Welcome to the 2018 newsletter of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa! So much has happened since we last published our newsletter in 2017. In this copy, we provide an update on key events and developments in the world of South African agricultural economics. We also celebrate the great achievements of many of our members throughout the year.

The compilation of this newsletter is truly a team effort and I am grateful to all who have made contributions to this edition. It is through your contributors that we are able to truly capture important developments and achievements.

See you at the annual conference in the Western Cape! Enjoy the read.

Thabi
CONTENTS

3  Message from the President of AEASA

4  ANNUAL AEASA CONFERENCES
5  AEASA Conference 2017
7  AEASA Conference 2018

8  UNIVERSITY NEWS
9  News from North West University (NWU) – Mafikeng Campus
11  News from Stellenbosch University
12  News from the University of KwaZulu-Natal
13  News from the University of Pretoria

18  EVENTS
19  International Food and Agribusiness Management Association (IFAMA)

21  2018 FR Tomlinson commemorative lecture
22  APFP 2017-18 USA study tour
24  TEDx Johannesburg: Hacking the Farm

25  THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIST’S TOOLKIT
26  Top blogs for agricultural economists
27  Must-follow Twitter accounts for agricultural economists
28  Books: Our top picks

29  THE LIGHTER SIDE

31  MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND CONTRIBUTORS
Dear members

Inspired by the experience of attending the 30th International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE 2018) that was held in Vancouver (28 July – 2 August) with the theme “New Landscapes and New Mandates for Agriculture”, I think many of us are having a growing feeling of anticipation for our own conference that will be held on 25 – 27 September at the Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset-West. The theme of our conference, “Practising agricultural economics in an uncertain neighbourhood” could not have been better picked to lead the upcoming inputs and the debates. The neighbourhood in SA is really uncertain with a high degree of volatility and rapid changes in all spheres that we as agricultural economists are facing. For example, just as I was about to board the flight back from Vancouver, the announcement was made that the leading party plans to go ahead with expropriation without compensation, which had an immediate impact on financial markets and in a way also reflecting on investor sentiments and expectations of future growth in the country.

Politics and the socio-political landscapes are, however, not the only elements that are changing. Science and policy communication is transforming completely with the global social media storm providing very effective dissemination platforms on the one hand, that are influencing voters and consumers, but on the other hand also tightening the pressure on young scientists to increase the rate of producing output that can constantly be posted on these platforms. Data science and the so-called big data revolution is offering very exciting opportunities of increasing the capacity to collect, layer, refine and store data. But also in this instance, new approaches and technologies bring new challenges and data privacy, Intellectual Property (IP), custodianship and ownership have become items that appear in newspapers almost at a daily rate.

On behalf of the Local Organising Committee and the Management Committee, I would like to call on each member of the association to actively promote the attendance of this year’s conference. Only through the active participation and engagement with key stakeholders in government and industry at our annual conferences can we communicate research results and empirical evidence to provide an evidence-based foundation for policy – and decision-makers. In South Africa we do not have the “safety in numbers” to simply drive an association forward and therefore, the interaction between key stakeholders and academia is central to the long-run sustainability of our association. To this end, I would like to congratulate the previous Management Committee who created the Career Portal for employers and job seekers. The business office also sends out regular announcements of vacancies. Judging by the increasing participation of young professionals from Management Level throughout the association over the past couple of years, there is no doubt that this initiative is making a major contribution.

On this note, I want to thank each member of Management Committee and the Local Organising Committee for all the planning, time and inputs being invested into our association. A special word of thanks also goes to Dr Mmatlou Kalaba, who is the driving our secretariat in collaboration with the AEASA business office that is hosted by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). We are looking forward to meet you all at the upcoming conference.

Ferdi
ANNUAL AEASA CONFERENCES

Highlights and information
The 55th annual AEASA Conference was held in Durban, Elangeni Hotel from 19-22 September 2017. The theme of the Conference was “Addressing Contemporary Challenges in the South African Agricultural Economy”. The conference was well-attended, with 40 research papers and 46 poster papers presented.

Numerous AEASA members received prizes for their work in various spheres. Congratulations to all award-winners!

**BEST FINAL YEAR STUDENT (4 YEAR DEGREE) FOR 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thandokazi Maxam</td>
<td>University of Fort Hare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TW Flanegan</td>
<td>University of Free State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNC Putini</td>
<td>University of KwaZulu-Natal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Ramoshaba</td>
<td>University of Limpopo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jodie Vosloo</td>
<td>University of Pretoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashleigh Dewberry</td>
<td>University of Stellenbosch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matome Maila</td>
<td>University of Venda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BEST M.Sc. THESIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chalwe Sunga</td>
<td>University of Stellenbosch</td>
<td>An analysis of spatial market integration: A case of Zambian dry bean markets connected by informal trade to Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tshepo R Pilusa</td>
<td>University of KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>An analysis of spatial market integration: A case of Zambian dry bean markets connected by informal trade to Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BEST PUBLICATION IN A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OR BOOK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RS Arp, GCG Fraser &amp; MP Hill</td>
<td>Quantifying the economic water savings benefit of water hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes) control in the Vaalharts Irrigation Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Davids &amp; Ferdi Meyer</td>
<td>A Demand Analysis of Farm Labour Employment in the South Coast and Midlands Commercial Sugarcane Farming by Labour Categories: Implications of the Sectoral Determination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SJJ DE SWART (FOR BEST ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN AGREKON)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M Delport, M Louw, T Davids, H Vermeulen and F Meyer</td>
<td>Evaluating the demand for meat in South Africa: an econometric estimation of short term demand elasticities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD van der Merwe, PC Cloete and HD van Schalkwyk</td>
<td>Factors Influencing the Competitiveness of the South African Wheat Industry: A Hedonic Price Model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BEST POSTER

1. M Mamabolo, C Gandidzanwa, P Chaminuka & M Makhura
   Agricultural Research and Development Data Rescue Initiative through Collaboration

2. M Kadwa & R Nicholson
   Input Costs Changes in Sugarcane Compared to Other Agricultural Enterprises in South Africa: 2006 to 2015

BEST PAPER CONTRIBUTED

1. D Jordaan & JF Kirsten
   Measuring the fragility of agribusiness value chains: A case study of the South African lamb chain

2. M van der Merwe, JF Kirsten & JH Trienekens
   Investing in collective reputation: Sheep farmers, geographic indicators and collective action in the Karoo, South Africa

BEST CONTRIBUTED PAPER BY A PhD STUDENT

[‘EXPERIMENTAL AWARD’ INTRODUCED IN 2017]

1. C Gandidzanwa, JF Kirsten, F Meyer & F Liebenberg
   Net farm income and tractor prices in South African agriculture: A co-integration approach
The 56th annual conference of AEASA is scheduled for 25 to 27 September 2018 at the Lord Charles hotel, Somerset-West. The theme for the event is “Practicing Agricultural Economics in an uncertain neighbourhood”. Dr Karen Brooks, Director of the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions, and Markets at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington DC, will deliver the Simon Brand Memorial Address. Furthermore, various prominent local role players in agriculture will partake in panel discussions on the role and contributions of Agricultural Economists in, amongst other, growth and investment in the agricultural sector, agribusinesses, the wine and horticultural industries, policy making and government. Land reform and ownership and growth and investment in the agricultural sector will also be debated. Symposia will cover aspects related to food security and trade in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

The conference website can be visited at https://centeqevents.wixsite.com/aeasa2018 for a draft programme, as well as online registration. For further enquiries kindly contact the Conference Secretariat at AEASA2018@allevents.co.za.
The latest from agricultural economics departments around the country
NEWS FROM NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY (NWU) – MAFIKENG CAMPUS

News and developments

The Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension on the NWU’s Mafikeng Campus continues to deliver teaching and training services. These are provided to enrolled students and to members of the surrounding community through Short Learning Programs. The Department’s staff also conduct research in a variety of areas of specialisation. Their research was featured in two international conferences and in ten journals approved by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) during 2017.

The Department welcomed a new Chairperson, Professor Simon Letsoalo in August. He takes over from Dr Sinah Modirwa. Professor Letsoalo joined the University in October from the Winter Cereal Trust where he served as an Administrator. Earlier in his career, Professor Letsoalo served in various positions at Tshwane University of Technology and Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Professor Letsoalo holds a PhD in Agricultural Extension from North West University and his research focus area is on group dynamics and collective action.

Research projects and collaborations

The Department is part of the Agricultural Chairs programme of the Land Bank. This programme is an effort by the Land Bank to empower postgraduate South African students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds and to capacitate lecturers in agriculture and rural development faculties in formerly disadvantaged institutions. The programme has four key pillars: capacity building, agricultural research, farmer support and innovation. Professor Letsoalo is the Land Bank Chair for the institution, taking over from Dr Mabe.

The second project that is run in the Department is the NWU e-AGRO-TOURISM CoLab. This project is housed in the Ikamva National eSkills Institute (iNeSI), a collaborator which has been appointed by the Department of Communications (DoC) to pull together stakeholders from different academic backgrounds, industries and societal groups. The aims are to foster indigenous knowledge, produce evidence-based research and to coordinate the dissemination of research findings. Ms Chiedza Tsvakirai is the project coordinator of the e-AGRO CoLab.

Lastly, the Department is part of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) project. This project is aimed at investigating the impact of climate change on the environment and rural livelihoods. It aims to produce research findings that can be used as inputs for policy development. The FANRPAN project fosters collaboration between parties such as the University of Venda, University of Fort Hare, University of Limpopo, University of the Free State, the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), and the Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC).
Student flies high at 2018 South African Society for Agricultural Extension Conference

Temitope Olorunfemi, a student pursuing a doctorate in Agricultural Extension, did the Department proud when her paper won The Most Scientific Paper Award at the 2018 South African Society for Agricultural Extension (SASAE) conference. The conference, held in the Eastern Cape on 5-7 June, had the theme “Synergising agricultural extension services towards the commercialisation of smallholder producers”. Temitope presented a paper which pointed out the constraints and attitudes of extension agents towards their performance in commercialising farmers’ production.
AgriSciences bags nGAP Programme Position

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) recently announced the implementation of Phase 3 of the nGAP Programme and two positions – out of 53 nationally – were awarded to Stellenbosch University. One was awarded to the Department of Agricultural Economics and the other to the Department of Applied Mathematics. Hein Gerwel, the appointee in Agricultural Economics, joined Stellenbosch in September 2017. Hein taught the University of the Western Cape for ten years and was subsequently affiliated with the University of Cape Town’s School of Economics and the Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR), where he is completing a PhD in Development and Agricultural Economics. This brings the total nGAP positions at Stellenbosch University to 11.

nGAP is one of five programmes of Staffing South Africa’s Universities Framework (SSAUF) approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training in 2017. It is aimed at the expansion of the size and composition of academic staff in South African universities – especially with regard to transformation. The focus of the programme is the appointment of black and female candidates.

The implementation of the transformative nGAP programme entails the recruitment of young academics as part of a six year programme which supports universities in their staffing and development strategies.

Article was first published in the AgriSciences Newsletter June 2017.
Students benefit from Erasmus+
Student Exchange Programme

Two postgraduate students (Eliaza Mkuna - PhD candidate, and Olalekan Bello - MSc candidate) under Prof Baiyegunhi’s supervision also benefited from the Erasmus+ Student Exchange Program. The students spent between 3 and 6 months at the Jagiellonian University Institute of Economy, Finance and Management in Krakow, Poland in 2017 and Universite de Liege, Business School HEC, Belgium in 2018, respectively. During these programmes, the students took additional modules to broaden their research and academic knowledge while gaining international exposure. Another PhD candidate (Temitope Ojo) under Prof Baiyegunhi’s supervision presented a paper titled “Determinants of adaptation strategies to climate change by rice farmers in South-West Nigeria” at the 30th Conference of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) in Vancouver, Canada from 28 July to 2 August 2018.
Department proud of continued hosting of the Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics programme

The Department prides itself in the hosting of the shared training facility for the regional Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics programme. The programme brings together students from 16 African universities. This makes UP the facility of choice for this continental capacity-building programme.

Since 2006, the Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development has hosted between 80 and 90 master’s students a year, amounting to a total of more than 1 000 students. Teaching staff are selected annually through a competitive process and include UP staff, colleagues from universities across the continent and various international researchers.

In 2017, the programme included eight UP lecturers, and colleagues from Burundi, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Australia. The 2017 cohort also included students from seven countries, 41% of whom were women. The student representative, Christopher Titan Chikowi from Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) in Malawi, summed the year up by saying that it was “a journey packed with experience and knowledge – an experience that has sharpened our minds and given us a deeper understanding in the areas of specialisation studied.” He appreciated having been able to learn from the module content and from engaging with students from different countries. The Department looks forward to receiving the 13th cohort of students and visiting staff in August 2018.
Department celebrates the graduation of 8 PhD students

This year has been a year of great achievements for the Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development. One of the biggest achievements was the graduation of eight PhD students during the autumn graduation ceremonies; six in Agricultural Economics, one in Rural Development and one in Environmental Economics. According to Prof Charles Machethe (acting Head of Department), this achievement can be attributed to a number of factors, including a rigorous application and selection process, dedicated supervisors and hardworking students. This accomplishment means that all lecturers in the Department hold doctoral degrees.

From left to right the graduates are Dr Charity Nhemachena, Tinashe Kapuya, Rebecca Namulindwa, Patricia Davids, Marlene Louw, and Colleta Gandidzanwa. Absent: Dr Mesay Gurmu, and Hilary Ndambiri.

Outstanding performance by UP team at the 2017 AEASA conference

The Department’s staff and students also fared well at national and international meetings and conferences. The department had a “good harvest” at the 2017 Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa’s annual conference held in Durban. Not only was more than a third of the accepted oral papers contributed by staff and students of the Department, but the Pretoria team also walked away with numerous prizes. The first and second prizes for the best contributed papers were won by members of the lecturing corps of the Department. Dr Danie Jordaan won first prize for his paper entitled “Measuring the fragility of agribusiness value chains: A case study of the South African lamb chain”, whilst Dr Melissa van der Merwe won the second prize for her paper “Investing in collective reputation: Sheep farmers, geographic indicators and collective action in the Karoo, South Africa”.
Other UP achievements related to the conference include the awards for the best paper submitted to the conference by a PhD student, won by Dr Colleta Gandidzanwa, and the best published article in the Agrekon journal on demand elasticities in the South African meat industry, published by Delport, Louw, Davids, Vermeulen and Meyer in Agrekon 56(1) in their capacity as researchers in the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP).

Dr Tracy Davids also won the second prize for the best published article on her work relating to the competitiveness of the South African broiler industry. The award for the best poster presentation went to the UP team, funded by the Agricultural Research Council, for data rescue work in memory of the late Dr Frikkie Liebenberg, who pioneered this work.

In addition, Prof Sheryl Hendriks was acknowledged during the Association's annual general meeting for making a significant contribution to the impact factor of the Association's journal with her authored and co-authored papers contributing 55% of the impact factor citations for Agrekon in 2016. During the same meeting, Prof Ferdi Meyer was also elected as the Association's new vice president.

**Dr Tracy Davids represents UP and BFAP at the World Outlook Conference in Switzerland**

On the 7th and 8th of June 2018, Dr Tracy Davids, a researcher in the Department and manager of the Bureau of Food and Agricultural Policy’s commodity markets division, attended the annual World Outlook Conference in Spiez, Switzerland. The World Outlook Conference is an annual event, focussed on forward-looking simulation modelling for agricultural policy analysis. It is attended by policy analysts from a number of global institutes, such as the FAO, the OECD, the European Commission, as well as country-specific research institutes and government analysts.

During this two-day conference, participants discuss and exchange views on the future and specific issues facing agricultural commodity markets globally. Countries represented at this year’s World Outlook Conference included the United States of America, the Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Japan, China, Norway and South Africa. In Spiez, Dr Davids presented the methodology that she applied to her PhD thesis. As part of her recently completed PhD thesis, Dr Davids developed an innovative structure for partial equilibrium modelling in Eastern and Southern Africa. This method provides a very promising solution to modelling the impacts of changes in bilateral trade agreements on agricultural markets.

The global interest in African markets and the innovation in the modelling technique led to a general interest in the application of the trade system to the future analysis of trade-related policy questions, and a number of opportunities for future collaboration were subsequently identified.
UP student part of winning team in the 2018 Agbiz Student Case Study Competition

On 7 and 8 June 2018, Khanimamba Hlungwani, a postgraduate student in the Department made us proud, when she and her teammates from other universities emerged as the winners of the prestigious 2018 Agbiz Student Case Study Competition. This competition brings together top-performing university students in agribusiness-related fields of study. This year’s challenge was to improve the performance of the Sundays River Citrus Cooperation (SRCC) based in the Eastern Cape, which has been experiencing serious problems in the area of labour relations. Their advice to the SRCC? “To position themselves in a way that would make it very clear to consumers that it not only provides good quality products but also has a positive social impact. Consumer trends show that consumers are moving away from viewing food as merely something we eat when we are hungry and that the European market to which SRCC exports their product, in particular, views the consumption of food as an experience.” As the only female in her team, Ms Hlungwani mentioned that the experience had shown her the opportunities that are available when people open themselves up and are willing to learn from others and become immersed in the process.

Team members Theunis Oberbolster, Khanimamba Hlungwani, Damien Sousa and Almeru Van Wyk
Dr Colleta Gandidzanwa shares research findings with ICABR Conference in Washington DC

From 12 to 15 June 2018, Dr Colleta Gandidzanwa, a researcher in the Department, attended a conference of the International Consortium on Applied Bio-economy Research (ICABR) at the World Bank in Washington DC. This year the theme of the conference was “Disruptive Innovations, Value Chains, and Rural Development”. As a researcher, Dr Gandidzanwa is involved in the data rescue initiative that is run by the Collaborative Centre on Economics of Agricultural Research and Development and the Agricultural Research Council, having the vision to establish growing collaborations in the data rescue process. Dr Gandidzanwa presented the research results from her recently-completed PhD thesis on “Net farm income, exchange rates and tractor prices in South Africa: A cointegration approach”. Her presentation was well-aligned to the conference theme, as tractor evolution was one of the disruptive technologies discussed by other researchers at the conference. Research and data systems need innovation to adapt to the dynamism of technologies. In addition to discovering touch points with other researchers and organisations in the technology innovation space around the world, Dr Gandidzanwa is now part of a multi-disciplinary research network that was initiated at the conference by the OCP Research LLC. Dr Gandidzanwa will continue to work with other researchers in this network and foster collaborations for future research.

Dr Moraka Makhura spearheads new research on food security and nutrition

On 27 June 2018, Dr Moraka Makhura, project team leader of the Committee for World Food Security’s (CFS) High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE), presented the findings of the first scientific report on the concept in Rome. The report ushers in a new focus of development research and practice, setting the groundwork for building a new research domain in development theory and practice. Previous HLPE reports call for radical transformations and suggest possible pathways to progress towards more sustainable food systems, at different scales, in order to address the multiple burdens of malnutrition. The reports typically draw on a large body of scientific research, synthesising this to present the consensus and controversies on critical and emerging issues facing food security and nutrition. The reports, being commissioned by the CFS, seek to provide policy guidance on these topics to the member states of the CFS. Since the inception of this science-policy interface mechanism in 2010, the HLPE reports have informed CFS discussions, changed public policy and influenced legal frameworks (notably on realising the right to food) in countries. The previous reports have covered 12 topics of global and national importance in the fight against hunger. The 13th report on multi-stakeholder partnerships to finance and improve food security and nutrition in the framework of the 2030 Agenda is novel in that there was very little published research, opinion and knowledge on the topic. Dr Makhura will present the report at the CFS annual meeting in October in Rome.
EVENTS

Feedback from our members
Young professionals and students make South Africa proud at IFAMA 28th Global Case Competition

The International Food and Agribusiness Management Association (IFAMA) held its 28th Global Case Competition at the end of June 2018, in Buenos Aires as part of their annual World Conference, in partnership with Universidad Austral. Twenty five teams comprising 120 participants hailing from all continents, were challenged by a real life agribusiness situation (proposed by Bayer Chemicals) and had to present their proposals and business plans to a high level panel of international CEO's and other stakeholders in the realm of Agribusiness.

The case study competition is one of the many events of the IFAMA conference which continues to draw participants from all five continents with some teams meeting days or just hours before the competition’s commencement. This year, teams were tasked with coming up with innovative ways of formulating food chain partnerships that would advance the promotion of Shared Value Initiates. The study highlighted how the different elements of Research and Development (R&D), Intellectual Property Rights, private-public partnerships, marketing, sound business strategy, traceability, coordinated extension and adequate institutional capacity were critical building sustainable value chains. The case study focused on how a neglected and utilised specie, the Bambara groundnut (a legume which has its origins in Southern Africa), could be used to empower the smallholder farmers in Malaysia.

The competition had student and young professionals categories and consisted of two rounds. In the first round, teams had four hours to work through a complex case study, develop a creative and practical solution to the problem and present this to a panel of judges. Eight teams are subsequently selected to participate in the final round where teams were allocated another four hours to work on the addendum to the case. The second round of presentations was then evaluated by a panel of judges. The panel for the final adjudication included representatives of the featured agribusiness (this year Bayer Crop Science).

The finals were conducted at the open plenary of the IFAMA World Forum. The competition was tightly contested and took novel approaches to solving the problems posed by the cases. Two South Africans, Hein Gerwel from Stellenbosch University and Dr Melissa vd Merwe from the University of Pretoria were members of the winning team in the Young Professionals competition. The team presented an ingenious idea to solve major value chain problems through the use of blockchain technologies.
The Africa student team which included Chiedza Tsvakirai (North West University), Jodie Vosloo (University of Pretoria), Paie Bowen (University of Pretoria) and Ayabonga Sibulali (Stellenbosch University) featured second in the student category. Their team’s approach was to ground their solution on a value chain-wide traceability system. By improving the traceability systems, they were able to create a branded product which resulted in a premium for the smallholder farmers and a shared value throughout the chain.

Competition participants also presented oral research papers on “Destructive innovation in the world of food and agribusiness” and “how to manage the resulting new and different opportunities and markets”. The president of the African chapter for IFAMA, Professor Van Rooyen (Stellenbosch University), headed an insightful panel discussion which highlighted the numerous agribusiness opportunities that various innovations have brought to Africa. The discussion panel was manned by Professor Andre Louw (University of Pretoria), Sifiso Ntombela (Agricultural Business Chamber), Thinus van Schoor (University of Pretoria) and Hein Gerwel (University of Stellenbosch).

Johann Boonzaaier (Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy), Thinus van Schoor, Michael Day (AfriValue Consulting), Johan van Rooyen (IFAMA President) and Hein Gerwel also presented scientific papers and participated in panel sessions. The next IFAMA conference and case competition is to be held in Hangzhou, China in 2019.
The 2018 FR Tomlinson Commemorative Lecture was presented by Prof Sheryl Hendriks on 22 February 2018 at the University of Pretoria. Professor Hendriks was the first woman in AEASA’s history to deliver the Commemorative Lecture. The theme for this year’s lecture was Food Policy and Nutrition Economics in the SDG era. A transcript of the lecture may be accessed on https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.aeasa.org.za/resource/collection/B6EB860D-F3E1-4160-AFC0-50B1E007408F/FRTomlinsonLecture2018.pdf.
APFP 2017-18 USA STUDY TOUR

A note from the Coordinator

With agricultural economics becoming an increasingly globalised 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 was rolled into a larger capacity building initiative named Agricultural Professional Fellowship Program (APFP). APFP includes other agricultural disciplines and expands the scope of the programme with several in-country activities held in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the 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 programme for a select group of South African young professionals working in agriculture and related fields. The programme selects an annual cohort of early-to-mid career agricultural professionals (Fellows) to participate in a year-long capacity building programme 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 programme 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 programme 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 2017-18 cohort comprised of two fellows: Asanda Jafta, a senior agricultural economist at the National Department of Agriculture, and Lerato Phali, a PhD candidate in Agricultural Economics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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, including Dr. Rod Hawkes, an expert on supermarket trends, and Dr. Ndunge Kiiti, a development practitioner with expertise on the use of mobile money in Africa. The fellows visited several local supermarkets and also got to see first hand how agribusinesses have thrived in the region on their visit to Keystone Mills in Romulus, NY.

From Ithaca the group flew to Tuskegee University, a prestigious historically black University in Alabama where the Fellows attended the 75th 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:

**Jafta**: Climate Smart Agriculture as a viable solution to climate change and food insecurity

**Phali**: Institutional integration and coordination in water governance in Smallholder Irrigation Schemes: Evidence from KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa

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), Global Harvest Initiative, as well as a unique opportunity to meet and discuss policy with the Ambassador from South Africa. We concluded the tour with a day of tourism before the group departed for South Africa.

**Dr Ed Mabaya**

**Fellows reflect on their experience**

**Reflections by Lerato Pali**

Visiting Cornell University was a great experience. Meeting Prof Christy, Dr Krizstina and Dr Ed was a great and humbling experience as I got to engage with people whose work I read upon. Dr Rod Hawkes gave a talk on supermarkets in the U.S. and this provided valuable insights on their functions and I was able to make a comparison with markets in South Africa.

Overall, the professional and networking experience made me realise that the challenges faced here in SA are not unique and that it’s upon young professionals to think of strategic solutions. It made me realise that I chose the right field and made me look forward to making changes in every way possible. I also realised that agriculture is diverse, and all the facets need to be considered to improve the sector in our country. I am now, more than ever, passionate about research and development in Africa.

**Reflections By Asanda Jafta**

The 2017 USA Study tour was the most inspirational programme in my career and personal life. Many thanks go to the founders and sponsors for having initiated this programme to strengthen the capacity and exposure of young South African agricultural economists. It was a great honour to be part of the programme.

Overall, my experience in the U.S. challenged me to think more strategically and to believe in my potential as a young professional. Personally I was inspired by Dr Mabaya’s leadership, and it helped realise that I do not have to be in a top position to bring about change, but I can have impact at the level I am at. This reminded of the late dear Mandela’s words “leadership is behavioural, not positional; the capacity to integrate, motivate and mobilise others to bring a common aspiration to life” this gives me confidence to know that I don’t have to attain certain organisational or political positions to lead and make a difference in my country.
TEDX JOHANNESBURG: HACKING THE FARM

AEASA members participate in TEDx Event on Hacking the Farm

On 1 March 2018, two AEASA members, Dr Ed Mabaya of Cornell University and Thabi Nkosi of AFGRI delivered TED Talks at an event hosted by TEDx Johannesburg under the theme Hacking the Farm. The line-up featured farmers, technologists, economists, agronomists, entrepreneurs, researchers, inventors, designers and activists who provided their perspectives on the exciting changes affecting the farm.

Dr Mabaya delivered an insightful talk on how improved seed varieties offer an easy and affordable way to improve both income and nutritional outcomes for smallholder farmers across Africa. View Dr Mabaya's talk here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ezlcvylcd4.

Thabi provided her take on the state of agriculture in South Africa and questioned why the sector is a perpetual “ugly ducking” in the South African economy. View Thabi's talk here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SNlCoR9K_4&t=100s.
THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIST’S TOOLKIT

Resources for when you’re on the go
**TOP BLOGS FOR AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blog Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AgWired</td>
<td>Informative blog focusing on what’s new in the world of agribusiness and agriculture marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://agwired.com/">http://agwired.com/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AgFunder</td>
<td>Provides news and views on global food and agriculture technology start-ups and the investors behind them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://agfundernews.com/">https://agfundernews.com/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMC Research Portal</td>
<td>Provides well-researched insights on key matters affecting South African agriculture, from the macroeconomy to food prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.namc.co.za/research-portal/">http://www.namc.co.za/research-portal/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wandile Sihlobo</td>
<td>Wandile is a home-brewed agricultural economist and media commentator. His blogs provide insights on topical matters affecting South Africa’s agricultural economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://wandilesihlobo.com/">https://wandilesihlobo.com/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayson Lusk</td>
<td>Jason Lust is a professor and Head of the Agricultural Economics Department at Purdue University. He blogs on all aspects of the agricultural economy, especially in the USA market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://jaysonlusk.com/">http://jaysonlusk.com/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MUST-FOLLOW TWITTER ACCOUNTS FOR AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS

Agricultural Economics Association of SA
@AEASA_LEVSA  Follows you
Carien Kruger, Paul Makube, TRALAC, and 22 others follow
Home of the South African agricultural economist

Wandile Sihlobo
@WandileSihlobo  Follows you
Mark Narramore, SACAU, Business Insider SA, and 155 others follow
South African Agricultural Economist and Writer. I blog at wandilesihlobo.com

Farmer’s Weekly SA
@FarmersWeeklySA
Rural Dev & Land Ref, Agri-Expo, MarionShikwinya, and 91 others follow
SA’s oldest & most trusted agri magazine. Bringing you the latest news, in-depth analysis & farming success stories.
South Africa  farmersweekly.co.za

Wessel Lemmer
@WesselLemmer  Follows you
Stockfarm magazine, City Farms, Farmbiz magazine, and 63 others follow
Senior Agricultural Economist at Absa

Scott Irwin
@ScottIrwinUl  Follows you
FAO Knowledge, Ags Players, AgResource Company, and 20 others follow
Agricultural Economist at the University of Illinois; Lifelong fascination with commodity markets; Iowa farmboy

AAAE
@afraaecon
Agricultural Economics Association of SA, AgEcon_UP, Litha Magingxya, and 5 others follow
African Association of Agricultural Economists is a network of Agricultural Economists working to improve the productivity of African agriculture
Nairobi  aaaa-africa.org
BOOKS: OUR TOP PICKS

Thinking, Fast and Slow
Daniel Kahneman

The Fourth Industrial Revolution
Klaus Schwab

Agricultural and Food Controversies: What Everyone Needs to Know
F. Bailey Norwood, Michelle S. Calvo-Lorenzo, Pascal A. Oltenacu, and Sarah Lancaster

The New Harvest: Agricultural Innovation in Africa
Calestous Juma

The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable
Nassim Nicholas Taleb

The Global Farms Race: Land Grabs, Agricultural Investment, and the Scramble for Food Security
Michael Kugelman

How South Africa Works: And Must Do Better
Greg Mills and Jeffrey Herbst

Why Nations Fail
Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson

The Oxford Handbook of Food, Politics, and Society
Edited by Ronald J. Herring
They say that an economist is someone who didn’t have enough personality to become an accountant...
As you can see, we were finally able to control the volatility in our stock price. This was done by carefully increasing the Y-axis intervals.

"My wife’s a Keynesian — she’s always spending herself out of depressions."
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND CONTRIBUTORS
# MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND CONTRIBUTORS

## AEASA Management Committee

**President**  
Prof Ferdi Meyer  
Ferdi.Meyer@up.ac.za

**Past President**  
Ms Bongiswa Matoti  
bongiswam@elsenburg.com

**Secretary/Treasurer**  
Mmatlou Kalaba  
mmatlou.kalaba@up.ac.za

**Agrekon Editor**  
Johann Kirsten  
jkirsten@sun.ac.za

**Newsletter Editor**  
Thabi Nkosi  
Thabi.Nkosi@agh.co.za

**Additional member**  
Mr Motlatjo Moholwa  
moholwam@gmail.com

**Conference Chair 2018**  
Dr Cecilia Punt  
puntc@sun.ac.za

**Conference Chair 2017**  
Dr Stuart Ferrer  
Ferrer@ukzn.ac.za

## Contributors to this issue

- Ferdi Meyer
- Asanda Jahta
- Masego Moobi
- Nick Vink
- Gerald Ortmann
- Melissa van der Merwe
- Cecelia Punt
- Chiedza Tsvakirai
- Lerato Pali
- Ed Mabaya

## Photo credits:

- [https://goo.gl/images/UKAVwi](https://goo.gl/images/UKAVwi)
- [https://goo.gl/images/qoiHCr](https://goo.gl/images/qoiHCr)
- [https://goo.gl/images/yiSYvu](https://goo.gl/images/yiSYvu)
- [https://goo.gl/images/TneM2R](https://goo.gl/images/TneM2R)
- TEDx Johannesburg