Mr Basie Malherbe played a major role in ensuring the continued success of this partnership. The Riversdal Wintergraan Bedryfskomitee Inligtingsdag, held on 2 September 2010, was again a great success. This information day has been held annually on the farm Uitkyk in the Riversdal “vlaktes” since 2002. What makes this particular day unique, is that it is “farmer and farming community ” driven. In this case, the community is Tuin Roete Agri’s Wintergraan Bedryfskomitee. This committee was instrumental in assisting researchers from the Department of Agriculture Western Cape’s Institute for Plant Production, to identify research needs for the district - way back in 2001. They also identified co-workers (local farmers) who would be prepared to provide land and assistance for the identified research projects.

It must be mentioned that an essential component in the success of research trials conducted on private land is the commitment of the land owner - in this case Fanie and Anne-Marie Joubert and Jan-Hendrik Joubert who have been totally committed since we began investigating the potential for this project in 2001.

One large-scale crop rotation research project was started in 2002. Since then, the research site has developed (under the management of the Department of Agriculture Western Cape in collaboration with the land owner - Joubert Boerdery) to include more than 7 additional research projects. These additional projects are conducted by researchers from institutions such as the Department, ARC-SGI, University of Stellenbosch and private companies. Again, the Wintergraan Bedryfskomitee assisted in identifying appropriate research projects for local rain-fed grain production systems.

More than 150 farmers, farm workers, technikon students, school learners and technical advisors from local agri-businesses attend the information day each year. The day usually starts with formal presentations where invited specialists give presentations on subjects such as “climate change”, “the future of agriculture in SA”, “the role of research in supporting a sustainable future for crop production systems”, as well as on topical research findings. Importantly, the formal presentation session is kept very brief, so that more time can be allocated to the “walk and talk” session.

Contributing to the success of the day is that farmers have the opportunity to walk through the experimental plots and discuss the results and outcomes of the various experiments with the researchers and technicians who run the trials. First-hand up-to-date information is therefore available during these “walk and talk” sessions, and the farmers come back year after year, some stating that this is THE information day that they will not miss.

Another contributing factor to the success of the day is that the logistics are the responsibility of the, whilst the scientific programme is left to the researchers. The committee decides on the topics for invited speakers, invites the speakers, raises funds, organises food and refreshments, advertises the day - in short, they do everything! People who are attending the day and researchers who are presenting their work, simply need to turn up and enjoy the information sharing.

If there ever was an example of a successful research partnership between the Department of Agriculture Western Cape, other public research institutions such as the ARC, agri-businesses and individual farmers that addresses the research needs of a local farming community, then this is it! AP
On Thursday, 4 November 2010, Minister van Rensburg paid a visit to the Anna Foundation. The Foundation runs a programme on 11 farms in the Cape Winelands based on 3 R’s: Reading, Running and Righting. This programme is based on a philosophy of holistic development and a belief in “Healthy body, healthy mind”.

The programme focuses on literacy development, physical development and wellbeing of the children and also teaches and encourages “right” living. The idea of right living refers to the right life style, right choices, right attitude and right behaviour i.e. “right me”.

250 Farm children benefit from this programme and 13 unskilled or unemployed women are trained as 3 R’s teachers. The Department of Agriculture, Western Cape funded the programme with R226 000. Minister van Rensburg was very impressed with the project and said: “More effort should be made to empower children living on farms who do not have easy access, as the city children do, to higher levels of education”. He commended the foundation on their efforts and the fact that they make such a difference in the children’s lives.
After worms had to give way to a new road at the Fresh Mark distribution centre in Brackenfell, a subsidiary of the Shoprite Checkers group, the management generously decided to hand over their earthworm project to the Department of Agriculture at Elsenburg for training purposes. Mr Johan Marx of Cence, a community development organisation, played a key role in handing over the project, and on Tuesday, 9 November 2010, Minister Gerrit van Rensburg officially received the earthworm project from Fresh Mark.

The project consists of 120 special crates with ± 200 000 Australian “red riggers”, together with a tunnel structure. Marius Mostert of AfriStone in Paarl donated the paving for the tunnel. The Elsenburg Institute for Agricultural Training is particularly excited about the project, since it will make many young people aware of recycling and waste management. “But we also want to introduce the public to these wonderful worms, so that they become a reality in each home” said Mr Marius Paulse, Head of the Elsenburg Institute for Agricultural Training. He also invited the industry and the private sector to share developments around waste management with Elsenburg at any time so that they can be adopted into the curriculum.

The throwaway culture needs to be changed, and earthworms can assist with recycling domestic waste. “It is a joyful day when the industry, sponsors, researchers and training take each other’s hands”, said Minister van Rensburg. He quoted an old slogan which reads: “From the earth comes the good” and the earthworm project is an embodiment of this slogan. Minister van Rensburg made a plea for group pressure so that each home would ultimately be using earthworms for recycling and in this way contribute to the reduction of our carbon footprint. “The group pressure should be similar to planting a tree with each overseas flight which someone undertakes”, Mr van Rensburg requested. Cence, led by Mr Marx, arranged for a training video to be made by AgriTV, and a pocket manual will also be available in the near future. These aids will make it much easier for the general public to start their own earthworm projects at home.

Pieter van Zyl of Fresh Mark says “It is a privilege to leave the project in such capable hands as those of the Department of Agriculture: Western Cape, and we look forward to future collaboration.”

**Above (fltr)**: Mr Johan Marx (Cence), Mr Pieter van Zyl (Fresh Mark), Mr Marius Paulse (Department of Agriculture: Western Cape), Mr Marius Mostert (AfriStone) and Minister Gerrit van Rensburg visit the Worms that Work tunnelstructure at Elsenburg.

**To the left**: Mr Ernst Möller of the Department of Agriculture: Western Cape, shows Minister Gerrit van Rensburg how the earthworms go to work in the crates to recycle waste.
Training of FSD personnel in farm planning

by HJF Grobler, SAA, Eden

National food security in the RSA is primarily dependent on the optimal functioning of every farming operation. It is at farm level where all production resources must be planned and integrated in such a way that the operation produce optimally and this be sustained economically.

One of the objectives of the programme Farmer Support and Development, is to plan and establish viable land reform projects in the Western Cape. New projects need to be planned in such a way that the natural resources, infrastructure, biological systems, mechanisation and human resources be integrated into a sustainable plan for the proposed project with market accessibility.

To achieve this, officials need to have a good working knowledge of farm and economical planning. They must also be able to work in multidisciplinary teams and support project enterprises to function optimally in a dynamic climate, social and market environment. Management of Farmer Support and Development through the Extension Revitalisation programme, is capacitating its personnel to be able to function properly in this regard.

One of the elements of the process is to train personnel in whole farm planning. A course with practical workshops in farm planning was held during the 11th to the 15th October 2010 at Stellenbosch. Presenters from different programmes of the Department of Agriculture (Research and Development, Sustainable Resource Management, Economy and FSD), Department of Environmental Affairs and the private sector helped shaped officials’ planning and team working skills. Sixty five officials, mainly from FSD, attended the course. Observers from North West Province and NMMU Saasveld also attended.

The process of planning that was covered during the week is presented in Figure 1. The presented workshop is the first in a series of in-service training that is focussed on planning, evaluation and support of projects. AP
WHOLE FARM PLANNING: PHASES

PREPARATION

1. Gather all relevant Information & maps
   - Natural resources
   - Demographic
   - Labour
   - Farm Inventory

2. Situational Analyses
   - Efficiency
   - Physical
   - Biological
   - Economic
   - Financial

PHASE 1: LONG TERM PLANNING
 (>5 years)

1. NATURAL RESOURCE PLANNING
   - Divide arable/ non arable
   - Soil conservation works
   - Management units

2. CROP PLANNING
   - Crop production system
   - Choice of crops

3. LIVESTOCK PLANNING
   - Carrying Capacity
   - Livestock Enterprise(s)
   - Production systems

4. FARMING SYSTEM
   - Gross Margin
   - Fixed costs
   - Net Farm Income
   - Balance sheet / Income statement

PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING
 (3 to 5 years)

1. EXISTING FARM SYSTEM
   - Existing Land Use
   - Existing Stock
   - Infrastructure

2. CROP IMPLEMENTATION
   - Equipment
   - New Rotation system
   - Establish pastures

3. LIVESTOCK IMPLEMENTATION
   - Fencing
   - Stock watering
   - Handling Facilities
   - Buy stock
   - Dairy

4. MANAGEMENT INFO SYSTEM
   - Record keeping
   - Efficiency measures

5. PHASE IN FARMING SYSTEM
   - Cash Flow
   - Monitoring & Evaluation
   - Mentors
   - Control

PHASE 3: INPUT PLANNING
 (Production Season)

1. CROP INPUT PER LAND UNIT
   - Land Allocation
   - Land preparation
   - Planning yield
   - Mechanization
   - Fertilizers
   - Herba/Pesticides
   - Diesel
   - Harvest & Transport
   - SAFEX & Contracts

2. LIVESTOCK INPUT PLANNING
   - Feed & Health
   - Fodder & Stock Flow
   - Planting of pastures
   - Management program
   - Market & Price

3. WHOLE FARM PLANNING
   - Rotation & Stock Systems
   - Labour, Mechanization,
   - Production loans
   - Cash Flow & Income Statement
   - Record Keeping & Analyses

CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT OF PROPRIETOR / FARMER

Figure 1. Farm Planning Process covered in the course
Die tema vir Wêreldvoedseldag hierdie jaar was “verenig teen hongersnood” en hierdie tema is uitgeleef deur verskeie partye wat byeengekom het om die projek moontlik te maak. Die Departement van Landbou, Wes-Kaap en hul agentskap, Casidra is bygestaan deur die Nasionale Departement van Landelike Ontwikkeling, die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling, Wes-Kaap en die Eden Distriksmunisipaliteit. Die Wêreldvoedselbank het ook ‘n aansienlike bydrae gelewer.

Minister Gerrit van Rensburg het die gemeenskap toegespreek en uitgewys dat die Regering, deur landelike ontwikkeling, wil kyk na ingrypings wat die gemeenskap sal help om selfstandig en volhoubaar te floreer. Minister van Rensburg het gemaan dat dit belangrik is vir Dysselsdorp se gemeenskap om hande vat en saam te staan teen hongersnood.

Die Departement van Landbou het vanjaar reeds R320 000 beskikbaar gestel vir huistuine in Dysselsdorp. Die eerste 40 tuine is klaar aangelê, en dit gaan groei tot 200 tuine. Volgens Minister van Rensburg is “hierdie tuine die beginpunt waar die armstes van die armes in hierdie gemeenskap kan opstaan en sê: My lewe raak nie nou meer slegter nie. Ek het die draaipunt bereik, en van nou af gaan dinge met my beter gaan.”

Vervolgens het Minister van Rensburg ‘n kompetisie aangekondig vir die Dysselsdorp gemeenskap vir die beste tuin. Minister van Rensburg het gesê: “Ek dink dit is belangrik om erkenning te gee daar waar dit toekom. Hierdie huistuin verteenwoordig ‘n geleentheid vir mense om weer iets te hê waarop hulle kan trots wees”.

Wêreldvoedseldag is voorts gevier deur ‘n voedselberg wat geskenk is aan 3 organisasies in Dysselsdorp naamlik die ACVV Ouetehuis, die Poplap Creché en ‘n Tehuis vir Gestremdes. Voedsel, klere, boeke en speelgoed is bygedra deur personeel van die Departement van Landbou en verskeie ander organisasies en invidiue. AP
As part of the Batho Pele theme months of 2010, a choir competition was launched early in 2010 for the research farms of the Department. Three choirs entered the competition and after many weeks of dedicated practice, the first round of adjudication took place during August at each farm and the final round during November at Elsenburg. Members of the Public Service Commission also attended the final round and were not only impressed with this initiative, but also with the energy and enthusiasm of the choirs.

The panel of judges were unanimous in their vote - Oudtshoorn Choir was the winner of the 2010 Research Farm Choir Competition. Tygerhoek walked away with the second prize, whilst Langgewens was third. All choirs received a handcrafted wooden trophy and each choir member a CD of the Libertas choir and a golf cap with the words “Sing sing bly ons die beste!” As part of their prize, the winning choir also travelled to Cape Town on the weekend of the 13th of November to attend the opening of the musical Annie at the Artscape Theatre. Well done to all the choirs! AP
The Department of Agriculture, Western Cape, again hosted the annual Provincial Farm Worker of the Year event. Western Cape is the only province in South Africa to award kudos to farm workers, which is one of the cornerstones of the South African agricultural industry.

The competition has grown substantially in stature since its inception six years ago. A record number of 750 entrants cemented this competition as one of the flagship projects of the Department of Agriculture, Western Cape. The entrants represented 11 districts and 10 categories. A special category for horse trainers was also added. On top of the category winners, the Department also paid tribute to the farm worker with the most potential and then of course the overall Farm Worker of the Year, who is chosen from the 11 district winners.

The fantastic prizes, which complement the honour of winning, are obviously a big drawing card for entrants. SANLAM has been a partner for the past 6 years and has again contributed substantially towards the event this year. The University of Stellenbosch also came on board by sponsoring a study bursary for the overall winner. Dalene Turner kindly sponsored three short courses for three of the category winners.

Christo Somer, a cellar worker from Riebeek Kasteel Cellars in Riebeek Kasteel, was crowned as the Western Cape Farm Worker of the Year at Grant West Casino, Cape Town. He received a grant prize comprising of an overseas trip; a R20 000 study grant, as well as R20 000 in cash. Somer will also join the ranks of the Western Cape Prestige Farm Worker Forum; a body that meets directly with the Minister of Agriculture on issues affecting farm workers.

“Farm workers are very important for our Province, and this competition gives you the recognition you deserve”, Western Cape Premier, Helen Zille, said. She said the farm workers who entered the competition serve as an inspiration to the rest of our society.

Zille also reported on a meeting she had earlier in the year with the Prestige Farm Worker Forum. “The Forum is a body taken very seriously by this government. I was invited to tonight’s function, and also asked to organise a meeting between agriculture and the Provincial cabinet. That I have done, and my cabinet will meet with the agricultural sector on the 10th of November in the Worcester Town hall. The Forum also asked me to lobby National Government for the lifting of the moratorium on equity share schemes. That I have also done, and we are positive to see movement on this issue in the near future”.

Gerrit van Rensburg, Western Cape Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development said the competition is contributing towards improving the image of agriculture. “Farm workers have been the best ambassadors for agriculture this year”. Van Rensburg said he will continue to promote agriculture as an exciting and worthwhile career option through initiatives such as the Farm Worker Competition.

**Region** | **Winner**
--- | ---
Agri Klein Karoo | Samuel Meiring
Bergriver | Piet Faro
Hex Valley | Jan Maritz
Langeberg | Maggie Kuwala
Olifantsrivier | Susarah van Niekerk
Overberg | Florina Samson
Horse trainers | Gert Siemon, Jackson Mabali, Tom Qata
Piket Bo-Berg | Johannes van Wyk
Stellenbosch | Jeremy Arries
Swartland | Christo Somers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>WINNER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall winner</td>
<td>Swartland</td>
<td>Christo Somers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Worker</td>
<td>Piket Bo-Berg</td>
<td>Aletta Marcus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Worker</td>
<td>Langeberg</td>
<td>Edwin Mathambo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractor Driver</td>
<td>Langeberg</td>
<td>Klaas Waterboer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Personnel</td>
<td>Hex Valley</td>
<td>Deidre Malgas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Production</td>
<td>Overberg</td>
<td>Anthony Strydom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Operator</td>
<td>Hex Valley</td>
<td>Damon Jansen</td>
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<td>Irrigation Specialist</td>
<td>Hex Valley/Witzenberg</td>
<td>Jacob Morris/Hendrik Lakay</td>
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<td>Junior Management</td>
<td>Overberg</td>
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<td>Overberg</td>
<td>Adam Mouton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most Potential</td>
<td>Bergriver</td>
<td>Piet Faro</td>
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