Foreword by AEASA president

The end of the term of the current AEASA Management Committee is fast approaching and, in this regard, it seems appropriate to reflect on some of the key matters that the Committee has dealt with during its term. The Committee has committed itself to improving its value offering to the members of AEASA by introducing new features through the online membership management tool.

One of these is the recently launched AEASA Career Centre (Portal). The portal is designed to act as a “meeting place” for job-seekers and potential employers.

On 1 June 2017, an invitation was extended to all AEASA members that are currently in the job market to login to the AEASA website to load their CVs which would be searchable by potential employers. At this stage, the potential employers that are being targeted are the loyal AEASA sponsors. There has already been an engagement from one of these sponsors who have shown an interest in participating in this portal. We trust that traffic on the Career Portal will increase both from potential employers and job seekers.

Part of getting especially our young members to be ready for the job market is the building of capacity and creation of opportunities for them to be exposed to the professional environment both locally and globally. Two initiatives are worthy of mention in this regard. One is the South African Agricultural Economics Professional Fellowship Programme (SAEAPP), a five-month session that is aimed at helping to train a group of highly qualified South African professionals who will use their experience and connections to the international agricultural economics profession to enhance the agriculture and agribusiness sectors of South Africa.

The programme has been successfully running for seven years and is structured to include study tours of academic, research, and government institutions in the United States and South Africa. It is coordinated by Market Matters Inc and run under the auspices of AEASA with sponsorship from the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). Recently, other partners have emerged to support the programme namely, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the KwaZulu-Natal Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA).

The second initiative is the AEASA student sponsorship grant. AEASA continues to sponsor student participation at AEASA annual conferences through a grant offered to universities to cover registration fees for three students per university.

In bid to promote closer collaboration between agricultural economics structures within the African continent and globally, the presidents of key agricultural economics associations that are active in Africa met to discuss several issues of mutual interest. These are Nick Vink (President-Elect of the International Association of Agricultural Economists), Bongiswa Matoti (Current President of Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa), Edward Mabaya (Current President of the African Association of Agriculural Economists), and Johan van Rooyen (Current President of the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association). The meeting was held in Stellenbosch, South Africa. Among the key agreements from this meeting was a plan to collaborate on upcoming conferences and a commitment to increase participation of women in the respective associations.

The AEASA business office, currently hosted at the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), is in the process of updating the AEASA archives. This is crucial in an effort to preserve the rich history of the Association. In the past, it has been a challenge to put an archive together due to the movement of the AEASA office around the country. However, with this office now hopefully settled at the NAMC, it is an opportune time to maintain a safe record of AEASA documentation.

On a sad note, the Association has lost two of its members this year namely Mr Billy Morokolo and Dr Rikkie Liebenberg. On behalf of the AEASA Management Committee, I would like to extend sincere condolences to their families and to the agricultural economics fraternity at large.
A word of congratulations to Dr Petronella Chaminuka and her team that facilitated the successful 2016 AEASA Conference held in Johannesburg in September 2016.

The 55th AEASA Annual Conference will be held in Durban on 19 to 21 September 2017. The AEASA Management Committee wishes the Local Organising Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr Stuart Ferrer, all the best in putting together the conference. The draft programme consists of a healthy combination of academic and agribusiness sessions that are all designed to address the broad common theme of Addressing Contemporary Challenges in the South African Agricultural Economy. We thank our loyal sponsors who make sure that AEASA is able to put together a successful conference every year.

The 2017 Tomlinson Memorial Lecture was successfully delivered by one of the AEASA honorary members, Dr Kobus Laubscher, who spoke about the agricultural economist’s critical role in providing policy advice in the face of the changing socio-political and economic environment. Congratulations to Dr Laubscher for an excellent lecture, and to the North West and Free State AEASA working groups for hosting a successful lecture in Potchefstroom in March 2017.

As the upcoming 2017 Conference will be an elective conference, it is my honour to take this opportunity to thank the AEASA membership for their trust bestowed upon the current Management Committee.

May I also wish the next Committee best of luck in discharging its duties.

AEASA Conference 2017

Theme: Addressing Contemporary Challenges in The South African Agricultural Economy
Venue: The Elangeni Hotel, Durban
Date: 19 - 21 September 2017

“The Challenge of Change: Agriculture, Land and the South African Economy”, edited by Lieb Nieuwoudt and Jan Groenewald, was published 14 years ago to coincide with the 25th international conference of the IAAE in Durban. The book, which provided an overview of South African Agriculture and its economic realities and policy challenges was distributed to all delegates as a memento of the conference.

The Foreword, written by the then President of AEASA, Johann Kirsten, ends with the sentence

“We hope this book serves as a yardstick against which the sector’s performance can be measured in 10 years’ time.”

It is therefore appropriate that the theme of the 2017 AEASA Conference in Durban invites us to do just that. It also affords an opportunity to update our perspective of the changing environment facing South African agriculture, to explore the contribution of agricultural economists to addressing contemporary challenges in the sector and to consider how the discourse has changed over the past 14 years.

The framework for agricultural policy in South Africa is largely provided by the National Development Plan: Vision for 2030 (NDP). The main sub-themes that will be addressed in plenary sessions and symposia at the conference are largely derived from challenges for the South African Agricultural Sector outlined in Chapter 6 of the NDP:

- Land reform
- Employment in agriculture
- The future availability and use of water in agriculture
- Expansion of commercial agriculture and agribusiness

They include:

Pictured to the left, the four presidents (from left to right): Nick Vink (President-Elect of the International Association of Agricultural Economists), Bongiswa Matoti (Current President of Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa), Edward Mabaya (Current President of the African Association of Agricultural Economists), and Johan van Rooyen (Current President of the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association).
Prof A wudu Abdulai

The 2017 AEASA Local Organising Committee, is honoured to announce that Prof A wudu Abdulai, will deliver the Simon Brand Memorial Address. Prof Abdulai is professor of Food Economics and Food Policy, and head of Department of Food Economics and Consumption Studies at the University of Kiel, Germany. Among several current roles, he is Chair of the Africa Section of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association. He served as Associate Editor for the American Journal of Agricultural Economics from 2012-2015. He is currently Co-Editor-in-Chief of Agricultural Economics and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Food Policy.

News from Stellenbosch University

The 2017 AEASA Local Organising Committee, is honoured to announce that Prof A wudu Abdulai, will deliver the Simon Brand Memorial Address. Prof Abdulai is professor of Food Economics and Food Policy, and head of Department of Food Economics and Consumption Studies at the University of Kiel, Germany. Among several current roles, he is Chair of the Africa Section of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association. He served as Associate Editor for the American Journal of Agricultural Economics from 2012-2015. He is currently Co-Editor-in-Chief of Agricultural Economics and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Food Policy.

ILUPSA: Tackling land reform

The Department of Agricultural Economics at Stellenbosch University has secured funding for a four-year research project focused on land form through the Swiss South African Joint Research Programme (SSAJP). This programme was established in 2007 by the Swiss and South African governments to promote scientific and technological cooperation. Grants awarded through the programme are aimed at promoting collaborative projects with ambitious research objectives and innovative approaches.

Most stakeholders agree that the land reform programme has failed to achieve its objectives of redress, poverty alleviation, economic growth and the establishment of vibrant and inclusive rural communities. Stakeholders do not agree on the mechanisms through which this should be achieved, which have resulted in the implementation of poorly designed or unworkable programmes. The objective of the Impacts of Land Use Patterns in South Africa (ILUPSA) project address this through the development of a novel agent based model of South African agriculture. Such a model will enable the testing of various “what if” scenarios in order assist with the development of optimal reform strategies. The project is collaboration with Prof Stefan Mann from Agroscope, the Swiss centre of excellence for agricultural research. BFAP is also a project partner.

The South African component of ILUPSA is funded by the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) and will total R2.2 million over four years. This includes two PhD bursaries, data collection, research exchanges and the installation of a high capacity computer capable of processing complex agent based interactions and big data modelling.
Department of Agricultural economics at Stellenbosch University contributes to the Masters Programme in Sustainable Agriculture

2017 is the third year that the programme MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE has been running at Stellenbosch University. The programme was established as a joint project between NUFFIC, an NGO that plays an important role in fostering international cooperation in education between the Netherlands and other countries, Wageningen University (Netherlands), Stellenbosch University and Conservation SA. The purpose of the programme is to train researchers in understanding and working within sustainable agriculture. Students are challenged to view agriculture as a system through modules such as Introduction to Systems Thinking and Systems Analysis and Simulation. This is then followed by concepts in sectoral sustainable agriculture, e.g. sustainable animal production, sustainable plant production, livelihood perspectives, etc. To generate knowledge in sustainable agriculture, the modules Systems Analysis and Simulation, Quantitative analysis of Land Use Systems (QUALUS) and Biometry help improve the students’ quantitative and analytical skills. The economics of sustainable agriculture integrates these concepts into the broader social and business environment.

The Department of Agricultural Economics at Stellenbosch University is directly involved with this programme in the teaching of two modules: The economics of Sustainable Agriculture and QUALUS:

- The economics of sustainable agriculture focuses on the application of basic notions of environmental economics, the organization of supply chains and competitiveness, explanation of the basics of price formation processes and application of the basics of economic multipliers. On farm level we also focus on the basics of typical farm modelling as a farming system planning tool and the critical assessment of the potential of certification to value environmental services, management of credit and insurance as well as contractual arrangements with regards to land and labour.

- QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF LAND-USE SYSTEM: This module introduces scientific quantitative methods to land use planning. It gives an overview of the qualitative and quantitative methods for (sustainable) regional land-use analysis. Explains the role of models within land-use design and planning, and explains competing claims between various types of land use, such as agriculture and nature conservation. Students carry out a qualitative evaluation of sustainable land-use using QUALUS.

Thus far we have one master’s student who has graduated under supervision from our department. There are currently one master’s project and one co-supervised, PhD project.

Highlights from the 2016 AEASA Conference

The 2016 AEASA conference was hosted by the Gauteng Province on 14-16 September 2016 at the Misty Hills Country Hotel, Conference Centre & Spa in Johannesburg. Approximately 220 conference delegates were in attendance. The theme of the conference was “Supporting Growth and Transformation in South African Agriculture.”

Pictures from the 2016 AEASA Award Ceremony, Johannesburg.
The full list of award winners from the 2016 AEASA Conference

**BEST Final Year Student**

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<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Best Final Year Student (4 year degree) for 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>University of Fort Hare</td>
<td>Mr Gift Mapfumo</td>
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<td>University of Free State</td>
<td>Ms Madri Brink</td>
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<td>University of KwaZulu Natal</td>
<td>Mr Christopher Gemmell</td>
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<td>University of Pretoria</td>
<td>Mr Struan Garland</td>
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<td>University of Stellenbosch</td>
<td>Mr Michael Day</td>
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**BEST M.Sc. THESIS**

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<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Farida Badu-Gyan</td>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>Factors affecting adoption of alternative pineapple production systems in Ghana</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Megan Leigh Bloie</td>
<td>Pretoria</td>
<td>The role of social capital in community-based natural resource management: A case study from South Africa</td>
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**Best publication in a professional journal or book**

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<td>1st</td>
<td>Samantha A. Munro, Gavin C.G. Faisel, Jen D. Snowball, Markus Pahlow</td>
<td>Journal of Cleaner Production</td>
<td>Water footprint assessment of citrus production in South Africa: A case study of the Lower Sundays River Valley</td>
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<td>2nd</td>
<td>B. Muchara, G. Ortman, M. Mudhara, E. Wale</td>
<td>Agricultural Water Management</td>
<td>Irrigation water value for potato farmers in the Mooi River Irrigation Scheme of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa: A residual value approach</td>
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**SJJ de Swart (for best article published in Agrekon)**

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<td>1st</td>
<td>Frikkie Mare, Bennie Grové &amp; Johan Willemse</td>
<td>Vol 54 (4)</td>
<td>Estimating the Maximum Value of Crop Hail Insurance under Stochastic Yield and Price Risk</td>
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<td>2nd</td>
<td>Frikkie Liebenberg, Philip Pardey, Jason Beddow &amp; Johann Kirsten</td>
<td>Vol 54 (4)</td>
<td>Re-Estimating South African Agricultural Output Value, Quantity and Price Aggregates, 1910-2010</td>
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**Best Poster**

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<td>Meghan King</td>
<td>Action Plan for Gender Transformation in the South African Sugar Industry</td>
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<td>2nd</td>
<td>Ikageng Maluleke &amp; Saliou Niassy</td>
<td>South African Agricultural Land Investments in Africa as per the Land Matrix</td>
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**Best Paper Contributed**

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<td>1st</td>
<td>D. Von Fintel &amp; L. Pienaar</td>
<td>Small-scale farming and food security: the enabling role of cash transfers in South Africa’s former homelands</td>
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<td>2nd</td>
<td>M. Van der Merwe &amp; J.H. Tienkens</td>
<td>The catalytic effect of farmer networks on (honest) information sharing to inhibit the opportunistic behaviour of farmers</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>N. Matthews &amp; B. Grové</td>
<td>Modelling Skewness of Crop Yield Distributions: Irrigated Maize as a Case Study</td>
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News from the University of Fort Hare

Fort Hare partners with HSRC’s Africa Institute of South Africa

The Human Sciences Research Council’s (HSRC) Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), in partnership with the University of Fort Hare, hosted the 2017 Africa Young Graduate Scholars (AYGS) international conference, focusing on ‘Re-Imagining Leadership and Gender for Sustainable Development’. The conference took place in Johannesburg on 13-14 March 2017. Prof A Mushunje represented UFH and five students from the Fort Hare’s Department of Agricultural Economics & Extension presented papers. One of the students’ papers, by Thandeka Dabata, won second place in the student paper competition.

Prof Mushunje delivers his inaugural address

On 30 May 2017, Prof Abbysinia Mushunje delivered an inaugural address, signifying his induction into the ranks of Fort Hare’s full professors. The topic of the lecture was ‘From Land Reform to Food Security in Zimbabwe: Lessons for South Africa’. The lecture reflected among other things on the different stages of land reform in post-independence Zimbabwe, and the significant livelihood and food security benefits that have accrued in particular since the introduction of Fast Track Land Reform. Professor Mushunje drew on his own doctoral research, as well as on his and others’ more recent scholarship. The lecture audience was enormous, more than filling the Agricultural Auditorium, which has an official capacity of 400.

Michael Aliber participates in a United Nations expert group meeting

Michael Aliber was requested to participate in an expert group meeting on “Strategies for Eradicating Poverty to Achieve Sustainable Development for All” that took place 8-9 May 2017 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York as part of the preparations for the 56th session of the Commission for Social Development and the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly. The meeting was organised by the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Michael presented a paper entitled, “Reducing poverty and inequality through redistributing assets, securing rights and democratising decision-making in rural areas.”

Agricultural Professional Fellowship Program
2016-2017 Report

“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom”
George Washington Carver
A note from the coordinator - Dr. Ed Mabaya (Cornell University)

With agricultural economics becoming an increasingly globalized issue, involving international partnerships, South Africa cannot afford professionals who are disconnected from the global fraternity of economists. It is with this vision that Mr. Ronald Ramabulana (former president of AEASA) and I founded the South African Agricultural Economics Professional Fellowship (SAAEPF) in early 2010. In 2015, SAAEPF rolled into a larger capacity building initiative named Agricultural Professional Fellowship Program (APFP). APFP includes other agricultural disciplines and expands the scope of the program with several in-country activities held in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture and Agribusiness Development Agency. It is with great pleasure that I report on another successful trip to the USA by the seventh cohort of fellows under this initiative that took place from November 26 to December 11, 2016.

The APFP is a capacity building program for a select group of South African young professionals working in agriculture and related fields. The program selects an annual cohort of early-to-mid career agricultural professionals (fellows) to participate in a yearlong capacity building program including study tours of academic, research, and government institutions in the United States and South Africa. To enhance the immediate and long-term benefits of the international engagement, the program will also include strategically chosen activities focused on skill-building in leadership, conflict management, critical thinking, professional conduct, as well as specific research skills such as research methodology, academic writing, and presentation. The overall goal of the program is to help train a group of highly qualified South African professionals who will use their experience and connections to the international agricultural economics profession to enhance the agriculture and agribusiness sectors of South Africa.

The 2017 cohort comprised of four fellows: Abongile Balarane, an agricultural economist from the Southern Africa Demand Crop Estimates Committee from the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), Bongiwe Mcata, a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension at the University of Fort Hare, Thato Majoane Moagi, a lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension at North West University, and Masego Nelly Moobi, a lecturer in Agricultural Economics at Tuung Agricultural College.

The tour kicked off with a visit to Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, where the fellows had very informative meetings with professors and key food industry players. One of the fellows' highlights was understanding local agriculture through a global learning when Dr. Anusuya Rangarajan presented on how agricultural extension benefits local farmers in the region. The fellows also got to see firsthand how agribusinesses have thrived in the region on their visit to Keystone Mills in Rome, NY. From Cornell University, the group flew to Tuskegee University, a prestigious historically black University in Alabama where the fellows attended the 74th Annual Professional Agricultural Workers Conference (PAWC). The conference was of particular relevance to the fellows because many of the issues discussed at PAWC had strong parallels to South Africa's current economic situation and reflected growing global trends in agribusiness; and also covered the broad areas of climate change, race and social justice, and innovations that agribusinesses operate. In the group presented the following papers which will appear in a forthcoming special edition of the Professional Agricultural Workers Journal:

- Abongile Balarane: Determinants of livelihood strategies among smallholder farmers on irrigation schemes in the North-West Province, South Africa.
- Thato Moagi: Assessment of collaboration among researchers-extension agents and farmers for agricultural innovation in North West Province, South Africa.
- Masego Moobi: Price transmission and asymmetry in the South African maize and wheat food industries: Are they in sync?

From Tuskegee University, the group travelled to nearby Auburn University in Alabama and visited the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology. The final stop of the visit was in Washington D.C., where the group had several meetings at the World Bank, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS), as well as a unique opportunity to meet and discuss policy with the Ambassador from South Africa. We concluded the tour with a special tour of the White House. The abridged feedback below from the 2017 fellows tells the rest of the story. Additionally please find attached an evaluation report on the program in addition to a detailed itinerary from the trip.

Reflection by Masego Nelly Moobi

The USA study tour was an exciting and inspiring experience. At Cornell University, we sat through presentations that were very helpful towards my research project and my general economics knowledge. I enjoyed the clarity at which the professors made their presentations. It was also refreshing to see how approachable the professors at Cornell University were; it taught me lessons on how to relate to my students better. The highlight of my stay in Ithaca was sitting through Prof. Ralph Christy's Emerging Market class and the Institute for African Development end of semester presentations. It exposed me to a classroom environment I had never experienced before. I enjoyed that classroom was treated as a shared learning experience; and from interactions it seemed as though students often read beyond the required scope. I was inspired to be innovative in my future presentations as I sat and listened to how the students' presentations were not as rigid as I am used to. Ithaca inspired me to remain and grow in academia, improve my work ethic, become innovative in my thinking and presentation of ideas. My only wish is that I could have made efforts to meet and share contacts with a post graduate student in Applied Economics to hear about their experience in the department and to compare some economic notes.

We then flew to Tuskegee University in Alabama to attend a Professional Agricultural Workers Conference.
from their professions and that made me appreciate that in South Africa we have a lot more young black professionals participating in agricultural conferences. Had it not been for this trip, I would have easily taken that for granted. Overall, Tuskegee felt like a piece of home, from their history, the jolly people, warmer weather to their soul fool.

I appreciated the visit to the church were Martin Luther King Jr pastored. This tour would have not have felt complete had we not gone to the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist church. The Booker T Washington museum was of great significance to me and my personal aspirations to enlighten the South African youth within my reach about the liberating benefits of getting educated.

In Washington, we visited some agricultural organisations that were very relevant to my field of study. It was a great transition from a more academic section of the tour I particularly enjoyed the visit to the USDA's Economic Research Services and IFPRI. I found a parallel between what I studied, my research interest and the work that they do. This section of the tour also sparked ideas of future research work. I was drawn in by some of the econometric methods they used which I could possibly make use of in future research projects. In Washington the highlight of my visit was getting an opportunity to interact with Dr Ed. Mabaya.

He provided some inputs towards my research and gave us very thought provoking parting words.

Reflection by Thato Marjorie Moagi

As a young lecturer it is challenging to stand in front of students as they see you as the mastermind of everything and often look up to you for answers and guidance, be it academically or socially. It is therefore imperative to broaden my knowledge and master the skill of professionalism and the Agricultural Professional Fellowship Program has incapacitated me in this regard.

The USA study tour was quite a remarkable and life-changing experience. I will always treasure in my professional being. I gained a lot of exposure, got to witness how diverse agriculture is and, built networks with people in the industry.

The tour has undoubtedly groomed me as an individual and will definitely impact on my career as I can impart the knowledge to my students and incorporate some of the lessons in my module guides and research projects. It has made me gain confidence in my field of work and lifted up my working spirit and triggered my aspiration of not only doing things for my own benefit but to assist others in every way possible and making a difference in their lives.

The most overwhelming experience of the tour was for me, the week spent in Ithaca, especially the Cornell visit. The people were very welcoming, helpful at all times and the coordinators were amazing. The environment and University culture was way too different from what I am used to and I got to appreciate its diversity. The relationship that students have with their lecturers and how they openly participated in class was breathtaking.

They seemed to be very independent and focused on their studies. The campus tour was remarkable and having a young, enthusiastic guide to narrate the rich history of the campus was intriguing.

The area where the Campus is situated is very conducive and clean environment. The daily bus rides were awesome as they created a platform for us to mingle with students and gave us a feel of being a student at Cornell University.

My other highlight was the Washington tour where we got to visit several institutions that I have always read about and never thought I would set foot in. Visiting the World Bank made me re-think my career objectives, as it was very encouraging to meet qualified South Africans working in a foreign country like America and excelling in their duties. It certainly made me realize that we should not only limit ourselves in terms of job opportunities and also that with perseverance, dedication and hard work, one can reach the stars.

Another institution that was captivating for me was the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) because my proposed research project for PhD is on food security and nutrition, thus the presentations and materials collected will be of great value to my study.

The USA tour has inspired me in so many ways and got me motivated to be the best I can be at all times.

Reflection by Abongile Balarane

As I was about to write this report at one moment, I felt little bit confused not knowing where do I start writing this report. This was because of the lifetime picture that will always be in my head. From the day I left South Africa to New York, I felt like someone going to his first day of school. It was huge excitement in me as well as a fear of going to an unknown world.

A world that our forefathers have never seen, only heard about it on news and papers. When the NAMC announced the successful fellows for the 2016 programme, it was joy and tears of happiness in me. Nevertheless even today I still feel very privileged to have been part of the group that has visited US. Personally speaking this trip has enormously contributed a lot to my personal skills of understanding how diverse the world is outside my comfort zone and how things within the same agricultural field are done differently. I have never been in US before and media has always portrayed negative things about the place.

However I was so amazed to realize that actually we have similar History with Black Americans. As to how previous governments systems have disadvantaged us. Please note this is not a political statement, however I was also excited by the break
though that Black Americans did in the history of slavery by believing in education and built their own University. To me this has proved education is a very powerful tool that can change a person's life and also benefit the entire community. This trip has taught me one strong lesson that your current situation or poor background cannot determine your future. I was also excited by the visit in Cornell University, to see how diverse the World and also how people from all over the World can meet in one place and have one common goal that is Education.

There are skills and knowledge embedded in me from this visit and this includes learning how to meet different people and make them or treat them as a family, and improving skills of understanding the World outside South Africa. I no longer have fear of knowing the unknowns and I have been encouraged by not limiting my knowledge with only domestic issues.

Reflection by Bongiwe Mcata

I have learnt to appreciate opportunities in life, since we know that Africa has a problem with access to education. Majority of our people have low levels of literacy and this has made me to realize that in my village I should make a change and reach out youth and motivate people. It was of great opportunity for me to take part in this programme. This has been a life changing experience for me. This programme has made me grow; think better and more especially wanting to be a driver of change by bringing more knowledge, information that can help improve the community's livelihoods. This programme allows me to have a degree in agricultural economics. This tour has allowed me to appreciate the agricultural sector and see the diversity of it. It has been an eye opening experience for me on the different aspects of life. This tour has not just developed me professionally but personally as well, it has been if great light to me. Furthermore, being part of this USA Study Tour has allowed me to identify more doors that can open and bring me better and more opportunities since this is an life-changing programme that brings better ways of viewing at things.

This tour has not just enriched me but also my institute would benefit a lot if more people can be given a chance to take part in such a programme. There will be more people who want to bring change through research and teaching that could help improve the community's livelihoods within my Province (Eastern Cape). This can occur through obtaining more and better skills to be better scientific writers (researchers) as there is a great need for research in order to archive the goal of “change or improvement” within society. This results to more scientific papers that my institution can produce for publication. Also, have these researchers going back to these communities and provide them feedback on findings obtained. Therefore, this can bring change. This tour has not only about active learning (research) but it taught a lot on interdisciplinary relations between different individuals with different professions, understanding different behaviours from different individuals since we (participants) had different backgrounds and principles, appreciation of every person, respect, opening ourselves for learning and not be scared of being rectified.

The crucial aspect it is to ask and not engage in something without full knowledge. I have personally learned so much throughout this programme since it is every fruitful. In the programme the best thing that I loved was that even though the participants were from different background (i.e Agricultural Economics, plant breeding (genetics), food science, engineering and financial management) we were able to form a multi-disciplinary team and it shows that in order for things to work they must all come together from day one when we met no participant felt less knowledgeable than the other. The vast history that is behind how the agricultural education has been to life and how it is being appreciated by the youth. Therefore, importance of collaborative work can do so much in a country.

As a person who works with students (undergraduates and post graduates), I got exposed to the engagement of the students with their lectures. It was very life changing for me to build that platform for my students so that they are able to grow and see beyond the level of study they are at. Everything that I acquired from this programme goes in line with what I would like to do professionally. The most important thing is the manner that all the institutions work together (i.e. Universities, Research Centre and government structures).

As a person who considers herself to be a social scientist that studied human behavior based on needs and wants Also, considering the limited resources that are available in the world. I have met other professionals that are as passionate about development as I am especially in rural areas whereby there is so much that needs to be done based upon the livelihoods of those people residing there in order to improve their standards of living. Therefore the way that information is shared for smallholder farmers in order to make them aware of all the knowledge that can help them improve their livelihoods.For example the use of technology (smart phones, computers), videos, radios stations and also the language that farmers can understand makes me want to go out of the world and share all that I have seen by being part of the study tour. In addition, the Kenya story of mobile money (M Pesa) as well, can work in terms of farmers having a way that they can access and send money in an easy way for them.

This has helped me in identifying ways that can help improve the livelihoods of people in this country. As a person who comes from one of the provinces that are regarded to be poor and yet the second largest province, I hope that through the knowledge that I have obtained I will be able to share with my friends who are working in government offices when they are seeking help in terms of brain storming. This gives hope that change is slowly but surely coming and research is the powerful tool for such establishments.
Overview of 2016

Training and research activities continued in a number of established fields. The Department of Agricultural Economics offers a variety of modules in three fields – agricultural economics with a scientific foundation (BSc Agricultural Economics); agricultural economics with more focus on business (BAgric Agricultural Economics); and then agricultural management (BAgric Agricultural Management).

The year 2016 was an interesting year for the department of Agricultural Economics. Changes that took place include the resignation of the Academic Departmental Head, Dr Dirk Strydom, who took up a new position at Grain South Africa in April 2016. In the capacity of Academic Departmental Head, Dr Strydom was replaced by Dr Henry Jordaan, who was appointed as Acting Academic Departmental Head as from 1st April 2016.

Achievements

Achievements of Staff

Dr Nicky Matthews was awarded a prize for the 3rd best contributed paper at the 54th conference of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA).

Mr F. A. Maré, Prof B. J. Willemse and Prof B. Grové won the award for the Best Paper published in Agrekon 54th conference of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA).
Activities

Together with the Water Footprint Network and the Water Research Commission, the Department of Agricultural Economics hosted the first conference of the Water Footprint Research Alliance (WFRA), 4th – 7th April 2016, in Cape Town. The WFRA include leading scientists on Water Footprint Assessment from universities and research institutes from The Netherlands, China, Spain, and South Africa.

Achievements of Students

Ms Farida Badu-Gyan won the award for the best Masters’ thesis in Agricultural Economics at the 54th conference of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA), under the supervision of Prof Bennie Grové, Dr J.I.F Henning and Mr Enoch Owusu-Sekyere.

Three post graduate students were invited to attend the Leadership Summit sponsored by ABSA and Pioneer Financials in Bloemfontein. The students who attended are Luan van der Walt, Dominique Bougard and Pascalina Mohlotsane, they are also research assistants in Agricultural Economics.
The 2016 Biennial South African National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (Sancid) Symposium was held at the Goudini Spa in Worcester from 11 – 13 October 2016 with the title of “Sustainable Irrigation Water and Drainage Management for Food Production: Vision 2030” and was attended by Dr Henry Jordaan, Pascalina Mohlotsane, Phoka Nkuo and To sho Adetoro, all three are Master’s students under the supervision of Dr Henry Jordaan.

Participants at the Annual Sancid Symposium were Tosho Adetoro, Dr Henry Jordaan, Pascalina Mohlotsane and Phoka Nkuo.

The 2016 African Livestock Trade Fair (ALFA) took place for the first time this year. The Expo was held at the Afridome in Parys between 27 September and 1 October 2016. ALFA was started with the idea that it will be an annual event where cattle farmers from around the country will come to feel at home at their own Expo. During ALFA week knowledge is exchanged, new technology is introduced and it also creates a trade platform between suppliers and buyers. Because one of the focus areas of the Expo is the exchange of information, the Unit in Livestock Economy from Agricultural Economics thought it prudent to present workshops during the Expo. In this way farmers can be exposed to research conducted by the Unit in Livestock Economy. A workshop was held on Wednesday, 28 September 2016 and was led by Prof Johan Willemse. The workshop was attended by Agri Business, farmers and members of industry. Two lecturers and 6 post graduate students attended the week long Expo.

In collaboration with Mamre and Veeplaas, the Department of Agricultural Economics jointly hosted the Veeplaas Intensive Sheep Production School in April 2016 at Golden Gate Hotel. About 120 delegates attended the School.

The Alfa (African Livestock Trade Fair) week was attended by Post Graduate students and staff from Department Agricultural Economics.

From left are: Marnus Ferreira, Fred Terblanche, Dominique Bougard, Henfred Linde, Phillip Oosthuizen, Anne Calitz, Prof Johan Willemse, and W.A. Lombard
Research

The research endeavours in the Department centralise around two broad themes: water related research funded by the Water Research Commission (WRC), and research on livestock economics funded mainly by industry partners. Dr Henry Jordaan is leading two research projects on water footprint assessment to inform sustainable water use for food and fibre production in South Africa. The first is more specifically concerned with the water footprints of livestock such as forage crops and the second with the water footprint of fuel and fibre crops. Prof Bennie Grové is also leading two projects funded by the WRC. The first is concerned with the development of management strategies to reduce the use of water, to improve the productivity of irrigation farming in South Africa. The second is concerned with the development and application of a long-run hydro-economic risk simulation and optimisation modelling framework to quantify the hydro-economic impact of water curtailments.

The Unit in Livestock Economics is involved in a variety of research projects related to the economics of livestock production in South Africa. Their research endeavours are mainly funded by the Red Meat Research Development (RMRD), Red Meat Producers’ Organisation (RPO), and research projects funded by private agribusinesses. Research projects funded by the RMRD include a project led by Mr Walter van Niekerk on wildlife predation in South Africa to assess the economic impact of wildlife predation and the factors affecting wildlife predation in South Africa. Mr WA Lobard led two more projects funded by RMRD. The first is concerned with the economic impact of stock theft and the factors affecting stock theft in South Africa, while the second is concerned with using eye-tracking technology in research in marketing of red meat in South Africa.

Mr Frikkie Maré led a research project exploring the economic impact of drought, funded by RPO National. The last research project Mr Philip Oosthuizen led a project, funded by Semick, to assess the optimal feeding period of different cattle breeds in a feedlot.

It is noted that most of the research projects are multi-disciplinary in nature. As such, academics from a number of different academic departments are involved in our research projects, such as the Department of Soil, Crop and Climate Sciences, the Department of Animal, Wildlife and Grassland Sciences Centre for Development Support, and also Department of Computer Science and Informatics.

Community Service

Quarterly Agricultural Outlook workshops are held by Prof Johan Willems, where farmers and corporate delegates meet and participate in lively discussions regarding the future market. These Agricultural Workshops started in 2006 and are still very well attended.

South African Futures Exchange (SAFEX) courses are presented by Dr Dirk Strydom and Mr Luan van der Walt to banks, farmers, students, and agricultural businesses.

In collaboration with Senwes Ms Simone Nieuwoudt and Ms Marëse Lombard presented a short course on Farm Tax to members of Senwes.

Dr Janus Henning served on the Judging Panel of the Free State Young Farmer of the Year Award.

Staff

Professors: Prof B. Grové

Senior Lecturers: Dr Henry Jordaan, Dr N. Matthews, Dr A.O. Ogundele, Mr J.J. van Staden

Lecturers: Dr J.I.F. Henning, Mr W.A. Loubser, Mr F. A. Maré, Mr P. Mokhatla, Mr H.J. van Niekerk, Ms M. Venter

Junior Lecturers: Ms P. Mohlotsane, Ms Z. Koka

Researchers/Research assistants: Dr Y. Bahra, Mr J. Bezuendhout, Mr J. du Preez, Mr M. Feniema, Mr T.W. Flanagan, Mr B.O. Haïke, Mr E.J. Loggenberg, Ms D. Bougard, Ms PA. Callitz, Ms M. Gadiši, Ms J.Z. Gwebu

Affiliate/Associate Professors: Prof M. Bergman

Research Associates: Dr B. Riddout

The Mega Merino Stud Farm at Colesberg was visited by 33 students and lecturers from the Department of Agricultural Economics. This stud farm has been in business for more than 100 years. The owner Mr Andries Pienaar gave the students an overview of how he manages his business. The Mega Merino business disciplines are based on marketing, finance, products, the factory and people.
Officers, professional services: Ms C. van der Merwe and C.S. Combrinck

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FR Tomlinson commemorative lecture 2017

The FR Tomlinson Lecture 2017 was delivered by Dr Kobus Laubscher on 29 March 2017 at Crista Galli in Potchefstroom and was jointly hosted by the Free State and North-West Working Groups of AEASA. The theme of the lecture was “Relevance versus indispensable in making the long-term urgent - Agricultural Economists can choose to shift the responsibility or to shift the paradigm.”

Dr Laubscher is an independent Agricultural Economist and Strategist with 27 years as an agricultural economics academic. He is an expert in several fields such as rural development, business process re-engineering and corporate governance.
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