



Sustainable agriculture for the future

September 2026

No 161

Women in Agriculture

Pioneers of Change

Women's Voice in Agriculture

Women Behind Plant Disease Diagnosis

Agroecology and Plant Genetic Heritage

Beyond Honey

2026 Jongboer Kompetisie Wenner

Noord-Wes

Gauteng

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Editorial

September is a season of renewal and reflection, and this month AgriAbout celebrates **Women in Agriculture**, recognising the women whose knowledge, leadership and determination are shaping the future of South African agriculture.

Our feature, **Women in Agriculture: Pioneers of Change**, explores their important role across the sector, while **Women's Voice in Agriculture** celebrates those driving growth and transformation. We also shine a spotlight on the **women behind plant disease diagnosis**, where Fahimeh Jami of ARC Plant Health and Protection demonstrates how expertise and dedication help protect crops and livelihoods.

This edition also explores the **impact of South Africa's Rhizobium Collection**, an important resource supporting plant health and productivity. Dr Matelele Lehlogonolo and Mr Fakude Sithembiso from the National Department of Agriculture highlight the value of **agroecology and our plant genetic heritage**, reminding us of the importance of safeguarding biodiversity.

Independent consultant Dr Ida Wilson encourages us to **rethink interventions in crop production**, while Dr Nontu Yanga of the University of Zululand explores how **beekeeping can strengthen household food security**.

We also celebrate some of this year's young farmer competition winners: **Joy van Deventer** (Agri North West), **Bertus Joubert** (TLU SA), **PN Basson** (Agri Gauteng) and **Rèan Clasen** (Agri Northern Cape). Their journeys reflect the passion, resilience and innovation driving the next generation of agriculture.

This September edition celebrates the women and young farmers shaping agriculture through knowledge, courage and commitment. Their stories remind us that agriculture is more than a profession, it is a calling that nourishes communities, preserves our heritage and cultivates a stronger future.

Until next time

Chris



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Women in Agriculture: Pioneers of Change

August 2026 marked a significant moment in South Africa's celebration of women, coinciding with Women's Month and the annual Women's Day on August 9. This year commemorated the 70th anniversary of the historic 1956 Women's March, a powerful symbol of resilience and leadership in the fight for equality. The national theme, "*Empowered Women Empower the Nation*," resonates deeply with the stories of Joy van Deventer, Lesego Mohube, and Marissa Solms, whose pioneering roles in agriculture embody this spirit of empowerment and transformation.

Their journeys reflect not only personal achievement but also the broader movement of women shaping the future of farming, business, and community in South Africa. This article honours their contributions within the context of a nation recognising the vital role women play in every sector, especially agriculture, where their impact is both profound and growing.

Women's role in agriculture has expanded dramatically over the past decade. Once working quietly behind the scenes, women now stand at the forefront: cultivating land, building businesses, driving research, and leading communities. Their contributions span the full spectrum of farming, from food production and agribusiness to sustainability and cultural preservation.

Joy van Deventer's recognition as the **Agri North West Young Farmer of the Year 2026** is a milestone. On her Berg en Dal flower farm near Brits, she cultivates chrysanthemums in eight tunnels across 3.5 hectares, producing

more than five million stems annually. Her operation blends controlled tunnel production with seasonal outdoor projects, ensuring year-round harvests. Flower farming at this scale demands meticulous hand planting and harvesting, supported by modern technology and international expertise. For Joy, precision agriculture is not a buzzword but a daily practice that nurtures biodiversity and keeps the soil healthy. Her success proves that women are not only able to compete but also to excel in a sector long dominated by men. Read about Joy's journey in this edition on p. 14 and in [AgriAbout 160](#)

In Gauteng, **Lesego Mohube** of Langzeekoeigat stood out as second runner-up in the Young Farmer competition. Her mixed farming operation, combining crops



Joy van Deventer



Lesego Mohube

and livestock, is rooted in strong community involvement. Lesego's work illustrates how women bridge the gap between commercial success and social impact. Her achievement highlights the growing diversity and inclusivity in agriculture, a clear sign that the sector is changing its face. Read about Lesego's journey in [AgriAbout 160](#).

Marissa Solms, a finalist in the TLU SA Young Farmer competition, adds yet another dimension. On her family-run Solms Farming enterprise near Utrecht in KwaZulu-Natal, she focuses primarily on Merino sheep, with careful attention to flock management, reproduction, lamb survival, and improving wool and meat quality. The farm also includes a growing cattle enterprise, managed sustainably. Marissa's philosophy blends tradition with innovation, and she is a strong voice for preserving culture and language within agriculture. Her story reminds us that farming is not only about production, but also about identity, heritage, and community. Read about Marissa's story in [AgriAbout 160](#).

Beyond competitions, women are making their mark as entrepreneurs who add value, from winemakers and olive producers boosting exports and tourism, to artisanal food entrepreneurs taking local products to international markets. They lead sustainability



Marissa Solms

projects that protect biodiversity, improve water management, and build climate resilience. In communities, they strengthen rural livelihoods through training, food security initiatives, and social programmes. In research, female scientists contribute to crop protection, genetics, and food safety, finding solutions to challenges such as climate change, pest control, and soil health.

Globally, women account for about 43% of the agricultural workforce, according to the FAO. In South Africa, they are responsible for much of small-scale food production, while increasingly participating in commercial farming and agribusiness. Access to land, finance, and technology remains a challenge, but the stories of Joy, Lesego, and Marissa show that these barriers can be overcome through innovation, networks, and determination.

Women in agriculture are not just participants; they are pioneers of change. From young farmers to entrepreneurs, researchers, and community leaders, they demonstrate that agriculture is a space where diversity and inclusivity shape the future. The **AgriAbout team** salutes all the women making their mark in agriculture. Their stories inspire us and remind us that sustainable farming is not only a technical challenge but also a social movement in which women play a vital role.

Women's Voice in Agriculture celebrates women driving innovation and growth

Hollard recently hosted the third edition of the Women's Voice in Agriculture competition. The initiative celebrates women whose work is helping to strengthen agriculture, from primary production and research to entrepreneurship, community upliftment, food security and sector development. It is an important platform for recognising the people and partnerships that help make agriculture more resilient, inclusive and connected.

As agriculture becomes more complex, the risks and opportunities facing the sector are increasingly interconnected. A challenge in one part of the agricultural value chain can affect production, logistics, market access, cash flow, employment and the communities that depend on the sector. This makes collaboration across the ecosystem more important than ever.

Andries Wiese, Head of Agriculture at Hollard Insure, said Women's Voice in Agriculture reflects the kind of connected thinking needed to support the sector's future. "Agriculture does not operate in a linear fashion. It is an

ecosystem of farmers, brokers, researchers, agribusinesses, communities, financiers, logistics partners and many others whose work is deeply connected. Our role is to understand those connections and help the sector navigate risk in a more informed, practical and sustainable way," said Wiese.

He said the women recognised through the competition bring insight and experience that can help the broader industry better understand how the sector is changing. "The women being celebrated here are helping the sector connect the dots between innovation and implementation, between risk and resilience and between commercial sustainability and community impact. Their work gives the industry a richer view of what agriculture needs now and what it will need next."

This is in line with the insurer's shared value approach: doing business in a way that creates meaningful impact for clients, partners and communities, while strengthening the sectors in which it operates.



Terryn Palani, Chief People Officer at Hollard, said the agricultural sector understands that nothing of value grows overnight. "Every field begins with someone preparing the soil, planting a seed, protecting something fragile and trusting that the seed which cannot be seen yet, will one day blossom into thriving vegetation. If we want to see more women leading the agriculture sector tomorrow, we must cultivate them today," said Palani.

The Women's Voice in Agriculture finalists were selected by an independent panel of adjudicators from thousands of entries. The entrants represented a broad spectrum of agricultural subsectors, ranging from commercial livestock farming to small-scale crop production.

Johann Pretorius, Director at Future Agri Perspective Group, explained the rationale behind the initiative and its vision to support the growth of women-led agricultural enterprises and initiatives.

"When I conceptualised the awards, I looked for like-minded organisations like Hollard who share my values of support the agricultural sector," Pretorius said. "Our partnership with Hollard was a meeting of minds and represented shared synergies between parties that seek to foster the development of the agricultural ecosystem."

An independent panel of adjudicators selected the top five finalists which were:

- Grietha Van Rensburg who presented on: *Rural safety and livestock theft*;
- Boniswa Kuhle Dlamini who presented on: *Farmer development*;
- Christel Basson who presented on: *Advocacy for rural development*;
- Carla Myburgh who presented on: *Leading the future of agriculture*; and
- Petru Fourie who represented on: *The invisible link (animal feed)*.

Petru Fourie was the third-place winner, followed by Christel Basson as the runner-up and Carla Myburgh as the overall winner. In accepting the accolade, Myburgh encouraged women entrepreneurs across the agricultural sector to use their influence to drive meaningful change.



"For my part, I intend to do exactly that. I will continue to champion women's inclusion and empowerment in agriculture while keeping my feet on the ground and my eyes on the horizon," said Myburgh.

Special recognition
The Women's Voice in Agriculture programme also honoured several leaders with Special Recognition Awards for their exceptional contribution to the advancement of South Africa's agricultural ecosystem. The recipients of the awards are:

- Rona Beukes – Economist, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- Wiana Louw – General Manager, Southern African Grain Laboratory (SAGL)
- Fhumulani Ratshitanga – Chief Executive Officer, Fruit South Africa
- Dr Renee Prins – Founder and Director, CenGen, and former Extraordinary Associate Professor, Department of Genetics, Stellenbosch University
- Annelize Crosby – Head of Legal Intelligence, Agbiz

Through initiatives such as Women's Voice in Agriculture, Hollard continues to support and celebrate the women whose leadership, innovation and determination are helping shape a stronger and more sustainable future for South African agriculture.

The Women Behind Plant Disease Diagnosis

Fahimeh Jami
ARC Plant Health and Protection

When a farmer notices unusual spots on leaves, dying branches, rotting fruit or plants that are suddenly declining, one important question immediately comes to mind: **What is causing my crops to die?**

The answer is not always straightforward. Plant health problems can have complex causes, and different pathogens, and sometimes environmental conditions, can produce very similar symptoms. An incorrect diagnosis can therefore lead to unnecessary treatments, wasted money and, in some cases, even further spread of a disease. This is where the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) plays an important role.

Supporting South African agriculture through plant health services

The ARC has a long-standing role in supporting South African agriculture through research, innovation and specialised scientific services. Plant health is an important part of this contribution.

The ARC's **Plant Health and Protection (ARC-PHP) campus** brings together expertise in areas that are essential for protecting crops and supporting agricultural production. Its services support farmers, agricultural industries, government and other stakeholders by contributing to the detection, identification and understanding of plant pests and pathogens, as well as plant disease management, surveillance and broader agricultural biosecurity.



Mycology team: Ms Thando Bhiya, Ms Tshiamo Phakalatsane, Ms Idah Ntuli & Dr Fahimeh Jami (left to right).



Dr Zwannda Nethavhani extracting DNA from an insect.



Dr Terry Reynolds trapping insects.



Ms Beth Grobbelaar identifying an insect.

Behind these specialised services are **29 women** scientists, researchers and technicians whose work helps turn observations and concerns from the field into reliable scientific information.

More than just looking at a sick plant

For farmers, a plant health problem often starts in the field or nursery. A crop may suddenly begin to decline, fruit may develop unusual symptoms, or trees that once appeared healthy may start dying.

Identifying the underlying cause, however, requires much more than simply looking at symptoms. At ARC-PHP, **specialised diagnostic teams work together to investigate plant health problems and identify the organisms responsible.**

The Mycology team specialises in fungal pathogens, Nematology in nematodes, Virology and Bacteriology in viral and bacterial pathogens, respectively, while Entomology focuses on the identification of different groups of insects.

Samples submitted for investigation can

include plant material, soil, water, fungal or bacterial cultures, and even biological products. Samples arriving from different crops and regions can also provide valuable information about the plant health challenges affecting South African agriculture.

The journey from a sample to a diagnosis can take time. The methods used depend on the organism being investigated. For example, fungal identification may begin with isolating the fungus from the plant material and growing it in the laboratory. This process can take two to three weeks. In many cases, microscopic characteristics alone are not sufficient to accurately identify a fungus, so further molecular testing is required. Molecular identification can take an additional week or more.

These careful steps help ensure that the result is based on scientific evidence rather than symptoms alone.

The result is a more reliable answer to one of the most important questions facing farmers:

- What exactly is causing the problem?
- Why an accurate diagnosis matter



Ms Magda Swart in a wheat field.



Ms Idah Ntuli and Ms Tshiamo Phakalatsane working on litchi samples.



Ms Robin Lyle catching a spider.



Dr Fahimeh Jami and Ms Maritha Schoeman investigating a macadamia tree.

In agriculture, treating a disease without knowing its cause can be costly. Different pathogens may require very different management approaches, while some plant health problems may not be caused by pathogens at all. Applying fungicides unnecessarily can increase production costs without solving the underlying problem.

An accurate diagnosis helps farmers and agricultural advisers make better-informed decisions, avoid unnecessary treatments and choose appropriate management strategies.

Early diagnosis can also be important when unusual or potentially serious pathogens are detected. Identifying a problem early provides an opportunity for the agricultural sector

to respond before a disease becomes more widespread.

For the diagnostic teams, therefore, every sample represents more than just a laboratory test. Behind every submission is a farmer, a crop, a business or an agricultural industry facing a real and often urgent problem.

The women behind the diagnosis

At the centre of this work are women scientists and technicians who contribute their expertise at every stage of the diagnostic process, from receiving and processing samples to interpreting results and providing meaningful scientific information.

Their work can involve a form of scientific detective work: following clues from symptoms observed in the field to the characteristics of an organism growing in the laboratory and then using specialised techniques to determine exactly what is responsible.

This work contributes to the early detection and identification of plant health problems.

It supports individual farmers while also contributing to the broader protection of crops and agricultural industries.

The journey from a diseased plant in a field to a laboratory diagnosis can involve many steps, but every accurate result begins with a question:

- What is causing the disease?
- Is it a pathogen?
- How serious is the threat?
- And what information is needed to make the right management decision?

For the women working within ARC-PHP's plant health services, answering these questions is part of their everyday work. Their contribution may not always be visible in the field, but it can have a direct impact on the people who work there. Through scientific expertise, specialised diagnostic services and careful investigation, they help farmers and the agricultural industry move from suspicion to certainty.

Because protecting plant health starts with understanding the problem, and the right diagnosis can make all the difference.



Ms Marika Van Der Merwe extracting RNA as part of her work on plant viruses.



Dr Fahimeh Jami investigating a papaya tree.



Agri Noord-Wes Jongboer van die Jaar 2026

Joy van Deventer

Toe Joy van Deventer se naam as **Agri Noord-Wes se Jongboer van die Jaar 2026** aangekondig is, was die atmosfeer gevul met trots, dankbaarheid en nederigheid. Vir Joy was dit erkenning vir jare se toewyding, innovasie en volharding. Die titel is nie net 'n persoonlike triomf nie, maar ook 'n simbool van die groeiende rol wat vroue speel in die vorming van SuidAfrika se landboutoekoms.

'n Bloeiende Blomboerdery

Op haar plaas, **Berg en Dal**, naby Brits, het Joy 'n krisantonderneming opgebou wat as maatstaf van uitnemendheid dien. Met 'n produksie van meer as **vyf miljoen stamme per jaar**, voorsien sy groot kleinhandelaars soos Woolworths en Pick 'n Pay, sowel as groothandelaars regoor die land. Haar uitvoere na die MiddeOoste en Afrikaeilande bewys



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SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

*Saam met ons jong boere,
bou ons aan die toekoms.*

VAN PLAASLIKE OORWINNING TOT NASIONALE VERTEENWOORDIGING



Ernst Brothers wens Joy van Deventer
hartlik geluk!

Wat begin het as 'n uitdaging om aan die Agri NW Jongboer van die Jaar-kompetisie deel te neem, het geëindig in 'n besondere oorwinning vir **Joy van Deventer**.

Joy het met haar kennis, passie vir landbou, harde werk en toewyding daarin geslaag om die kompetisie te wen. Hierdie prestasie is 'n merkwaardige erkenning van haar potensiaal en haar bydra tot die landboubedryf.

By **Ernst Brothers** is ons besonder trots om Joy se sukses te vier. Dit is vir ons 'n voorreg om deel te wees van haar landboureis en om haar deur ons ondersteuning te sien groei en presteer.



**VOLGENDE STOP:
DIE NASIONALE KOMPETISIE!**

Met hierdie oorwinning kry Joy nou die geleentheid om **Noordwes** op nasionale vlak te verteenwoordig. Dit is 'n onglooflike prestasie en 'n geleentheid waarop sy met groot trots kan voortbou.



Joy van Deventer
AGRINW JONGBOER
VAN DIE JAAR 2026 -
WENNER

*Joy, baie geluk met hierdie
werverdiende erkenning!*

Ons wens jou alle sterkte en sukses toe vir die nasionale kompetisie. Gaan verteenwoordig Noordwes met trots en wys weer wat 'n jong boer met passie, deursettingvermoeë en toewyding kan bereik.

**Ons glo hierdie is slegs die begin
van nog baie groot prestasies in jou landboureis.**

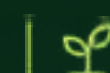
Ernst Brothers is trots op jou Joy!
Baie geluk en sterkte met die nasionale kompetisie!



*Noordwes
is trots op jou!*



BETER LANDBOU



STERKER JONG BOERE



'N VOLHOUBARE TOEKOMS



ERNST BROTHERS
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

dat SuidAfrikaanse blomme 'n mededingende internasionale voetspoor het.

Hierdie sukses spruit uit 'n reeks innovasies wat sy die afgelope vier jaar geïmplementeer het: kragtoevoer gestroomlyn van drie transformators na een, klimaatsbeheer in tunnels opgegradeer, grondmedia aangepas vir beter produksie, en 'n nuwe eenhektar buiteligprojek gevestig.

Filosofie van Sukses

Joy glo dat boerderysukses op drie pilare rus: **goeie bestuur, aanpasbaarheid en finansiële dissipline**. Sy beklemtoon dat boere bereid moet wees om tegnologie te omarm, voortdurend te leer en aan te pas by veranderende omstandighede. Haar benadering kombineer tradisionele harde werk met moderne presisieboerdery, wat haar onderneming mededingend en volhoubaar maak.

Haar raad aan jong boere is eenvoudig maar kragtig: *"Werk hard, bly leer en moenie bang"*



wees om risiko's te neem nie. Jy moet bereid wees om aan te pas, en bowenal passievol wees oor wat jy doen. Moet nooit opgee wanneer dinge moeilik raak nie."

Vroue in Landbou

Joy se oorwinning is 'n mylpaal vir vroue in landbou. In 'n sektor wat histories deur mans oorheers is, wys sy dat vroue nie net kan meeding nie, maar kan uitblink. Sy dien as rolmodel vir jong vroue wat 'n loopbaan in boerdery oorweeg en bewys dat passie en volharding struikelblokke kan oorwin.

Leierskap en Gemeenskap

Joy se betrokkenheid strek verder as haar plaas. Sy is 'n lid van **Agri Noordwes** en stigtervoorsitter van **Agri Bokfontein**, wat samewerking tussen plaaslike boere bevorder. Hierdie leierskap wys dat sy nie net 'n produsent is nie, maar ook 'n gemeenskapsbouer.

Terselfdertyd is sy 'n ma van drie jong seuns. Die balans tussen professionele leierskap en gesinslewe voeg 'n ander dimensie by haar visie van landbou as 'n lewenswyse en 'n nalatenskap.



Die Impak van Wen

Die titel het reeds nuwe deure vir Joy oopgemaak. Dit versterk haar boerdery se geloofwaardigheid, motiveer haar span om hoër te mik, en inspireer ander boere, veral vroue, om uitnemendheid na te streef. Sy beskryf die oorwinning as 'n bevestiging dat passie en volharding raakgesien word: *"Hierdie eer bevestig dat harde werk en toewyding nie ongesiens verbygaan nie. Dit motiveer my om groter te droom en ons boerdery na die volgende vlak te neem."*

Vir kopers, vennote en kollegas is die titel 'n teken van vertroue en uitnemendheid. Vir haar gemeenskap is dit 'n bron van trots. En vir haar familie is dit 'n herinnering dat toewyding en volharding merkwaardige resultate kan oplewer.

Identiteit en Nalatenskap

Joy se verhaal gaan nie net oor produksiesyfers of toekennings nie. Dit gaan oor identiteit, erfenis en gemeenskap. Vir haar is boerdery 'n lewenswyse wat geslagte verbind en



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Baie geluk, Joy!

Dynatrade wens **Joy van Deventer** hartlik geluk
met haar besondere prestasie as
Agri Noord-Wes Jongboer van die Jaar.

Ons is trots op ons jarelange werksverhouding,
gebou op vertroue, goeie kommunikasie en wedersydse respek.

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veerkragtigheid bou. Deur tradisie met innovasie te kombineer, verseker sy dat haar onderneming volhoubaar en vooruitstrewend bly.

Haar rol in Agri Bokfontein beklemtoon die belangrikheid van samewerking. Sy glo dat boere saam moet werk om die sektor te versterk en gemeenskappe te ondersteun.

Later vanjaar sal Joy Noord-Wes verteenwoordig as finalis in die **Toyota SA/Agri SA Nasionale Jongboer van die Jaarkompetisie**. Hierdie volgende fase van haar reis dra die hoop van haar streek en die inspirasie van ’n nasie. Ongeag die uitkoms, staan haar verhaal reeds as ’n baken van moderne SuidAfrikaanse landbou: innoverend, volhoubaar en inklusief.

Die **AgriAboutspan dra hul gelukwense oor aan Joy van Deventer** met haar uitmuntende prestasie. Haar verhaal van passie, innovasie en volharding is ’n inspirasie vir jongboere regoor SuidAfrika.

Multi Plant
a perfect start



Baie geluk
Joy van Deventer
Agri Noord-Wes Jongboer van die jaar.

Multi Plant is trots om met jou onderneming geassosieer te word.



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Baie geluk!



Joy van Deventer
Agri Noordwes Jongboer van die jaar

Congratulations!



Your story matters



Joy van Deventer

on being named Agri Noordwes Jongboer van die Jaar 2026!

This is an achievement in full bloom.

Your dedication to chrysanthemum farming and contribution to the sector make this a moment worth celebrating.

Gerhard Heinlein

on your well-deserved recognition of TLU SA Jongboer van die Jaar 2026 runner-up!

From crops and livestock to game, your dedication across a diverse farming operation reflects your commitment to the sector.



Bertus Joubert
TLU SA Jongboer van die jaar

Absa AgriBusiness is proud to share this special achievement with you.

Baie sterkte met die nasionale beoordeling.



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MADRAIS

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KAMPIOEN

BAIE GELUK!



TLU SA Jongboer van die Jaar 2026:

Bertus Joubert

Bertus Joubert is tydens 'n gala-aand as **TLU SA se Jongboer van die Jaar 2026** aangekondig. Vir Bertus, stigter en uitvoerende direkteur van **JSA Farms (Pty) Ltd**, het die titel bevestig dat sy harde werk en deursettingsvermoë erken word.

Hy beskryf die oomblik so: "Dit het onwerklik gevoel. Ek was voorbereid vir tweede of derde plek omdat ek geweet het die kompetisie was baie sterk. Om as wenner uit te kom, is 'n groot eer en 'n bevestiging van die pad wat ek moes loop."

'n Boerdery uit niks opgebou

Bertus het JSA Farms van die grond af opgebou. Vandag strek sy boerdery oor pluimvee, saaiery, vee, skape, wild, lusern, groente en 'n Brahmaan stoet. In die afgelope drie jaar het hy 'n nuwe plaas ontwikkel wat nou 'n lêhenne-eenheid van 70 000 hennes huisves, volledig op sonkrag en toegerus met wêreldklastegnologie.

Hierdie prestasie wys dat die titel nie net oor produksie gaan nie, maar oor visie en innovasie. Bertus se boerdery is 'n toonbeeld van moderne landbou wat tegnologie en volhoubaarheid kombineer.

Innovasie en Tegnologie

Sy hoenderhokke is toegerus met die nuutste klimaatbeheer en outomatiseringstegnologie uit Europa, wat aanlyn gemonitor kan word. Hy gebruik GPSstelsels vir presisieplant, hommeltuie vir bespuitings, en outomatiese pompe wat waterbehoefte bestuur. Hierdie



stelsels maak sy boerdery meer doeltreffend en volhoubaar.

Vir Bertus is tegnologie nie 'n luukse nie, maar 'n noodsaaklikheid. "Jy moet jou boerdery beplan, jou opsies oorweeg, en soveel raad as moontlik kry. Dan moet jy dit uitvoer tot die beste standaard moontlik. En wanneer tye moeilik raak, moet jy onthou dit gaan ook verby."

Filosofie en Gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid

Bertus glo dat sukses gebou word op beplanning, uitvoering en geloof. Hy hou vas aan die oortuiging dat boerdery 'n roeping is, en dat vertroue in die Here sy pad rig.

Hy is ook betrokke by sy gemeenskap. JSA Farms borg plaaslike landbou en veiligheidsorganisasies en help instansies wat fondse of kos benodig. Hy stel werkgeleenthede beskikbaar aan mense uit sy eie gemeenskap en sien dit as sy roeping om terug te gee. "Ek is baie geseënd deur die Here, en om daar te wees vir ander mense



JONGBOER VAN DIE JAAR

Kampioene kies
Kampioene!

Bertus Joubert

(Hartbeesfontein, Noordwes)

Namens Dfert wens ons vir Bertus Joubert baie geluk – hy is as die TLU SA Jongboer van die Jaar 2026 aangewys.

Bertus Joubert (links) saam met min. Willie Aucamp (regs).



is vir seker die eintlike doel van alles wat ons doen."

Die Impak van Wen

Die titel van Jongboer van die Jaar bring geloofwaardigheid aan sy relatief jong boerdery. Dit gee hom 'n platform om sy visie te deel en ander jongboere te inspireer. Vir Bertus is dit 'n bevestiging dat sy boerdery op die regte pad is en dat daar ruimte is vir verdere groei.

Hy sê: "My volgende doelwitte is om die reeds sterk basis waaruit my besigheid bestaan te verbeter en te groei. Ek wil 'n voorbeeld stel vir medeboere en meer betrokke raak by georganiseerde landbou en instansies wat elke dag werk om 'n verskil te maak."

Pryse en Borge

As wenner ontvang Bertus die gebruik van 'n BYD Shark bakkie vir 'n jaar, geborg deur Hatfield Motor Group, asook 'n tegnologieborgskap van iNspexia Systems. Hierdie pryse versterk sy vermoë om sy boerdery verder te ontwikkel en nuwe geleenthede aan te gryp.

Die AgriAboutspan dra hul gelukwense oor aan Bertus Joubert

met sy aanwysing as TLU SA se Jongboer van die Jaar 2026. Bertus se wen is meer as 'n titel. Dit is 'n bewys dat 'n boerdery wat uit niks opgebou is 'n toonbeeld van moderne landbou kan word. Hy is 'n waardige wenner en 'n rolmodel vir die volgende geslag.

Agroecology and South Africa's Plant Genetic Heritage

Dr Matelele Lehlogonolo & Mr Fakude Sithembiso
National Department of Agriculture, Directorate Genetic Resources,
National Plant Genetic Resources Centre.

Preserving crop diversity today to build a more resilient food system tomorrow

A seed may look small, but it carries an enormous inheritance. Within it lies genetic potential that farmers may need tomorrow to cope with drought, heat, pests, diseases, poor soils, and changing markets. For generations, South African farmers have selected, saved, exchanged, and planted seeds suited to local conditions, helping maintain an extraordinary agricultural heritage.

This heritage includes traditional crop varieties, farmer-selected landraces, indigenous vegetables and neglected and underutilized crops. Together, these plant genetic resources are a reservoir of diversity that can contribute to food security, nutrition, climate adaptation, and future crop improvement.

Yet this diversity is under pressure. The replacement of locally adapted varieties with a narrower range of commercial varieties, changing farming practices, urbanization, environmental degradation, and the loss of traditional knowledge can contribute to genetic erosion.

The question is therefore not simply to preserve seeds, but to **keep useful diversity alive in farmers' fields and in the hands of the people who use it.**

This is where agroecology can make an important contribution.

Keeping diversity alive on the farm

Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) are the genetic material of crops and their wild relatives that can be used for food, agriculture, and crop improvement. They include modern varieties, traditional varieties, landraces, and other genetic materials containing traits of value to agriculture.

Some of these resources are conserved **ex situ**, in seed banks and gene banks under others are conserved **on farm**, where farmers grow, select, exchange, and adapt crop varieties within their agricultural environments. On-farm conservation keeps a variety in use and allows farmer-led selection to respond to local conditions and needs

South African farming communities have historically helped maintain sorghum, pearl millet, cowpea, Bambara, groundnut, amadumbe, indigenous leafy vegetables and locally adapted maize varieties. These farmers are more than producers. They are custodians of agricultural biodiversity.

So, what is agroecology?

Agroecology brings ecological thinking into farming. It seeks to work with natural processes rather than treating the farm as a system dependent only on external inputs. It places emphasis on biodiversity, healthy soils, efficient use of water, ecological interactions, local knowledge, and farmer participation.



Figure 1: Agroecological practices

Agroecology should not be understood as simply “farming without chemicals”. Rather, it is an approach to designing agricultural systems that use diversity and ecological processes to improve resilience and sustainability. This makes it highly relevant to the conservation of plant genetic resources.

Five ways agroecology can protect crop diversity

Agroecology can create a positive chain of benefits that begins with farming in harmony with nature and ends with more resilient and nutritious food systems. The pathway below (Figure 2) illustrates how these elements are connected:



Figure 2: Agroecology pathway from crop diversity to climate resilience and food and nutrition security



1. Diversity becomes an asset, not a burden

One of the strongest principles of agroecology is diversification. Diversification reduces dependence on a single crop or genetic solution. Different crops and varieties may respond differently to drought, heat, pests, or diseases.

For example, one maize landrace may perform better during drought, while sorghum may tolerate dry conditions and leafy vegetables may provide micronutrients. Maintaining this diversity creates options.

If one crop or variety performs poorly, another may still provide food, seed, or income. This is particularly important in an era of climate uncertainty.

2. Local varieties can contribute to climate resilience

Climate change is making agricultural production increasingly unpredictable. Farmers are dealing with changing rainfall patterns, prolonged dry periods, higher temperatures, extreme weather events and shifting pest and disease pressures.

Some traditional varieties and landraces have been maintained precisely because they perform under difficult local conditions. They may possess characteristics such as drought tolerance, heat adaptation, early maturity, pest tolerance, or the ability to produce under low-input conditions.

These characteristics are valuable not only to farmers growing the varieties today, but potentially to future crop improvement programmes.

When farmers continue to plant, select and save seed, they help maintain genetic variation that can respond to local environmental pressures. In this sense, **on-farm conservation is also a form of climate adaptation.**

3. Farmer-managed seed systems keep diversity moving

A seed that is stored but never planted may be conserved, but a seed that is planted, selected, exchanged, and improved by farmers remains part of a living agricultural system.

Farmer-managed seed systems include household seed saving, farmer-to-farmer exchange, local seed production, and community seed banks. These systems can be particularly important in areas where farmers have limited access to a wide range of commercial planting materials.

Community seed banks can complement the national gene bank by helping communities conserve and access locally important crop diversity close to where it is used.

South Africa’s National Plant Genetic Resources Centre also has a key role in conserving crop diversity and making genetic resources available for research, breeding, and other appropriate uses. The Department of Agriculture’s mandate includes the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The strongest system is therefore not one that chooses between gene banks and farmers’ fields. It is one that **connects them.**

A seed conserved in a gene bank can potentially return to farmers when needed, while farmers’ knowledge and locally maintained diversity can inform national conservation and research programmes.

4. Indigenous and underutilised crops can strengthen food and nutrition security

South Africa has a wide range of crops that have historically received less attention than major commercial commodities.

Bambara, groundnut, cowpea, sorghum, pearl millet, amadumbe, Jugo bean and indigenous leafy vegetables are examples of crops that can contribute to diversified diets and farming systems.

These crops should not be viewed simply as “traditional foods”. They can be strategic agricultural resources.

Many are suited to local environments, have cultural significance and can provide food when other crops are under stress. Growing them can also help preserve associated knowledge about cultivation, harvesting, processing, preparation, and seed selection.

If consumer demand for nutritious indigenous foods increases, these crops can also create new opportunities for farmers, processors, and entrepreneurs.

Conservation and economic use can therefore reinforce each other.

5. Healthy agroecosystems support healthy crop diversity

Crop diversity does not exist in isolation. It depends on functioning agricultural ecosystems.

Agroecological practices that improve soil health, conserve water, reduce erosion and encourage natural pest regulation can support diverse farming systems. This creates an important shift in thinking. Conservation does not have to mean taking agricultural land out of production. Conservation can happen through sustainable production.

When farmers grow diverse crops sustainably, they can produce food while simultaneously

maintaining genetic resources for the future.

Farmers are the custodians and innovators of diversity

The role of farmers deserves recognition. For generations, farmers have experimented with seed, selected plants, adapted production practices and exchanged knowledge, creating much of today’s crop diversity.

Women have often played important roles in seed selection, storage, food processing, and the maintenance of traditional crop varieties, while young farmers are essential to carry this knowledge forward.

Farmers should not simply be recipients of agricultural technologies. They should be partners in research, variety selection, seed multiplication, seed fairs, local markets, and participatory plant breeding.

What can farmers do?

Agroecology and on-farm conservation do not necessarily require farmers to transform their entire farming system overnight.

Practical steps can start small as shown in figure 3.



Figure 3: Practical steps for farmers

The aim is not to reject modern agriculture or commercial varieties, but to ensure that **modern agriculture does not come at the cost of losing the diversity needed in the future.**

A policy opportunity for South Africa

The conservation of crop diversity is receiving renewed attention nationally and internationally.

South Africa deposited its instrument of accession to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) in December 2024, becoming the 154th Contracting Party. The Treaty recognises the importance of conserving and sustainably using plant genetic resources and acknowledges the contribution of farmers and local communities to agricultural biodiversity.

South Africa also has a National Plan on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which identifies on-farm management as an important action, including expanded on-farm conservation, farmer participation, and community seed banks.

The National Agroecology Framework, published in 2025, provides further policy support for strengthening agroecological approaches in South African agriculture. Together, these developments connect biodiversity, climate resilience, sustainable production.

These developments create an opportunity to bring several priorities together: agricultural biodiversity, climate resilience, sustainable production, food and nutrition security, farmer knowledge, and sustainable seed systems.

From seed banks to living seed banks

South Africa should continue investing in national and other forms of ex-situ conservation. Seed banks and gene banks provide an essential safety net against genetic loss. But a seed bank cannot replace a farmer's field.

A variety growing in a farmer's field is being evaluated by real environmental conditions. It is being selected, used, exchanged, cooked, eaten, and evaluated. It is a **living seed bank**.



The future therefore lies in strengthening the relationship between ex-situ conservation and on-farm conservation, with research, government, extension services, markets, and communities supporting farmers' seed systems.

The seed we save today is an investment in tomorrow

South Africa's agricultural future will depend not only on higher yields, but also on enough diversity to respond when conditions change. The future drought may require a trait in a traditional sorghum variety; a disease may require genetic resistance preserved in a landrace; and future breeders may need genetic material that farmers maintain today.

Agroecology provides an opportunity to make conservation part of everyday farming by placing biodiversity, farmer knowledge, and ecological resilience at the heart of production. The choice is not between conservation and productivity.

The opportunity is to build farming systems in which **conservation supports productivity, and productivity provides an incentive for conservation.**

Every seed saved, every local variety planted and every piece of traditional knowledge passed to the next generation helps keep South Africa's agricultural heritage alive.

The seed may be small, but its contribution to the future of farming could be enormous.

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Impact of South Africa's Rhizobium Collection

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The South African Rhizobium Culture Collection (SARCC) is a national public good asset curated by the Biological Nitrogen Fixation (BNF) unit, under the Plant Microbiology division of the ARC-Plant Health and Protection campus in Pretoria, South Africa. The establishment of the SARCC goes back to the 1960s when a comprehensive research programme was started to exploit the nodule-bacterium-legume symbiosis at the then Plant Protection Research Institute (PPRI) in collaboration with the University of Pretoria. This led to the establishment of the biological nitrogen fixation (BNF) unit in 1965 (Strijdom, 1998), which shortly launched the start of the South African Rhizobium Culture Collection (SARCC). It is the only locally and internationally recognized collection that hosts and maintains several strains of rhizobia species in South Africa. The SARCC has long been considered the cornerstone of the legume industry as it is the main source of legume-rhizobium inoculant strains, particularly for the commercial production of agriculturally important legume.

This asset is a key resource for South Africa's agriculture as it maintains and provides rhizobia, for use in the production of legume inoculants, natural biofertilizers that help legume crops grow better without the need for harmful external input of chemical fertilizers. These soil bacteria symbiotically fix atmospheric nitrogen (N_2) in the root nodules of several legumes making it available for plants to absorb and use it for their growth and metabolism.

Beneficiaries of SARCC

Who benefits from SARCC? Well, it is a combination of commercial farmers, small-

scale farmers, researchers, and students. Universities use the collection for research, and to improve farming practices. Students also benefit by working with the strains, gaining valuable experience for future jobs in science and agriculture. Since its establishment, the SARCC has supplied, pure strains of rhizobia culture for the commercial production and formulation of legume inoculants to several manufacturer companies, including Stimuplant Pty Ltd, MBFI Pty Ltd, Microbial Solutions Pty Ltd, Metson Manufacturing Pty Ltd, Biocult Pty Ltd, Siena Bionatec Pty Ltd, Rizobacter SA Pty Ltd, Soygro Pty Ltd and many others. The South African Rhizobium Culture Collection (SARCC) also helps smallholder farmers grow more nutritious and affordable food, which means better prices and food quality in stores. By supplying elite rhizobia strains to stakeholders, the SARCC supports eco-friendly farming which reduces the usage of chemical fertilizers, helps protect South Africa's land and water, and provides a healthier environment for everyone. In this regard, adopting rhizobia strains in legume production systems by farmers and other stakeholders will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, supporting South Africa's Climate Change Act 22 of 2024.

Significance and impact of the SARCC

The SARCC makes it easier for farmers to access environmentally friendly bioinoculants or biofertilizers for their legume crops. The SARCC currently hosts close to 5000 strains of bacteria, the majority of which are nitrogen-fixing rhizobia. In recent years, the collection started to expand its holdings from maintaining mere nitrogen-fixing rhizobia in legumes, to different strains of free-living beneficial microbes collectively known as plant growth-



Figure 1. The SARCC facilities and maintenance activities. Viable cultures (A), frozen and freeze-dried cultures of bacteria (B, C & D). Laboratory facilities (E & F) and maintenance of bacterial cultures and research activities (G & H)). Photo by Hassen AI (2026).

promoting rhizobacteria (PGPR). The PGPRs are known for their plant growth-promoting activities to improve the yield and qualities of several other crops in addition to legumes.

Through prolonged research on the nodulation competitiveness and nitrogen fixation efficacy, several rhizobia strains have been screened in the past and developed as commercial inoculants as biofertilizers. Since its establishment as SARCC, fifteen rhizobia strains from the collection were screened, developed and commercialized locally for use as inoculants in the cultivation of legumes including soybean (strain WB74), cowpea (strain XS21), lucerne (strain RF14), beans (strain UD5), peas (TJ14) and a number of other food and forage legumes.

Challenges

The SARCC faces some challenges, such as the availability of sufficient information about the origin and properties of the rhizobia strains collected decades ago. In other words, the asset's database is one of the weakest links since, due to incomplete metadata information for most of the strains collected in the 1960 – 1990s, it makes it hard to fully tap into their potential. The collection also lacks some vital equipment such as a freeze dryer used in the long-term preservation of its holdings and depends on ultra-low freezers

(-80°C) and routine maintenance of the strains that includes regular thawing and freezing. Maintaining and servicing equipment, along with ensuring a steady supply of essential materials for culture preservation, remains a crucial aspect of sustaining the collection's operations.

Financial support for SARCC

The SARCC relies heavily on support from organizations such as the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the Department of Agriculture (DoA), which provide funding for its maintenance.

What is needed?

Looking ahead, SARCC could benefit from greater collaboration with international partners and more investment in research and equipment. Improving processes by acquiring better equipment, such as a freeze-drying machine, would make it easier to preserve strains for longer. Expanding storage by adding a cold room would solve the problem of limited space and allow for more samples. Adding more staff to the current team would improve how the strains are managed. This would help South African farmers and promote sustainable agriculture for generations to come. Regarding the up grading of the SARCC database, more work is needed to strengthen alliance with the World Data Centre for Microorganisms (WDCM),

the data base link of the World Federation of Culture Collections (WFCC). In this regard, effort is being made to develop a new SARCC homepage to link the collections to the database of the Global Catalogue of Microorganisms (GCM).

Conclusion

The South African Rhizobium Culture Collection is an important resource for improving sustainable farming in South Africa. Even though it makes a big difference, SARCC faces some challenges that could hold it back. If the South African Rhizobium Culture Collection (SARCC) is not properly maintained and loses its capacity as a public good asset and in its ability to conduct research using these assets, it would have a big impact on farming and food security in South Africa.

Without SARCC, many farmers, especially small-scale ones, would have limited access to affordable and sustainable soil fertility solutions. Given that chemical fertilizers are often too expensive for small-scale farmers, SARCC provides an essential alternative for improving soil health and crop productivity. It would also slow down important research, as universities and scientists use SARCC's collection to study ways to improve crops production and make farming more sustainable. Additionally, SARCC helps develop bacteria that can survive in dry conditions, so without it, farmers would have fewer tools to deal with droughts and climate change.

Finding more funding, upgrading equipment, and improving data management will help SARCC keep supporting farmers and improving food security. This article gives readers a look at why SARCC matters and how it helps with sustainable agriculture. It is aimed at farmers, researchers, policymakers, and anyone interested in farming.

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From Symptoms to Systems:

PART 6

Rethinking Interventions

Dr Ida Wilson
Independent Crop Production Consultant

In every crop production system, there are limits. These limits are not always visible, and they are not always where assumed. Yet they play a defining role in crop performance. No matter how well a system is managed, outcomes are shaped by its constraints. Understanding these constraints is essential.

Inputs vs. Constraints

Crop management often focuses on optimising inputs: fertiliser for nutrition, irrigation for water, crop protection for pests and diseases. These interventions are important, but they are often applied without fully understanding what is limiting the system. Adding more inputs does not necessarily improve performance.

A crop cannot use extra nutrients if root function is impaired. More irrigation will not help if soil structure blocks water movement. Crop protection may reduce symptoms but not resolve underlying stress. In these cases, the system is limited not by what is added, but by what prevents it from functioning.

Soil Constraints

Constraints often exist below the soil surface. Soil compaction restricts roots, limits water infiltration, and reduces oxygen availability. From above, crops may appear uneven or stunted, leading to more fertiliser or irrigation. But if roots cannot explore soil, interventions have limited impact.

Example: Wheat Field

In a wheat field with variable emergence, fertiliser may improve overall growth, but compacted areas continue to underperform. Variability persists because the constraint remains.

Water Constraints

Water can limit growth in multiple ways. Too little reduces growth; too much saturates soils, reduces oxygen, impairs roots, and favours soil borne pathogens.

Water quality adds further constraints. High salts or imbalanced composition interfere with nutrient uptake and plant health. In orchards, poorly drained soils may be the cause declining vigour. In response, though,

fertilisation is intensified, yet the real issue is persistent malnutrition. Chronic exposure to brackish water restricts nutrient uptake through osmotic stress and ion imbalance.

Nutrient Constraints

It should be considered that nutrient deficiencies do not always reflect absence in soil. They may reflect limitations in availability or uptake—affected by pH, moisture, microbes, and root health. Extra fertiliser may improve appearance temporarily, but if the constraint remains, the problem persists.

Nutrient oversupply can be just as limiting. Elevated nitrogen drives excessive vegetative growth, often weakening structural integrity and reducing resilience. This increases vulnerability to disease. The constraint shifts—from shortage to imbalance.

Biological Constraints

Pests and pathogens are often misinterpreted as the primary problem. Stress makes crops more vulnerable. Once established, pests and diseases further weaken plants, reinforcing the original constraint. Biological pressure is both symptom and driver.

Repeated interventions can introduce new constraints. Resistance in weeds, insects, and pathogens is a clear example. Control measures lose reliability, which increase management complexity.

Environmental Constraints

Temperature extremes, irregular rainfall, and shifting seasons influence system function. These cannot be controlled, but they interact with soil, water, and plant conditions.

A high-temperature period may increase stress, making crops more vulnerable to disease. If combined with humidity, disease pressure rises further. If soil or water constraints already exist, the potential impacts of pathogens are amplified.

Multiple and Shifting Constraints

Constraints rarely occur in isolation. A single field may face soil compaction, uneven water, impaired nutrient uptake, and favourable disease conditions simultaneously. Each interacts, making single-point interventions less effective.

Constraints also shift over time. Early-season soil and root development may dominate. Later, water or disease pressure may become more significant. In both instances, management decisions influence how constraints evolve throughout the growing cycle.

Changing the Focus

Recognising constraints changes management focus. Instead of asking how to maximise inputs, the question becomes: what is limiting the system, and how can that limitation be reduced?

This requires looking beyond symptoms, considering system function, and prioritizing it. Not all constraints can be addressed at once. Identifying the most significant limitation allows more effective resource use.

Practical Approaches

Improving performance relies on accurate identification of constraints. Enhancing soil structure may deliver greater benefit than more fertiliser. Managing crop residues as well as crop rotation can improve soil health and pest dynamics, addressing multiple limitations at once.

Although these changes may not produce instant results, they influence the system toward more consistent performance over time.

Navigating Complexity

Understanding constraints does not eliminate complexity. It provides a way to navigate it. By identifying limitations and recognising interactions, decisions align more closely with how the system functions. This does not guarantee perfect outcomes, but it improves the likelihood of stable, predictable results.

In the next edition of AgriAbout, I discuss how working with the system can reduce crop vulnerability.

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Read PART 7 (**Working with the System**) in the next edition of **AgriAbout**

Agri Gauteng Jongboer van die Jaar 2026:

PN Basson

Toe Petrus Nicolaas “PN” Basson van Janelda Boerdery naby Bronkhorstspuit as Gauteng se Jongboer van die Jaar 2026 aangewys is, was dit ’n besondere oomblik. Sy vader was Gauteng se eerste Jongboer van die Jaar in 2005 en twee dekades later het PN dié prestasie herhaal.

Vir PN is die toekenning ’n bevestiging van sy filosofie dat landbou ’n roeping is wat innovasie, dissipline en gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid vereis. “Om my pa se nalatenskap voort te sit, is ’n groot eer, maar ook ’n verantwoordelikheid om verder te bou,” sê hy.

’n Geïntegreerde boerdery

Janelda Boerdery is ’n familieonderneming met meer as 235 000 lêhenne, 1 250 hektaar graan, Eragrostis-hooi en beeste. Die vertakkings vorm ’n geïntegreerde stelsel waarin elkeen die ander ondersteun.

PN gebruik presisieboerdery en werk saam met kundiges van Agri Technovation en Bayer se Innovation Squad. GPS-stelsels, opbrengsmonitering en gevorderde pluimveebestuur ondersteun sy fokus op doeltreffendheid en innovasie.

Finansiële dissipline en volhoubaarheid

Met sy agtergrond in bestuursrekeningkunde speel PN ’n aktiewe rol in die boerdery se finansiële bestuur. Moderne stelsels en deeglike kontantvloei-beplanning verseker verantwoordelike uitbreiding.



Volhoubaarheid is ewe belangrik.

Geenbewerking, hoendermis en kompos bevorder grondgesondheid, terwyl energie-doeltreffende henuise en ’n sonplaaas koste en die omgewingsimpak verminder. “As jy die grond oppas, sal die grond jou oppas,” sê PN.

Leierskap en gemeenskap

PN ondersteun plaaslike veiligheidstrukture en radiokommunikasienetwerke en is betrokke by brandbestryding en fondsinsameling vir die plaaslike skool. Vir hom gaan boerdery nie net oor produksie nie, maar ook oor die bou van sterk gemeenskappe.

Die titel het Janelda Boerdery se profiel en geloofwaardigheid verder versterk. PN

sien dit egter as ’n verantwoordelikheid om voortdurend te verbeter: “Jy moet altyd vra: Hoekom doen ek wat ek doen? Is daar ’n beter manier?”

Later vanjaar verteenwoordig hy Gauteng in die Toyota SA/Agri SA Nasionale Jongboer van die Jaar-kompetisie.

Die **AgriAbout-span** wens PN Basson geluk met sy uitmuntende prestasie. Sy verhaal van innovasie, finansiële dissipline, volhoubaarheid en gemeenskapsleierskap is ’n inspirerende voorbeeld van moderne Suid-Afrikaanse landbou.

Jongboer van die Jaar 2026

Réan Clasen:

Toe sy naam tydens die gala-aand van 26 Augustus 2026 as wenner van die Agri Noord-Kaap Jongboercompetisie aangekondig is, het Réan Daniel Clasen 'n knop in sy keel gehad. "Ek het glad nie verwag dat ek as wenner aangekondig sou word nie. Dit was 'n groot eer en ek het net 'n gevoel van dankbaarheid ervaar," vertel hy nederig.

'n Jong gesin en 'n groeiende boerdery
Réan is 34 jaar oud, getroud met Kristen, en pa van klein Kara van sewe maande. Nog 'n kleinding is oppad. Saam vorm hulle die hart van Kleinplaas Boerdery, 'n pekanneut- en wingerdonderneming op die oewer van die Oranjerivier. Die gesin is aktief betrokke: Kristen hanteer die lone en ligter take, sy ouers help met finansies en administrasie,



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JONGBOER VAN DIE JAAR

VDC Raisins wens **Réan Clasen** hartlik geluk met sy aanwysing as **Jongboer van die Jaar – Noord-Kaap 2026**.

Hierdie besondere prestasie is 'n weerspieëling van jou toewyding, harde werk, deeglike beplanning, aanpasbaarheid, passie vir landbou en sterk geloof.

Ons is trots daarop dat Réan en sy familie deel vorm van die VDC-produzentefamilie en dat hul boerdery jaar ná jaar 'n uitsonderlike produk lewer.

Dit is produsente soos Réan wat bydra tot die gehalte, integriteit en volhoubare groei van die Noord-Kaapse rosyntjiebedryf.

Baie geluk ook aan oom Réan en tannie Estelle, Kristen en klein Kara – hierdie prestasie dra die handafdruk van 'n familie wat saam bou, ondersteun en vorentoe kyk.

Réan, ons is trots om hierdie mylpaal saam met jou te vier en wens jou alle sukses toe met die pad vorentoe, VDC Raisins.



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wens met sy besondere prestasie.
Hierdie toekenning is 'n welverdiende erkenning van Réan
se harde werk, toewyding en passie vir landbou.

KLK is trots om die pad saam met sy
boerdery te stap!



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Innovasie en ontwikkeling

Sedert hy die plaas 14 jaar gelede begin ontwikkel het, het Réan self die bome en wingerde geplant, geboue en droogfasiliteite opgerig, paaie en heinings gebou. Hy het moderne tegnologie geïmplementeer: presisie-data, probes, drones, grondklassifikasiekaarte en sagteware. Veiligheidskameras en volhoubare praktyke soos dekgewasse, kompos, minimale gifosaat en waterbesparing is deel van sy benadering.

“Ek wil maksimum opbrengste behaal op huidige blokke en nuwe grond ontwikkel. Ek wil ook meer werk skep en die boerdery uitbrei,” sê hy oor sy tienjaarvisie.

Gemeenskap en betrokkenheid

Réan se betrokkenheid strek verder as sy plaasgrense. Hy is deel van die plaaslike boerevereniging se bestuur en reël fondsinsamelings soos veldskietdae, danse en potjiekosgeleenthede. Hy het sokkertoernooie vir plaaswerkerspanne gereël, ondersteun 'n sopkombuis en



terwyl Réan self die daaglikse bestuur en ontwikkeling van die plaas se besproeiing en infrastruktuur lei. “Ek het grootgeword op 'n melkplaas in die Oos-Kaap en van kleins af geweet ek gaan boer. Ek hou van buite wees, ek hou daarvan om iets op te bou en te kan sien wat jy doen. Ek het 'n passie vir plante, die natuur en vir mense,” sê hy.

Filosofie van boerdery

Vir Réan is drie eienskappe ononderhandelbaar vir sukses: volhoubaarheid, winsgewendheid en goeie menseverhoudinge. Hy glo dat boerdery nie net oor opbrengs gaan nie, maar oor die verhoudings wat jy bou. “Ek sit tyd in om verhoudings met werknemers te bou en probeer sosiale welstand by werkers ontwikkel,” verduidelik hy. Sy grootste uitdagings? Natuur, prysfluktuasies en menslike hulpbronne. Sy oplossings is prakties én geestelik: gebed, die regte kultivars vir elke mikroklimaat, waardetoevoeging deur middelmannen uit te skakel, en doelbewuste belegging in mense.



Baie geluk,
RÉAN CLASEN,
met jou aanwysing as
AGRI NOORD-KAAP
se **TOYOTA JONGBOER**
VAN DIE JAAR 2026.

Agri Technovation is trots
om saam met jou die pad te stap.

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KLEINPLAAS
BOERDERY



Hartlik geluk

Rèan Clasen

Agri Noord-Kaap 2026
Jongboer van die Jaar

AECI Plant Health word trots geassosieer met jou boerdery.

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groentetuin, en is administrateur van plaaslike brandbestrydings- en veiligheidsgroepe, sowel as 'n pekan-studiegroep.

"Ek wil 'n positiewe impak op my werkers se lewens hê. Ek wil ook 'n goeie man vir my vrou en pa vir my kinders wees terwyl ek die boerdery uitbrei. Ek wil groei as boer én as mens," sê hy.

Erkenning en nederigheid

Vir Rèan was die toekenning 'n nederige ervaring. "Mens verwag nie altyd erkenning vir wat jy doen nie. Soms gaan jy net elke dag aan, werk hard, sonder dat jy besef ander mense sien dit raak. Ek het ervaar hoe die Vader sy genade gee en ek is baie dankbaar oor alles."

Sy raad aan ander jongboere is eenvoudig maar kragtig:

- Harde werk word altyd beloon.
- Plig kom altyd voor plesier.
- Moenie probeer om vinnig ryk te raak nie; goeie dinge vat 'n leeftyd.
- Vermoë skuld so ver moontlik.
- Fokus op een afdeling en raak 'n spesialis daarin.



Baie geluk,
Rèan Clasen

**NOORD-KAAP JONGBOER
VAN DIE JAAR**

Laeveld Agrochem Prieska wens Rèan Clasen van harte geluk met sy besondere prestasie as Noord-Kaap Jongboer van die Jaar.

Hierdie toekenning is 'n welverdiende erkenning van Rèan se harde werk, toewyding en passie vir landbou. Sy strewe na uitnemendheid en volgehoue deursettingsvermoë maak hom 'n waardige ontvanger van hierdie besondere eer.

Dit is vir ons 'n voorreg om Rèan op sy plaas te ondersteun en deel van sy landboureis te wees. Ons vertrou dat hierdie prestasie net een van vele hoogtepunte op sy pad vorentoe sal wees.

Mag jy voortgaan om met visie, passie en vasberadenheid te boer en 'n waardevolle bydrae tot die landboubedryf te lewer.

Baie geluk, Rèan!

Ons is trots om jou as kliënt en vennoot in landbou te hê.

Laeveld Agrochem Prieska



0828045144
prieska@laeveld.co.za



Tradisie en kultuur

Op Kleinplaas begin elke dag met gebed en Bybellees saam met die werkers. Oesaftbraaie en jaarafsluitings word saam gevier, en ná werk speel Réan soms sokker saam met sy span. Hierdie tradisies bou 'n kultuur van gemeenskap en gedeelde trots.

Slotgedagtes

Réan se grootste prestasie is nie net die toekennings wat hy al gewen het nie, soos die Raisins SA Jongboer van die Jaar in 2018, maar die feit dat hy elke dag trots voel oor hoe ver die boerdery gekom het. "Op die einde van die dag is alles net genade. Die Here besluit wat gebeur wanneer. Ons is net rentmeesters van die grond," sê hy.

Sy verhaal is 'n inspirasie vir jongboere regoor die land. Dit wys dat sukses nie net in opbrengs of titels lê nie, maar in volhoubaarheid, menseverhoudinge, geloof en harde werk.

*Die **AgriAbout-span wens Réan Clasen** geluk met sy uitmuntende prestasie as wenner van die Agri Noord-Kaap Jongboer Kompetisie. Réan sal die Noord-Kaap met trots verteenwoordig as finalis in die **Toyota SA/Agri SA Nasionale Jongboer van die Jaar-kompetisie** later vanjaar, en ons wens hom alle sukses toe in hierdie volgende fase van sy reis.*



Beyond Honey:

How Beekeeping Can Strengthen Household Food Security

Dr Nontu Yanga
Prof Maxwell Mudhara
University of Zululand

Many rural households in the Eastern Cape continue to struggle to produce or purchase enough nutritious food throughout the year. High unemployment, low household incomes, rising food prices and uneven agricultural production place pressure on families, particularly where several household members depend on limited income.

Agriculture remains central to rural livelihoods in the province. However, relying on only one farming enterprise can leave households vulnerable to drought, crop failure, weak markets, and seasonal income. Beekeeping offers a practical opportunity for small-scale farmers to diversify their livelihoods while supporting the productivity of the wider farming system.

What the Eastern Cape study found

The study involved 240 households across five district municipalities in the Eastern Cape. The findings showed that 42% of the households were moderately food insecure, 30% were severely food insecure and only 28% were food secure.

Households participating in beekeeping were less likely to experience food insecurity

than households that did not keep bees. Beekeeping increased the likelihood of households falling within the least food-insecure category while reducing their likelihood of experiencing severe food insecurity.

Household income and agricultural production were also important. Families with higher incomes and greater production output were better able to meet their food needs. These findings demonstrate the value of livelihood activities that generate additional income while strengthening farm productivity.



Figure 1: Household Food Insecurity Status

Key findings and their practical meaning

Key finding	What it means for Eastern Cape farmers
About 42% of households were moderately food insecure and 30% were severely food insecure.	Many rural families need additional and more reliable livelihood opportunities.
Beekeeping participation was associated with improved household food security.	Income from bee products can help families purchase food during difficult periods.
All participating beekeepers produced honey.	Honey remains the most accessible commercial bee product.
Beeswax, propolis and royal jelly were also produced.	Farmers can diversify beyond honey and develop additional income streams.
Higher household income and agricultural output improved food security.	Beekeeping can support food security through product sales and improved pollination.

More than a honey enterprise

Honey was the main product produced by beekeepers in the study, but farmers also produced beeswax, propolis and royal jelly. These products can be sold directly or processed into candles, cosmetics, health products, and other value-added goods.

The economic potential of beekeeping therefore does not end with bottled honey. With suitable training, processing, quality control and market development, farmers can earn income from several products produced by the same bee colony.

Beekeeping is particularly suitable for small-scale farmers because it requires little land. Hives can be placed near crop fields, orchards, homesteads, or suitable natural vegetation. Bees do not compete with livestock for grazing or with crops for farmland. Instead, they provide pollination services that can improve the development, quality, and yield of flowering crops.

Why the Eastern Cape has potential

The Eastern Cape has extensive rural areas, varied natural vegetation, plantations, farmland, and seasonal flowering resources capable of supporting bee colonies. The



province therefore has considerable potential to expand beekeeping as part of rural enterprise development.

However, many farmers still face barriers such as limited technical knowledge, inadequate protective clothing, shortages of suitable hives, weak processing facilities and difficulty accessing reliable markets. Farmers may also require support with colony management, safe harvesting, food-safety requirements, packaging, branding, and business planning.

Turning potential into opportunity

Provincial departments, municipalities, extension officers, farmer organisations, universities, and development agencies can help unlock this potential. Support should combine practical training with access to equipment, finance, processing facilities, and markets.

Training should cover hive placement, colony health, harvesting, product handling, recordkeeping, and enterprise management. Market support is equally important. Farmers need opportunities to sell their products at fair prices and meet the quality standards required by retailers and consumers.

Cooperatives and producer groups could help small-scale beekeepers share equipment, process products, develop stronger brands and supply larger markets.

The take-home message

The Eastern Cape findings show that beekeeping is more than a side activity that produces honey. It can provide additional income, strengthen crop production through pollination, and reduce household vulnerability to food shortages. With appropriate training, equipment and market support, beekeeping can become a vital component of more resilient rural livelihoods in the province.

This article is based on the peer-reviewed study, "Contribution of Beekeeping to Household Food Security among Small-Scale Farmers in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa," published in the Future of Food: Journal on Food, Agriculture and Society. The full research article is available at: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21283801>



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Durban Flattie

Ina Paarman

Marinate overnight in Durban Curry and yoghurt, then slow braai while basting with remaining marinade, rest for 30 minutes for unparalleled juicy tenderness.

Serves: 4 - 6

You Will Need:

Marinade

1 x 200 ml Ina Paarman's Durban Curry Cook-In Sauce

1/3 cup (80 ml) plain full cream yoghurt

1 T (15 ml) Ina Paarman's Seasoned Sea Salt

1 good size free range chicken



Mix all the marinade ingredients together.

Butterfly the chicken.

Place the prepared chicken in a medium/large zip lock bag.

Pour marinade into the bag, zip up securely.

Massage the bag to rub the marinade all over the bird. Leave overnight in the fridge.

When ready to braai prepare medium/low coals.

Remove chicken from marinade.

Using 2 skewers, skewer the chicken from the breasts to the legs (see video). Reserve marinade for basting during cooking.

Start braaiing on bony side. Remember it is best to allow more cooking time on that side to avoid the skin side from over-browning.

Braai, baste and turn regularly. Braai for at least 75 minutes.

When cooked remove from the fire to a wooden board. Rest for 30 minutes to avoid moisture loss.

Cut into 8 portions as demonstrated,

Serve with a Spicy Sambal Salad.

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Bulgur Wheat Salad

Ina Paarman

This lemony, textural salad is fresh, nutty and filling.

Serves: 6 as a side dish

You Will Need:

- 1 cup bulgur wheat
- 2 t (10 ml) Ina Paarman's Vegetable Seasoning
- 2 carrots, julienned
- 2 medium courgettes, cut into thin strips
- ½ cup (125 ml) Italian parsley (and/or mint), finely chopped
- ½ cup (125 ml) dried apricots, sliced
- ¼ cup (60 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup (60 ml) almonds, toasted
- 1 x sachet Ina Paarman's Zesty Lemon Flavour Bomb

Method:

Place bulgur wheat into a bowl. Add Seasoning. Just cover with boiling water. Cover with cling wrap and allow to swell for 10 – 15 minutes.

Add the carrots to the bowl, along with the courgettes, parsley, and apricots. Reserve some of these ingredients to garnish the top of the salad.

Season with more Vegetable Seasoning to taste and stir gently.

Mix the oil and Flavour Bomb together, then drizzle all over the salad. Stir gently to coat all over, then transfer to a salad platter. Top with the toasted nuts. Serve at room temperature.



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