

EMBARGO MEDIA RELEASE

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**SOUTH AFRICA'S OLDEST AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY COMMEMORATES AND
INNOVATES IN ITS 190TH YEAR**



Agri-Expo, the oldest agricultural society in South Africa and Africa, celebrates its 190th

anniversary this year – and with good reason. On Monday 29 November 2021 during its special 190th-anniversary celebrations at Cavalli Estate outside Stellenbosch, Agri-Expo honoured prominent agricultural role players and announced exciting plans for 2022. **New initiatives include an international agriculture-in-the-classroom project, a kykNET television series on cheese and a series of SA Cheese Festival Pop-up Picnics.**

According to Johan Ehlers, CEO of Agri-Expo, the organisation celebrates **190 years of heritage and 25 years of innovation**. “The Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society was established in 1831 and Agri-Expo, our marketing name, in 1996. Renewal has always been part of our DNA, including the initiative to establish organised agricultural structures in South Africa, such as the first Department of Agriculture in the Cape in 1886, and an Agricultural College in 1888,” says Ehlers.

"Agri-Expo has had an impact on many aspects of people's lives since its inception," writes Her Royal Highness Princess Anne in a letter of congratulations from Buckingham Palace in her capacity as President of the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth (RASC). According to Princess Anne, the anniversary also offers an opportunity to give recognition to those who make a difference in everyday South African agriculture.

Two agricultural icons, Alan Winde and Joyene Isaacs, were honoured with the newly established Agri-Expo Honorary Award on Monday 29 November. Winde, Premier of the Western Cape, received this award for his contribution to agriculture during his term as MEC for Economic Opportunities (2014-2018), and as Premier of the Western Cape, and the direct impact thereof on the dynamics of Agri-Expo. Isaacs, Chairperson of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), was honoured for her contribution to agriculture during her term as Head of Department of the Western Cape Department

of Agriculture (WCDoA) (2005-2020). International dairy expert Kobus Mulder was honoured as Agri-Expo Honorary President on the same day.

Winde says it is a privilege to be honoured for his efforts to support agriculture: "Agriculture is a driving force behind the province's economy and ensuring that it succeeds remains a priority. We have seen the benefit of agriculture clearly over the last 19 months, where it has helped soften the blow caused by the pandemic by creating much-needed jobs. We need to expand this further, and leverage our competitive advantage in this space."

Isaacs acknowledged the team at the WCDoA who worked with her and the opportunities that Agri-Expo created: "This award is just as much about Agri-Expo doing a good job as it is about the department and the brilliant team that worked with me to achieve what I set out to do."

MAKING PEOPLE LOOK AT AGRICULTURE WITH NEW EYES (AND TASTE IT!)

Over the past 25 years, Agri-Expo has managed to stay at the forefront through innovation and creative thinking, according to Ehlers: "We created and recreated exciting opportunities in different agricultural industries so that people look at agriculture with new eyes, also thanks to media exposure to the value of R80 million that we generate annually."

According to Ehlers, **highlights** include:

- the establishment of the national Youth Show Association (1998),
- the development of the Qualité logo (2001) as the only mark of excellence for SA dairy products,
- the creation of the SA Cheese Festival brand in 2002 and the doors it opened for agri-entrepreneurs,
- the From the Earth Expo (2006, 2009) at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC),
- a world-first city-centre horse auction inside a Conference Centre at the CTICC (2011)
- a world standard show ring at Agri-Expo Livestock (2014-2019),
- the transformation of information days for new and small farmers into hybrid SIYABONGA days (2020),
- the very first virtual awards event in the agricultural sector, the 2020 Qualité Awards, which paved the way for many other virtual events,
- the 2020 Sauvignon Blanc SA Top 10 awards, with Nataniël as guest artist, described by renowned wine writers as the best awards event in the industry,

- and the fact that Agri-Expo is the only organisation in the world that could host a dairy championships continuously in 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic.

2022 AND BEYOND

Agri-Expo takes on new territory on new platforms in 2022, says Ehlers: "In a first for Agri-Expo, we enter the exciting world of television with the very first South African food series on the versatility of cheese together with our partners Ladismith Cheese and Sea Harvest. The **TV series of thirteen episodes, with chef Tiaan Langenegger** as presenter, is produced by Homebrew Films and will be broadcast on kykNET from April to June 2022.

"In a first for South Africa and Africa, we take agriculture to the classroom with **Farmer Time South Africa as part of the international Farmer Time project** that utilises digital communication to inspire, engage and educate young people about agriculture. The project was started by farmer Tom Martin in the United Kingdom and is already established in Australia, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Denmark and New Zealand. Learners chat directly to a farmer via a video call from their classrooms. Agri-Expo started a pilot project at Porterville High School this year and will expand it further in 2022.

"Really good news is that the award-winning SA Cheese Festival returns after two years. Cheese and wine lovers can look forward to a brand new experience with a special series of Pop-up Picnics that will take place over four weekends in April 2022. The **SA Cheese Festival Pop-up Picnics** are presented with select partners at four of the Cape's most popular picnic destinations – from the Winelands to Walker Bay to the West Coast and back to the Winelands. The first Pop-up Picnic will take place on **Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 April 2022 at Warwick Wine Estate outside Stellenbosch**, the second on **Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 April 2022 at Benguela Cove Wine Estate** outside Hermanus, the third on **Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 April 2022 at Groote Post Wine Estate outside Darling**, and the fourth and final on **Saturday 30 April and Sunday 1 May 2022 at Sandringham outside Stellenbosch**."

According to Ehlers, the conclusion of partnerships is crucial for a visionary approach to agriculture: "We would like to thank our platinum partner, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, as well as all the partners of Agri-Expo's anniversary celebrations, including our platinum partner Standard Bank with whom Agri-Expo has a 150-year relationship. "

Send Agri-Expo a congratulatory message on social media (Agri-Expo on LinkedIn and @AgriExpo1 on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) or by e-mail at admin@agriexpo.co.za. Visit www.agriexpo.co.za for

a 190-year timeline, a video with highlights and HRH Princess Anne's full message of congratulations, or call 021 975 4440 for more information.

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