



*The Grain and Oilseed Industry
of South Africa*

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

CHAPTER 6

6 Grain SA's NAMPO HARVEST DAY

What started in 1967 as an opportunity for maize producers to compare mechanisation equipment on a non-competitive basis in one place, in fact expanded to a diversified agricultural trade show of an international proportions.

After 50 years Grain SA's NAMPO Harvest Day is in 2016 still considered to be the trendsetting showcase for agriculture in southern Africa, and it involves even more: It is a grid reference of progress in agriculture; a technological score board and an annual institution symbolising a feeling of solidarity among producers.

A former managing director of NAMPO and Grain SA – and a Harvest Day pioneer in his own right – Mr Giel van Zyl, put the sentiments of the agricultural community into words as follows: “The Harvest Day project’s biggest contribution, apart from the fact that it is a shopping place for producers, is the solidarity that it creates among all grain producers, because it is something that they built up, manned and managed. In fact, there are very few things that create so much pride in grain producers like the Harvest Day.” Van Zyl also reckons that the Harvest Day is an extension of the inputs over many years of people in agriculture to promote the best interests of the grain producers as part of the grain industry’s battle for recognition and survival.

INCEPTION AND ESTABLISHMENT

SAMPI, or rather the South African Maize Producers’ Institute, was established in 1966 by maize producers who were dissatisfied with the fact that those who handled the maize industry were not bona fide maize farmers, as well as with their incorrect handling of the economic affairs of the industry. For SAMPI as a newly established maize producers’ organisation, it was a challenge to try and fight the government-supported maize specialist organisation (SAMSO) and organised agriculture. However, a common pursuit of adequate and democratic representation gave the young SAMPI the courage to boldly start the “big maize battle”.

The Harvest Day owes its inception to the initiative of three producers from Bloemfontein, Messrs Moos Haddad, Hannes van Wyk and George Stegmann – all of them members of the then SAMPI regional management from Bloemfontein.



Messrs Moos Haddad, Hannes van Wyk and George Stegmann were the founder members of the SAMPI Harvest Day Project. The first Harvest Day was held in the Bloemfontein district on 7 and 8 June 1967.

“ I TRUST THAT THE HARVEST DAY WILL BECOME WORLD FAMOUS ONE DAY LIKE THE FLOWER FESTIVAL IN HOLLAND, THE RHINE FESTIVALS IN GERMANY AND THE CARNIVAL IN WINDHOEK. ”
– The former director of SAMPI, Dr Willie Kotze, in 1967 after the very first Harvest Day.



Video: Mr Crawford von Abo tells about the origin of the Harvest Day.



One of the earliest Harvest Days as seen from the air – around 1969.

MECHANISATION EXHIBITORS DURING THE FIRST HARVEST DAY IN 1967

1. Malcomess
2. Sentraalwes Koöperatiewe Maatskappy
3. International Harvester
4. John Deere
5. John Roderick & Southy
6. Lambons
7. Lifa
8. Mangolds

These three musketeers, whose farms bordered one another north of Bloemfontein, suited the action to the words, and on 7 and 8 June 1967 the first SAMPI Harvest Day was held on Donkerhoek – Van Wyk's farm – near Bloemfontein. A total of eight exhibitors took part and 203 people attended. This modest beginning was the start of a agriculture-focused, needs-driven agricultural trade show that grew steadily, and in 2016 it accommodated 685 exhibitors and 75 116 visitors.

'We started the Harvest Day because we wanted to bring farmers and the manufacturers of implements together. For maize farmers the sixties was a time of transition to large-scale mechanisation and the bulk handling of grains. There was a real need to view tractors and implements on a larger scale than when only one company demonstrated its products on your farm,' Van Wyk told *Mielies/Maize* (the predecessor of *SA Graan/Grain*) in the April 1989 issue. The dream was to create a platform where suppliers of mechanisation implements and producers could meet one another so that informed production and purchasing decisions could be made.

Van Wyk also said that it was really tough going to organise the first Harvest Day. Tractor and implement manufacturers had to be convinced to take part. Eventually eight companies agreed and Lister provided a generator.

Regional harvest days followed

Haddad's farm, Hopefield, was selected as the base for SAMPI's Harvest Day from 1968. As Hopefield was situated next to the Bloemfontein/Bultfontein tarred road, its better accessibility was probably the reason why the Harvest Day was held there until 1972.

“WHEN YOU THINK BACK ABOUT PEOPLE IT IS ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO SINGLE SOMEONE OUT. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO MENTION THE THREE MUSKETEERS FROM BLOEMFONTEIN, MOOS HADDAD, HANNES VAN WYK AND GEORGE STEGMANN, AND THEIR SPOUSES. THEY WERE THE ONES WITH THE GREAT IDEA (OF A HARVEST DAY) IN 1966.”

– Mr Dennis von Abo,
Harvest Day Director; 1983.



A framed version of the first Harvest Day's poster hangs in the administrative offices at NAMPO Park.

THE NAME 'HARVEST DAY' CAME FROM THE FOCUS ON MECHANISATION OF HARVEST EQUIPMENT DURING THE VERY FIRST HARVEST DAY IN 1967. IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED THE IMPLEMENTS THAT WERE DEMONSTRATED ON A NON-COMPETITIVE BASIS UNDER WORKING CONDITIONS WERE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE ALL FACETS OF THE PRODUCTION CYCLE. THE NAME OF HARVEST DAY STOOD THE TEST OF TIME AND IS STILL USED TODAY.

In July 1969 *Die Landman* reported that about 2 000 producers had been present at Hopefield over the two days in 1969. Transactions to the amount of R50 000 – a substantial amount for those days – were settled over the two days. Dr AJA Roux, Chairperson of the Atomic Energy Board, was the keynote speaker, and Mr Fanus Rautenbach, well-known radio broadcaster, was the announcer.

As far as controlled implement demonstrations were concerned, the normal procedures were followed just like when a producer would cultivate his own crop. Demonstrations included those of stationary threshers, after that self-driven and drawn threshers, followed by the ploughing of the harvested fields. Planters in action were added from 1970.



An archive photo of the second SAMPI Harvest Day. It was taken on Haddad's farm, Hopefield.



In the early years a keynote speaker was part of the Harvest Day programme. Dr AJA Roux, Chairperson of the Atomic Energy Board was 1968's keynote speaker.



Practical demonstrations of agricultural equipment on a non-competitive basis were a core focus for approximately 40 years since the inception of the Harvest Day.



A controlled mechanisation demonstration during the Harvest Day in 1972.



By 1972 the regional harvest days were already established. This is the poster from that year.

The success of the Harvest Day was confirmation that SAMPI had a unique recipe. To demonstrate a variety of tractors and implements under working conditions on a non-competitive basis at one venue addressed an urgent need of maize producers. Although the organising committee had to work resourcefully to convince mechanisation exhibitors to take part, the concept of the Harvest Day was rapidly gaining ground – to the dismay of SAMSO and Co., but to the benefit of a unquenchable spirit of solidarity that was taking root in the ranks of SAMPI.

From 1969 this popularity led to additional harvest days on a regional basis under the banner of SAMPI's Central Harvest Day Committee, namely one on the Eastern Highveld (today Mpumalanga) and one in the Western Transvaal (the current North West). The Harvest Day that was held near Standerton was initially presented on the farm Roodebank of Mr Flip Viljoen. Later it moved to the farm Uitgezocht of Mr Tienie Louw in the Hendrina district. At Ottosdal it was presented on the farm Rietvlei of Ms Annie Lombard. By 1972 the three Harvest Days boasted an attendance of more than 11 000 producers at the various venues.

First national Harvest Day

By 1972 a Central Harvest Day Committee was formed to oversee the regional harvest days. Mr Janneman Venter, Chairperson of the committee, visited the USA in 1972 to investigate the Field Show model, and in collaboration with the manufacturers he planted the seed for presenting one Harvest Day, but on a larger scale.

It became a goal for SAMPI to make a permanent harvest day venue the annual centre for agricultural mechanisation in South Africa. The suppliers of mechanised equipment and implements also said that one central exhibition and demonstration effort was more affordable and effective than three separate harvest days. A decision by the committee in October 1972 to combine the three harvest days into 'one massive presentation' from 1973 and to present it at one central, permanent venue, led to

THE NAMES OF VARIOUS OF HALLS AT NAMPO PARK COME FROM THE HISTORY OF THE HARVEST DAY

- **Donkerhoek Hall** (farm of Mr Hannes van Wyk, where the first Harvest Day was held)
- **Hopefield Hall** (Mr Moos Haddad's farm, where the Harvest Days of the Free State were presented)
- **SAMPI Hall** (predecessor of Grain SA)
- **NAMPO Hall** (predecessor of Grain SA)
- **Fanie Ferreira Hall** (last Chairperson of SAMPI and first Chairperson of NAMPO)
- **Roodebank Seed Hall** (Mr Flip Viljoen's farm, where the Eastern Transvaal's Harvest Days were initially presented)

THE HARVEST DAY IS ONE OF THOSE EVENTS THAT ONE SHOULD NOT MISS, BECAUSE THIS IS WHERE EVERYTHING IN THE AREA OF AGRICULTURE IS HAPPENING IN THE SPACE OF THREE DAYS.

– Mnr Japie Grobler,
Chairperson of NAMPO; 1996.

the first combined Harvest Day, which was held in 1973 at the temporary national Harvest Day grounds in Ottosdal.

When the farm Marthaville in the Bothaville district came on the market, the decision was made to buy the land and develop it for this purpose. The Bothaville/Viljoenskroon district was seen as a locality that was readily accessible to producers from all over the country. Approximately 80% of the maize production area at the time was located within a 160 km radius from Bothaville. Marthaville also borders a tarred road, which optimised accessibility and traffic.

It must be said that the way in which the land came into SAMPI's possession is partly a mystery. Tradition has it that it was donated as a whole to SAMPI, but that is unconfirmed. The harvest day grounds are made up of three title deeds, of which the smallest part (approximately 25 ha) was donated by Mr Louis Luyt, at the time the owner of Triomf Kunsmis, and in later years rugby boss, because he supported SAMPI's cause.



The first combined Harvest Day was presented in 1973 on a farm near Ottosdal. To accommodate the previous harvest days of the Free State and the Eastern Transvaal there, the grounds were enlarged by approximately 100 morgen.

The previous owner of Marthaville, Mr Jan Bothma, was apparently not happy to sell directly to SAMPI, as he was a supporter of SAMSO. This challenge was circumvented when Mr Flip Grobler, whose land bordered Marthaville, bought the farm of 171 ha and transferred it to SAMPI immediately. As SAMPI was a relatively young organisation at the time, the twelve Executive Committee members, of whom Grobler was one, had to provide surety for the bond in their personal capacity. A third piece of land was bought by NAMPO in the late eighties to house a sheep project as part of the land conversion scheme.

In 1973 Messrs Hannes van Wyk and Callie van Wyk were delegated by SAMPI to visit a Field Harvest Day in New Zealand to find out how the Kiwis were doing it.

The NAMPO era begins

After intervention by the former Minister of Agriculture, Mr Hendrik Schoeman, unity in the maize industry was eventually achieved. On 3 October 1980 SAMPI and SAMSO were dissolved to make room for the National Maize Producers' Organisation, or NAMPO. The Harvest Day – as a prominent part of SAMPI's dowry – was therefore renamed the NAMPO Harvest Day.

During the nearly 20 years that followed, the NAMPO Harvest Day went from strength to strength. What was initially a maize-focused trade show was diversified and expanded to accommodate the South African agricultural industry as a whole. It developed into one of the best known local agricultural brands and today even boasts a strong presence in Africa and abroad.



A view from the air of the Harvest Day grounds before the big rush started in 1973.

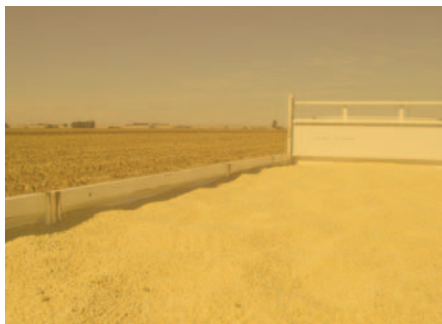
“ I WANT TO GIVE SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR INPUT PROVIDERS AND EXHIBITORS. YEAR AFTER YEAR THEY ARE THE LIFE BLOOD OF THE HARVEST DAY. THEY INCUR BIG EXPENSES TO BRING MILLIONS OF RANDS OF AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT AND ANIMALS TO THE HARVEST DAY. ”

– Mr Bully Botma, Harvest Day Chairperson, 1996.



EXHIBITORS IN 2016 WHO HAVE EXHIBITED AT NAMPO PARK SINCE 1974

1. New Holland SA
2. Argo Industrial
3. John Deere
4. Northmec
5. Barloworld Agriculture
6. Kempston Agri (Claas)
7. Eqstra (Deutz & Same)
8. Shell
9. Syngenta
10. Andrag Agrico
11. Erdvark Implemente
12. Rovic Leers
13. Pannar
14. Senwes
15. Engen
16. Bessemer



Video: A commemorative DVD production to commemorate the 50th Harvest Day in 2016 was made at the direction of Grain SA.



Special recognition was given to six of the eight exhibitors of the 1967 Harvest Day who are still exhibiting today, as well as to 17 exhibitors who have been exhibiting continuously since 1974 at the current venue. At the function were personnel from New Holland SA, Argo, BarloworldAgri, KempstonAgri (Claas), Eqstra (Deutz & Same), Shell, Syngenta, Rovic Leers, Pannar, Senwes and Bessemer.

Grain and oilseeds industries become one

Unification in the grain and oilseeds industries followed nearly two decades later, in 1999, after the deregulation of agricultural marketing in 1997. Speciality organisations representing producers from the maize, winter cereals, sorghum as well as oil protein seeds industries established the biggest agricultural producers' organisation in the country. The Harvest Day was once more part of the assets that NAMPO brought to the newly established speciality organisation.

The initial name – the Grain Producers' Organisation (GPO) – made room for a brand new corporate identity when Grain SA was unanimously approved by the annual Congress on 8 March 2000.

With a proud history stretching over five decades the Harvest Day is today a combination of the most recent agricultural technology, product variety, innovation, discussions, networking opportunities and agricultural hospitality – upholding its reputation as southern Africa's agricultural showcase.

During a special event at NAMPO 2016 Grain SA acknowledged the contribution of exhibitors, volunteers, the agricultural leadership and staff to the Harvest Day since 1967. Special recognition was given to seven of the eight exhibitors at the 1967 Harvest Day who are still exhibiting today, as well as to sixteen exhibitors who have been exhibiting continuously since 1974 at the current venue.

BY PRODUCERS FOR PRODUCERS

Since its inception the Harvest Day has been owned and presented by volunteer grain producers' organisations: first by SAMPI, later – after unification in the maize industry in 1980 – by NAMPO, and since the consolidation of grain organisations in 1999 by Grain SA.

The winning recipe of an effective committee system, the support from volunteers from the communities in the grain producing areas, as well as dedicated staff has contributed to the Harvest Day being widely acknowledged today as the biggest agricultural exhibit in private ownership in the world.

The same determination of maize producers that led to the founding of SAMPI echoed in the organisation of the Harvest Day, with a principle of 'by farmers for farmers' that quickly became established. As a young organisation SAMPI could not afford full-time staff and members had to roll up their sleeves themselves to get the work done. More than 200 volunteers comprising existing members of Grain SA and its predecessors and their families, as well as people from the community who supported the cause of the Harvest Day, jumped in every year to prepare and serve refreshments.



Grain SA entertained the organisation's former leadership, NAMPO Harvest Day Committee members, volunteers, staff and friends of the Harvest Day during a 50-year event on Friday, 20 May. On the photo are the agricultural leaders responsible for Grain SA's NAMPO Harvest Day over the past nearly three decades. In front: Vic Mouton (Harvest Day Chairperson 2001 - 2005), Jub Jubelius (Harvest Day Chairperson 2005 - 2011), Cobus van Collier (Harvest Day Chairperson since 2011) and Johan Loxton (Manager, Commercial Services, who has been at the helm of the NAMPO Harvest Day organisation for the past 20 years). At the back: Jannie de Villiers (CEO: Grain SA), Japie Grobler (Harvest Day Chairperson 1987 - 1989) and Bully Botma (Harvest Day Chairperson 1989 - 2001).

Agricultural leadership

The goal of the Harvest Day pioneers was to establish the Harvest Day as a competitive SAMPI product and at the same time effectively address the need of the producers. Throughout those initial years the three pioneers from Bloemfontein maintained a strong presence in the organisation of the Harvest Day that was held on Hopefield, as well as at the other regional harvest days that became established since 1969.

Mr Kobus Kotzé took the lead in organising the harvest day in the Eastern Transvaal. In the Western Transvaal Mr Callie van Wyk from Ottosdal took the lead. Mr Paul Jordaan was the Chairperson of the Harvest Day since 1974 and was succeeded by Van Wyk in 1983.

By the early eighties the officials were supported by an organising committee comprising volunteer producers who did not necessarily serve on the Executive

“ WE WILL HAVE TO GUARD AGAINST THE HARVEST DAY BECOMING A FLEA MARKET. THE PURPOSE OF THE HARVEST DAY IS TO GIVE INPUT PROVIDERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE CONTACT WITH OUR FARMERS ON A PERSONAL LEVEL AND TO SHOW THEM THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY IN THE AREA OF AGRICULTURE. ”

– Mr Giel van Zyl, Managing Director of NAMPO; 1996.



The first buildings on the permanent Harvest Day Grounds were erected in 1974 . Here the floor of one of the restaurants is poured.

THIS YEAR – AND IN THE FUTURE – THE EMPHASIS WILL HOWEVER STILL BE ON AGRICULTURAL AND AGRICULTURE-RELATED EXHIBITORS. YOU ARE ALSO AWARE OF OUR POINT OF VIEW THAT WE ARE NOT AFTER NUMBERS, BE IT VISITORS OR EXHIBITORS. THE NAMPO HARVEST DAY IS AND REMAINS A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY, WHERE A PLATFORM IS CREATED FOR INPUT PROVIDERS AND PRODUCERS IN ORDER TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT PRODUCTION AND PURCHASES.

– Mr Vic Mouton, Harvest Day Chairperson, during a press conference in 2002



Mr Hannes van Wyk

of NAMPO. Any member of the public could work as volunteer at the Harvest Day. After a few years such a person was usually approached to serve on a committee and could very well become a Chairperson of a committee or the Harvest Day Committee.

A decision in the eighties by the Executive of NAMPO to place the Harvest Day Committee under the management of the Executive led to the Chairperson of the Harvest Day Committee becoming an elected Executive member of NAMPO. This aligned the control of the Harvest Day as prominent commercial service once more with that of the organisation.

Mr Japie Grobler – then a member of the Harvest Day Committee as well as Executive member of NAMPO – was therefore elected as Chairperson of the NAMPO Harvest Day Committee as a working committee of the NAMPO Executive in 1987. Grobler – a well-known agricultural leader who was also the only person who served on the Executive of SAMPI, NAMPO and Grain SA – held this position until 1989. The committee system, which is still used to this day, resulted in everything running very smoothly, and by 1987 there was a management committee, as well as committees for demonstrations, the pub, liaison, the grounds, animals, refreshments, farming, and farmers' patents.

A following decision of the Management Committee determined that all the elected management committee members had to report for work during the Harvest Day. Those that could not be there, had to explain to the Chairperson of NAMPO why they could not be on duty.

The Chairpersons of the Harvest Day from 1987 were as follows:

- Mr Japie Grobler from Bothaville (1987 - 1989)
- Mr Bully Botma from Bothaville (1989 - 2001)
- Mr Vic Mouton from Koster (2001 - 2005)
- Mr Jub Jubelius from Hennenman (2005 - 2011)
- Mr Cobus van Collier from Viljoenskroon (2011 - 2016)

Senior officials of the Harvest Day

Hannes van Wyk, Managing Director: SAMPI and SAMPI Harvest Day Director 1974 - 1976

When Marthaville became the permanent home of the Harvest Day, and with SAMPI's office situated in Bothaville, the Harvest Day pioneer Hannes van Wyk was appointed as Managing Director of SAMPI, and at the same time as Harvest Day Director. His brief for the Harvest Day was to handle its establishment on the farm and therefore to also manage the layout of the grounds and the demonstration area.

Two giant restaurants and toilet facilities – the first buildings on the grounds – were erected in time for the 1974 Harvest Day. Other permanent facilities included an administrative head office, entrance gates, a beer garden and a caravan park. The show area and buildings extended over 16 ha.

The mobile demonstrations of the 1974 Harvest Day made provision for harvesters, threshers and pickers, driers and bulk-handling balers, rakes, hammer mills, stubble-tillage implements, ploughs, fertiliser sifters, planters, hoeing and soil-breaking implements, as well as spraying equipment.

Various input providers spontaneously jumped in and – free of charge – helped to make Marthaville a complete Harvest Day Venue. Massey Ferguson ploughed the whole farm free of charge, while fuel for the tractors was donated by Shell. Pioneer Seed donated the seed, Fedmis the fertiliser, CibaGeigy the herbicides, VETSACK the spraying equipment, implements were provided by various companies and six workers' houses were built free of charge by TAFSCO.

Die Landman (February 1974) described the development of the Harvest Day farm as an excellent example of co-operation and teamwork between SAMPI's Harvest Day management and a number of private companies and co-operatives who had the service theme of the Harvest Day at heart. In the subsequent years structures

WHAT IS HIDING UNDER THE BLACK CLOTH?

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WERE PROBLEMS AS MANY OF THE MANUFACTURERS DID NOT WANT TO BE PART OF THE HARVEST DAY. HANNES VAN WYK REMEMBERS ONE OF THE TRACTOR COMPANIES WHO OBSTINATELY REFUSED TO TAKE PART IN THE HARVEST DAY. THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE THEN TOOK ONE OF THAT COMPANY'S TRACTORS AND PARKED IT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GROUNDS, COVERING IT WITH A PIECE OF BLACK CLOTH. THIS NATURALLY ATTRACTED A LOT OF ATTENTION. IT WAS APPARENTLY THE LAST TIME THAT THIS COMPANY WAS NOT PART OF THE HARVEST DAY.



Mr Dennis von Abo

like the Hopefield and Donkerhoek Halls were constructed. An airfield was built, as well as ablution facilities at the caravan park. A cattle complex followed in 1978.

As far as refreshments were concerned, no one other than the Harvest Day Committee was allowed to bring any refreshments to the grounds. A strong volunteer group was therefore essential. The slaughtering of sheep and cattle and the processing of the meat was a huge activity in the week before the Harvest Day. During the Harvest Day volunteers were employed to braai the meat and prepare the salads. These volunteers were made up of producer members, members of their families, as well as people from the community.

HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT ALL WORK AND NO PLAY...

- *Die Landman* (predecessor of the *SA Graan/Grain* magazine) of April 1974 reported as follows: There is red-hot entertainment in the evenings. This includes a variety concert, a cabaret and a Harvest Day Ball.
- Hannes van Wyk told *Mielies/Maize* in April 1989 that after the earliest Harvest Days came to an end the dancing continued in a tent until dawn and there was so much merrymaking that even the tent nearly bit the dust in the process.

Since 1974 a ladies' programme was presented. This included speakers, demonstrations and a fashion show.

Dennis von Abo, Harvest Day Director 1976 - 1987

Thanks to a marketing career in the mechanisation industry Mr Dennis von Abo was instrumental in establishing a sound base for exhibitors of tools and implements at the Harvest Day. Under his management the Harvest Day developed from its humble beginnings in 1974 to a fully-fledged agricultural show.

In 1977 the first foreign participation in tractor and implement demonstrations was recorded when a manufacturer from the former Rhodesia took part. Demonstrations were held on four sites, which enabled Harvest Day goers to visit the full series of demonstrations at set times.

The 1982 Harvest Day can be regarded as a milestone year, as various completed permanent buildings on the grounds were used for the first time, among which the NAMPO/Shell information centre. The Harvest Day offices were housed there, as well as a lounge and pub area for important guests. According to Dennis, he could negotiate with Mr Church van Niekerk from Shell to obtain Cape Dutch yellowwood tables and riempie chairs, as well as a built-in solid wood bar counter as a donation.

Other completed buildings that were completed in 1982 were:

- NAMPO Museum (sponsored by Mobil)
- Malcomess Building
- Ford Training Centre
- Bayer SA Building
- Vetsak Building
- International Harvester Building
- Natuurgroei Building
- Spartan Cages Building
- Rietvlei Hall (later converted into the Club 200 Restaurant and currently the Grain SA Members' Hall)

As far as demonstrations were concerned, the first day was dedicated to stationary exhibitions. On the second and third days a large-scale demonstration of implements took place, with the stationary exhibits still there for inspection. Since 1983 the demonstrations were presented in different categories to enable the

viewers to directly compare tools and implements with one another. From 1987 onwards tractors were grouped according to kilowatt size.

Various cultivar trials and NAMPO maximum yield trials were also ready for the Harvest Day of 1982. These developments were continued in 1983, when the cattle complex and the Trek access gates were opened. The Fanie Ferreira Hall (named after the last Chairperson of SAMPI and the first Chairperson of NAMPO), with a service area for more than 1 200 people, was completed thanks to a sponsorship by Total. Then the sheep complex and the Maize Board's Building were completed in 1984, and the horse complex in 1985. The covered veranda of the Fanie Ferreira Hall was added in 1988. A beer garden and tea room for other refreshments were also added.

A building that was mainly the result of Von Abo's initiative is the museum – nowadays known as the Engen Museum. Von Abo found the sponsors, as well as the tractors and equipment displayed in the museum, some of them dating back to 1917. He was also responsible for the start of the NAMPO/Fedmis Farmer Patent Competition in 1985. Omnia took over the sponsorship in 1988, and in 2013 the 25-year anniversary of this popular Harvest Day attraction was celebrated.

Over time Von Abo managed to establish an excellent team of farm workers and grounds people at Marthaville, who deserve to be mentioned for their contribution to the development of the Harvest Day.



A photo dating from the late seventies shows the excitement of a demonstration by a spraying plane during the Harvest Day.



Messrs Fanie Ferreira (left) and Dennis von Abo lay the first bricks of the Fanie Ferreira Hall on the NAMPO grounds.



Video: There was always a spirit of co-operation among the producers, volunteers and staff – Mr Giel van Zyl.



Natuurgroei's new building on their stand was completed for the 1982 Harvest Day.



Malcomess's brand new complex being erected on the Harvest Day farm; 1982.



Mr Giel van Zyl



Video: New rules introduced by the Harvest Day Committee had to be implemented – Mr Giel van Zyl.

NUMBER PLEASE!

- BY 1983 TELEPHONE FACILITIES WERE PROVIDED AT FIFTEEN STANDS.
- AFTER A TEMPORARY CELLPHONE TOWER PROVIDED CELLPHONE CONNECTIONS IN 1996, MTN AND VODACOM CONSTRUCTED A PERMANENT TOWER ON THE GROUNDS IN 1997.

Giel van Zyl, Manager Administration NAMPO 1983 - 1992; Managing Director of NAMPO 1992 - 1999; Managing Director of Grain SA 1999 - 2001.

Since Mr Giel van Zyl joined NAMPO in 1983 the Harvest Day was part of his management responsibilities. As liaison between the former Managing Director, Dr Piet Gous, and the Harvest Day Committee, his duty was among other things the strategic planning, and making sure that it was carried out – something that suited Van Zyl's personal ability to a T in executing huge plans in the finest detail.

The first part of the long-term strategy with the Harvest Day was to get it acknowledged country wide. Although it had already developed a good standing in the market, the Harvest Day was still in competition with other agricultural shows in 1983. It was also not a given that exhibitors would take part every year, and there was room to convert it to become a preferred show venue for agricultural exhibitors.

With the purpose of developing the Harvest Day into a world-class trade show a vision and mission statement, which were drawn up by the Harvest Day Committee, were accepted by the NAMPO Executive. It then became clear that time and energy had to be invested in expanding the standard of the Harvest Day grounds and facilities, improving the rules for exhibitors and a renewed focus on developing the character of the Harvest Day as a purely agricultural trade show.

'In the early eighties the grounds were not fenced in and exhibitors and visitors parked everywhere. The festive atmosphere was also emphasised by the beer garden, which was situated in the middle of the grounds. Exhibitors did not have many rules to abide by,' says Van Zyl.

During subsequent years the Harvest Day Committee laid down stricter rules so that no exhibitor could enter the grounds with a vehicle during the Harvest Day. The duration of the Harvest Day was also extended from one-and-a-half days to three days, and exhibitors' contracts were changed so that tool and implement manufacturers had to undertake to show their goods. Participation in controlled demonstrations also now became compulsory.

Van Zyl also says that it was not always easy to enforce and apply the rules that were laid down by the committee. Many exhibitors can attest to the entrance gates being introduced for exhibitors, and how they quickly became known as 'swearing gates'. Although it was a challenge to get exhibitors used to the new house rules, a standard was set that put the organisation and stature of the Harvest Day on par with those of many international agricultural trade shows.

Since 1983 food was also provided at other points and not only at the restaurants. Since 1984 take-aways and cooldrink kiosks were introduced on a larger scale.

There was a real danger in 1988 that the Harvest Day could be cancelled due to an above-average rainy season. According to Van Zyl, the grounds were soaked after more than 900 mm of rain had fallen and they had to act quickly. Drainage pumps were therefore used to dry out the grounds in time.

Through contact with input providers he could convince companies to act as sponsors for the construction of halls that could provide extra covered exhibiting spaces, but also provide more permanent areas for companies who had an association with the Harvest Day. Examples of these venues were the Sentraoes Hall, Foskor Media Centre, Eskom Hall, the ARC Building and the first phase of the current Afrox Building.

Companies' faith in the Harvest Day as a strategic trade show was further confirmed by their investment in the permanent structures on their stands. By 1996 new buildings had been erected by Staalmeeester, Interlov, Sanvet, Pumpmaker and Mercedes-Benz. NAMPO reacted to this by creating permanence in the infrastructure, amenities and facilities on the grounds. In the same year the Roodebank Seed Complex was opened, and the renovation of the Donkerhoek Hall followed.

Recognition is given to the architect, Freek du Plessis, who helped a lot with plans at no charge, Willem le Roux, the builder who did most of the brick work of the buildings, and Dappies Venter, who erected almost all the steel structures of the buildings – admittedly for remuneration, but with a special loyalty towards the Harvest Day.



The NAMPO Harvest Day brand was still in use until the establishment of Grain SA in 1999. Although the name was kept, the show has since then been officially known as Grain SA's NAMPO Harvest Day.

Van Zyl's vision to have a big hall that could accommodate 127 exhibitors covering approximately 3 600 m² was realised when the NAMPO Hall was opened during the 1998 Harvest Day. The finishing touches to this modern addition to the covered exhibiting space were made when it was fitted out with carpets and professional exhibiting kiosks. Since then this exhibiting method, which was introduced by Mr Johan Loxton, was extended to each one of the halls on the grounds.

Globalisation led to international participation, namely delegations and individual or organised exhibitors, becoming a common sight at the Harvest Day as far back



Three of the hard workers in the Fanie Ferreira Hall. From the left are Petra Kruger, Annatjie van Zyl and Theresa Jordaan. Here they are trying to solve a serious problem that arose. Petra was in control of the catering in 1991 and Annatjie of the breakfast sessions.



Video: Mr Giel van Zyl relates how a lady from Mpumalanga divined water for NAMPO Park over the phone.



The people flock into the Fanie Ferreria Hall and everyone has to be on their toes. Like it has been the case every year, all the volunteers had to fill hungry bellies for hours on end. Thanks to all the ladies who pulled their weight over the years!



A scene that shows the many people during the second day of the 1985 NAMPO Harvest Day.





The NAMPO Hall under construction in 1998.

as the eighties. In South Africa's years of political sanctions the *Western Australian Regional Manufacturers* decided to hold exhibitions here, as Western Australia's agricultural conditions correspond with those in parts of South Africa. Eventually the Australian pavilion was established in the early 1990s as the Harvest Day's first international pavilion.

Communities

Learners of the NAMPO Agricultural Secondary School and Bothaville High School annually worked at the grounds on Harvest Day, for which the schools received an amount and could also use the facilities for school functions in exchange. NAMPO Secondary is currently still involved at the Harvest Day.

Another local community initiative that developed was the guest house project of the Maize Capital's tourism forum that involved not only guest houses, but also private homes that satisfy the so-called maize rating to provide accommodation during, for example, the Harvest Day and the Congress. By 1995, when the project started, the number of beds occupied was recorded as 80 guests. However, a total of 200 guest houses in the Bothaville area and neighbouring towns provided accommodation to approximately 5 400 visitors during NAMPO 2016.

The Rotary Club and the Hervormde Kerk from Bothaville, were the first community organisations to operate take-away kiosks, manned by volunteers, to help them



Sound bite: Anecdote about the erection of the NAMPO Hall – Mr Giel van Zyl.



The Wall of Remembrance was erected in 1998.

WALL OF REMEMBRANCE FINDS A PLACE AT NAMPO PARK

The Hennenman Farmers' Association launched an initiative in 1998 to erect the wall of remembrance with the purpose of providing a collection point for the names of victims of farm attacks. This Wall of Remembrance is a monument in the memory of those producers and their families who died in farm attacks since May 1961.

As NAMPO Park's central location makes it ideal for the honouring of victims of farm attacks the NAMPO Harvest Day Committee agreed that the wall of remembrance be erected on the grounds near the main entrance. By 2016 more than 2 000 names had already been added to the wall.



Mr Johan Loxton

raise funds. In subsequent years the Broekman Study Group became involved in the running of the beer garden, and the Allanridge Study Group manned the entrance gates. At one stage approximately 500 volunteers were on duty during a Harvest Day week.

Johan Loxton, Manager: Administration and later Manager: Commercial Services of NAMPO and then Grain SA 1996 - 2016

When Loxton joined NAMPO in 1996 as Manager: Administration, the foundation of the Harvest Day and the infrastructure at the venue were established. With a human resources management and business background his challenge was to adapt this unique agricultural trade show continually to the most recent trends in collaboration with the Harvest Day Committee, and to stay at the forefront of technology.

Loxton played a key role in the development of infrastructure (electricity distribution, water reticulation, the sewage system and refuse removal) as well as the general modernisation of the administration, exhibiting methods, facilities and communication. He says that they continually focused on the content of what was being presented and the manner in which the Harvest Day was managed.

As commercial farming started to diversify for the sake of sustainable profitability, the choice of exhibitors and the facilities dynamically stayed in tune with new developments and the latest farming technology to be able to give attention to almost every facet of agriculture today.

With respect to the number of exhibitors, the Harvest Day nearly doubled over the past two decades since agricultural marketing was deregulated in 1997. Among other things an even distribution of visitors over the four days was achieved by making the organised programme the same for each day.

Keeping up with change

In order to involve top exhibitors and keep up with the constant growth of the Harvest Day, the infrastructure at NAMPO Park was developed functionally and according to recommendations of the Harvest Day Committee, NAMPO and later Grain SA reinvested funds annually to upgrade the grounds and the facilities.

The Harvest Day could not escape a decline in public service delivery, and it was obvious that NAMPO Park had to become self-sufficient for the current needs and for the future. Technology and aids were therefore involved to install modern systems for power distribution, water distribution and sewage.

In earlier years support services for safety and disaster aid on the grounds were provided by the Bothaville local authorities. However, a control centre was constructed in 2010 that is continually in contact with the SAPS, traffic authorities, medical emergency services, air-traffic control and all the services in the grounds with respect to electricity, gas, sewage, refuse removal and fire fighting during the Harvest Day. With the co-operation of provincial traffic authorities access routes to and from the Harvest Day grounds were improved.

“THE GENERAL FEEDBACK FROM EXHIBITORS IS THAT THE VOLUME OF BUSINESS IS MUCH HIGHER THAN EXPECTED, AND IN MANY INSTANCES IT EXCEEDS THE NUMBERS OF THE PREVIOUS YEARS. LIKEWISE, THE FEEDBACK FROM VISITORS IS SPONTANEOUSLY POSITIVE ABOUT THE HIGH STANDARD OF THE EXHIBITIONS AND THOSE OF THE GROUNDS.”

– Mr Jub Jubelius, Harvest Day Chairperson; 2006.



1960's



2015

Where the Harvest Day started out in 1967 with only eight exhibitors and a temporary venue, by 2016 Grain SA's NAMPO Harvest Day boasts a modern, equipped venue that can accommodate more than 650 exhibitors with ease.

APART FROM THE NAMPO HARVEST DAY BRINGING UNBELIEVABLE GOOD PUBLICITY FOR SOUTH AFRICA WORLDWIDE, IT IS AN ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL EVENT FOR ANY COMMERCIAL FARMER. THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE YOU CAN SEE EVERYTHING IN ONE PLACE AND CAN MAKE PURCHASING DECISIONS. YOU ALSO FIND UNBELIEVABLE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES. IT IS THE PLACE TO BE WHEN YOU ARE IN AGRICULTURE.

– Mr Johan Loxton, Manager: Commercial Services of Grain SA; 2015.

THEN AND NOW: EXHIBITOR AND ATTENDANCE NUMBERS

Year	Number of exhibitors	Attendance
1967	8	203
1974	32	'Thousands of real farmers'
1983	175	13 000
1996	280	42 000
2000	516	50 400
2005	576	68 802
2010	650	68 900
2015	More than 650	69 584
2016	685	75 116

Although the advance selling of tickets was introduced since 2006, an electronic ticket system that makes provision for online purchasing, optimises access control and ensures accurate attendance numbers was implemented in collaboration with TicketPro since 2015.

The former extended Harvest Day Committee was streamlined in the meantime. As the provision of refreshments is mainly assigned on tender, the committee has more of a coordinating task. The Harvest Day Chairperson is assisted by a Vice-chairperson and conveners of the mechanisation and 4x4 demonstrations and livestock exhibitions, while the general management, grounds, administration, functions and catering are handled by the staff of Grain SA.



The controlled tool and implement demonstrations were a core aspect of the Harvest Day for 40 years.



Keeping up with the times...visitors at NAMPO can buy tickets online through TicketPro since 2015.

“GRAIN SA’S NAMPO HARVEST DAY OPENS UP A DIFFERENT WORLD. A PRODUCER’S NEEDS AND FOCUS ON HIS FARM DIFFER EVERY YEAR, AND THIS HUGE HARVEST DAY UMBRELLA COVERS SOMETHING TO MEET THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF EVERY PRODUCER EVERY YEAR.”

– Mr Cobus van Collier, Harvest Day Chairperson; 2012.



Sound bite: According to Mr Johan Loxton, exhibitors’ presentation methods changed over time, but the Harvest Day’s goals remained the same.

“NAMPO IS A LEADER IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE IN OUR COUNTRY. I HAVE NEVER SEEN SO MANY BLACK FARMERS TELLING A STORY OF CHANGE.”

– A tweet by Prof Jonathan Jansen, rector of the University of the Free State after his first visit to the Harvest Day; 2012.



NAMPO Park's runway for light planes and helicopters is thoroughly utilised during the Harvest Day week.



The 4x4 demonstration track attracts large groups of spectators every year.

Highlights and milestones

Extensions, upgrades and activities that were realised with Johan Loxton at the helm of Harvest Day matters, were as follows:

- Buildings that were erected in collaboration with exhibitors include Senwes, Omnia, Claas, Northmec and SA Truck Bodies. Various exhibitors also upgraded the permanent structures on their stands.
- The access road from the main entrance on the grounds was tarred, dirt roads were paved and additional lawns were planted between the buildings and on stands.
- Negotiations with John Deere that had already started in Van Zyl's time were continued by Loxton and ultimately concluded with the special support of Mouton as Harvest Day Chairperson.
- A new runway for light aeroplanes and helicopters – with a manned control tower during the Harvest Day week – was built on the grounds in 1999 and is used by exhibitors, visitor groups, private pilots and agricultural producers. During NAMPO 2016 448 aeroplanes and/or helicopters landed there.
- The first phase of an own electricity distribution project on the grounds was completed in 2000 and a substation and four transformers were commissioned that year. As it was one of the biggest capital projects until then, Botma did a good job as Harvest Day Chairperson to obtain the support of NAMPO's Executive and Management Committee for the project.
- A 4x4 obstacle course was developed in 2000 at the southern end of the grounds and was upgraded again in 2008.
- In a random sample that was taken on 15 May 2001, 5 800 producers were counted at the controlled implement and tool demonstrations.
- A Maize Hop shuttle service to and from NAMPO Park has been operated since 2001 by the Mieliehoofstad chamber of business in collaboration with taxi drivers from the community of Bothaville. Sponsored vehicles are also used. Since then the service has been expanded to even include a route from Gauteng and elsewhere on demand.
- New stands, exhibition spaces, paved roads and toilet facilities were created every year and resulted in the Harvest Day grounds having been extended systematically to the south since 2001.
- As a result of practical circumstances restaurants and take-away kiosks were allocated on a tender basis since 2001 to institutions that are dependent on fundraising, such as schools, churches and farmers' societies.



Grain SA used volunteer kitchen workers until about 2001.



Prof Jonathan Jansen, Rector of the University of the Free State (middle), in the VIP Reception Hall during his visit to the Harvest Day in 2012. With him are Messrs Jannie de Villiers and Anton Botha of Grain SA.



Part of the special treatment for Grain SA members is a parking area for members and transport from there to the Members' Hall.



Grain SA members are treated in the Members' Hall.

- Grain SA's new VIP reception hall was inaugurated in 2002.
- By 2002 nearly 80 ha was used for practical mechanisation demonstrations.
- A light aeroplane has been used to monitor the traffic and supply traffic reports since 2003.
- The biggest number of tools and implements in the history of the Harvest Day were demonstrated in 2004 over a width of approximately 4 km.
- A Members' Hall for the exclusive use of Grain SA's fully paid-up members was equipped on the grounds in 2006. The venue was moved to the old Club 200 Building in 2014, as it was closer to the parking area for members and provided better facilities to receive guests.
- Although the controlled mechanisation demonstrations were an important component of the Harvest Day for about 40 years, after the Executive of Grain SA gave their approval, the Harvest Day Committee agreed that there would no longer be any practical demonstrations from 2009 onwards. The decision was made to make a compromise with exhibitors of implements in order to cut down on expenses – more specifically the transport of the implements – in order to ensure their ongoing participation in the Harvest Day.
- Since then exhibitors utilise computer technology, electronic exhibits and even simulated experiences at their stands to support their stationary exhibits.



The Harvest Day's role as discussion and dialogue platform was established in 2013 with the Nation in Conversation forum, of which TV recordings were made during the Harvest Day week and then telecasted. This addition stimulates discourse about current agricultural affairs as well as macro factors affecting the economy and society.

- An economic impact study that was done in 2008 by the University of the Free State showed that visitors to Bothaville spent approximately R7 million during the Harvest Day, while exhibitors' spending amounted to R3,5 million.
- A renovation project of front part of the cattle complex started in 2011 and was completed in 2015.
- A ploughing competition, which served as qualifier for the World Ploughing Competition, was presented during the Harvest Day between 2013 and 2015 by Grain SA in collaboration with Tubestone.
- Since 2015 an auctioneers' competition has been held in the auction complex in collaboration with the magazine *Veepplaas* and Toyota.
- The first phase of the 8 000 m² extension of the exhibiting spaces on the old southern parking area, as well as the building of a new parking area at the southern end of the grounds, was put commissioned during the Harvest Day of 2013.
- The popular Nation in Conversation discussion forum, in which Grain SA, Senwes and other companies are partners, has involved thinking leaders from various affiliations, political backgrounds and the business sector since 2013 to carry on a dialogue during the Harvest Day on agricultural matters of national interest and to find solutions to ensure the future and viability of the agricultural industry.
- After the attendance of the ladies' programme declined over time, the SAMPI Hall has since 2015 made room for a wider variety of exhibitors focusing on the ladies.
- Various seed companies take part in seed plots that were installed on the new part of the grounds in 2015. This addition gives Harvest Day goes the opportunity to view and compare suppliers' cultivars in practical production conditions.



Special provision is made for members of the local and overseas media at the Grain SA media centre.



A free tractor-and-trailer transport system was introduced for individuals who are less mobile...and for tired NAMPO feet.



NAMPO's animal shows are representative of most of the breed societies in the country.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE HARVEST DAY GROUNDS

1. The Harvest Day grounds function like a municipality on their own.
2. Since 2000 electricity has been purchased in bulk from Eskom and is distributed around the grounds.
3. We handle water supply and distribution, sewage and refuse removal ourselves.
4. We handle cleaning services during the Harvest Day ourselves.
5. Drainage channels, paved roads and drainage pipes were installed to improve the drainage of water and to drain some of the stands.
6. In 2000 the Harvest Day Committee decided to change the name to NAMPO Park.
7. Covered exhibiting space on the grounds currently extends over 17 060 m² and the outside exhibiting space covers 170 630 m².
8. NAMPO Park is the home of Grain SA's Harvest Day and Congress.
9. The facilities and amenities were developed and are used for conferences, auctions, weddings, corporate functions and the rolling out of products right through the year.
10. A complete catering service is provided.
11. Grain SA's guest rooms on the grounds provide luxurious accommodation.



Since 2015 the Ladies' Programme has made room for a bigger variety of exhibitors focusing on the fairer sex.



Welcome to Grain SA Radio...Mr Jannie de Villiers of Grain SA (left) talking to Mr Christie Hansen of OFM Stereo, who annually runs Grain SA Radio on behalf of Grain SA.



Harvest Day Chairperson Cobus van Coller (left) and Johan Loxton in the electricity control room. Electricity is purchased in bulk and distributed around the grounds by us.



Just before the deadline at the media centre's news desk concentration is high.



Mr Charl van Rooyen of *Landbouweekblad* relaxes over lunch.

- A free tractor-and-trailer transport system with fixed routes was introduced in 2015 to make transport across the grounds easier.
- The access gates have been sponsored and staffed by Engen for nearly two decades.
- Grain SA's NAMPO brand is continually expanded and enhanced by means of the following:
 - NAMPO Harvest Day website
 - Liaison with agricultural and other media
 - Equipped media centre at NAMPO Park
 - Media statements and press conferences
 - Information office at NAMPO Park
 - Special Harvest Day edition of *SA Gaan/Grain*, published in April
 - Free booklet with list of exhibitors available at the gates
 - List of exhibitors previously available on a mobi system for cellphones
 - Grain SA Radio on the air since 2012 for the duration of the Harvest Day This is operated by OFM Stereo and keeps listeners up to date with traffic flow, events at NAMPO Park, commercial news and relevant agriculture-related information
 - NAMPO Harvest Day app available since 2015 – contains information, daily programme, grounds map and news
 - Presence on social media networks
- As commercial farming started to diversify for the sake of sustainable profitability, the Harvest Day Committee's choice of exhibitors and the facilities dynamically stayed in tune with new developments and the latest farming technology to be able to give attention to almost every facet of agriculture today.

INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION

The Harvest Day offers an ideal opportunity to international exhibitors to investigate a possible market for their products in South Africa and to make contact with local distribution networks.

A delegation from Argentina took part in the NAMPO Harvest Day for the first time in 2008. Since then an Argentinian pavilion has been developed. In 2010 around five American exhibitors took part, while new products from Australia were also exhibited. From 2011 visitors groups from Africa started to become established.

By 2012 the combined exhibitions from America and Argentina formed part of the overseas exhibitors, with individual exhibitors from Pakistan, Brazil, Italy and Denmark. More than 45 international exhibitors were involved in the Harvest Day by 2013.



The international interest in the Harvest Day was highlighted by the signing of a collaboration agreement with the Argentine Expoagro Show in 2010. Around 60 international exhibitors from nine countries took part in the Harvest Day in 2015.

International delegations from the following countries were accommodated in 2014: America, Argentina, Brazil, Denmark, France, Hungary, Italy, Israel, India, Canada, Ukraine, China and various African countries. Around 60 international exhibitors from nine countries took part in the Harvest Day in 2015.

INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBERS, SPOUSES AND STAFF

The active participation in the Harvest Day by agricultural leaders' spouses deserves mention. The spouses of Haddad, Van Wyk and Stegmann handled the refreshments in the early days. This example was spontaneously continued after 1974, and over the years the leaders' spouses made their mark regarding the refreshments and the ladies' programme. One thinks automatically of names like Mss Isabel de Jager, Hettie Ferreira, Bibi von Abo, Lina Viljoen, Ida Claassen, Malie Grobler, Hannetjie Botma, Drisette Mouton, Lettie Jubelius, Ina Ferreira and Philine Steytler.

Since the days of the SAMPI Harvest Day – as well as in NAMPO and even Grain SA – it was part of the culture that the office staff were selected to be on duty during the Harvest Day. In the days when Grain SA's office was in Bothaville, it was common for the spouses of senior staff members also to be on duty during the Harvest Day and even serve on the Harvest Day Committee as conveners, like Ms Annatjie van Zyl on the refreshments committee and Ms Margot Loxton for the ladies' programme. The wife of Dr Kit le Clus, Lynette, was also involved for years.

The staff of Grain SA have been used in key positions increasingly since 2012, as well as to represent the organisation in the VIP area and the Members' Hall.

GRAIN SA FOCUSES ON MEMBERS AS WELL AS STAKEHOLDERS

According to Grain SA's CEO since 2011, Mr Jannie de Villiers, the organisation sees the Harvest Day as one of the best contributors to the assurance of sustainable food production and security in South Africa and in southern Africa. This prominent opportunity is therefore perfectly in line with the vision of Grain SA as representative grain producers' organisation.

The Harvest Day also provides the ideal opportunity for all producers to compare new technology and other products in one place and decide which product, patent or technology will be the most suitable on the farm. There is also ample time to

NAMPO PARK'S AIRFIELD



JOHAN LOXTON

NAMPO Park's airfield also has a story or two to tell. The original air-control tower – a pole-and-thatched-roof construction – was struck by lightning in 2013 and was then replaced by a permanent steel structure.

In 1999 a pilot with an experimental aircraft came in for landing, missed the runway, ran over the nicely cut shoulder and came to a standstill next to a large boulder. And a pilot who neglected to secure the plane's anchor cables found it on its roof later on after the cheeky Free State wind got hold of it.

During NAMPO 2016 a record number of 448 aeroplanes/helicopters utilised the landing strip.



Sound bite: Wives of producer members and officials pulled their weight over the years – Giel van Zyl.



communicate with suppliers about products and services, as representatives from the whole grain value chain are present at the Harvest Day.

However, NAMPO is also an important source of income for Grain SA. The income from this is applied for agricultural research and other industry services, which are again beneficial for the producer, like relevant market information, research data, image building, as well as negotiation with the government and other role-players.

Grain SA's members receive red-carpet treatment at the Harvest Day and the organisation shows its appreciation for their loyalty in this way. Members receive free access and parking near a special entrance gate for members. From there they are transported to the Members' Hall in golf carts. At the Members' Hall they are made much of with refreshments and a relaxation area where they can sit back and chat to everyone.

In the Members' Hall provision is made for live Safex screens where producers can keep up to date on movements in the grain markets. Key personnel from Grain SA's Grain Economics and Marketing, Grain Research and Farmer Development divisions liaise here with members.

Members of the Executive and Management Committee are continually on duty in the Members' Hall as well as in the VIP reception hall where constructive talks with opinion formers from the industry, government circles and even international delegates and notable guests take place. 'Various guests who attended NAMPO for the first time this year were surprised at the extent of the agricultural industry and the Harvest Day. The level of technology being exhibited is also a further revelation for them,' said De Villiers in a press statement on 18 May 2016.



Mr Victor Mongoato (far right), a Management Committee member of Grain SA, took a moment to pose for a photo with visitors to the Grain SA Members' Hall.



'Minister Zokwana's presence was a compliment to Grain SA and to agriculture at large. He is probably the first Minister of Agriculture since 1994 to visit the Harvest Day. This accentuates the NAMPO Harvest Day as an authoritative platform for dialogue, discussion and networking.' – Jannie de Villiers, CEO: Grain SA, after the visit by Senzeni Zokwana, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, to the Harvest Day in 2015.



Some of Grain SA's guests during the NAMPO 50-year commemorative event in 2016.

“ WE HAVE NOW LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR ACTIVE DIALOGUE AT THE NAMPO HARVEST DAY. I TRUST THAT THE NATION IN CONVERSATION DISCUSSION FORUM AS PRESENTED BY SENWES, GRAIN SA AND PARTNERS AT NAMPO 2013, AS WELL AS OTHER DISCUSSIONS ON TECHNICAL MATTERS, WILL IN FUTURE ADD EVEN MORE VALUE TO AGRICULTURE. ”

– Mr Jannie de Villiers, CEO: Grain SA; 2013.



Families relaxing in the shade of the trees – a familiar sight at NAMPO.

The jovial atmosphere is characteristic of Grain SA's Harvest Day and the togetherness is always comforting. It is also an important networking opportunity for producers to communicate with one another and to exchange solutions for sustainable production at farming level. Families with prams sitting on the grass in the shade of a tree over lunch are also a common sight.

ROAD AHEAD

Grain SA's NAMPO Harvest Day falls under Dr Dirk Strydom, Manager: Grain Economics and Marketing since April 2016. Mr Toit Wessels, previously with Grain SA as members' marketer in the Western Cape, was in the meantime promoted to Assistant Manager: NAMPO Harvest Day and Marketing and takes the reins of the Harvest Day from 1 October 2016, with Loxton who will support him as mentor.

IN CONCLUSION

After the conclusion of the 50th Harvest Day in 2016 and looking back over the past five decades, Van Coller described the character of the Harvest Day as follows: 'Over the past half century this has developed into a brand that portrays modern agriculture in South Africa accurately. It appeals to the general public as consumers of our agricultural products; it appeals to all producers in our country; it appeals to decision-makers in government circles and the industry; it even appeals to the international arena and the growing interest from abroad confirms it.'

Grain SA's NAMPO Harvest Day definitely developed into an integrated part of agriculture in South Africa as a whole. This is a proven recipe consisting of:

- Permanent facilities and modern infrastructure;
- Directional agricultural leadership;
- The dedication of SAMPI, NAMPO and Grain SA's Executive members and staff;
- Sustained support from local and international input providers;
- Helpfulness of volunteers over many years;
- Growing annual attendance by producers and the general public; and
- Contributions to communities and the regional economy.

Seen in perspective, SAMPI's members have literally and figuratively laid the corner stone and poured the foundations of the Harvest Day. The NAMPO generation completed the structure of the building and erected the roof. This paved the way for Grain SA as a united grain and oilseeds organisation to add the final touches to the building and colour the exterior and the interior to set the pace in the modern era of agriculture in a sustainable manner.

THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN NAMPO PARK WAS CREATED OVER THE YEARS AND EXPANDED TO HANDLE A LARGE NUMBER OF VISITORS WITH EASE AND TO PROVIDE EXHIBITION FACILITIES OF A HIGH STANDARD TO EXHIBITORS. EVEN THE RUNWAY COULD HANDLE A TOTAL OF 365 AEROPLANES AND HELICOPTERS OVER THE FOUR DAYS WITH EASE THIS YEAR. GRAIN SA IS GEARED TO PROUDLY PRESENT THE 50TH NAMPO HARVEST DAY NEXT YEAR.

**– Mr Cobus van Coller,
Harvest Day Chairperson;
2015.**

HAVE A LAUGH WITH THE HARVEST DAY

By Thys Human, published in SA Graan/Grain, April 2010

Comical incidents that will be remembered for a long time must be one of the characteristics of large gatherings with thousands of visitors. The annual NAMPO Harvest Day is no exception in this respect and *SA Graan/Grain* asked a few veterans of the agricultural family to share a few of these anecdotes.

One of these that many of the guys can remember very well is the true story of the cute blonde in her snow-white cat suit. Mr Bully Botma, former Chairperson of Grain SA recounted that it was one of those years when it rained much more than usual at the Harvest Day. The water rapidly dammed up in certain places and the Harvest Day goers had to seek shelter at stalls.

Near one of the sheep pens and the sheep shearers the water stood a good 15 cm to 20 cm deep and people tried to find shelter under the roof of a pellet machine. One of them was a pretty blonde in a snow-white cat suit. She wanted to look more closely at the sheep shearers' skills, but did not really want to take a chance with the deep water. One of the guys who was busy around there started talking to her and then decided that he would see what he could do. Just like a man carrying his bride across the threshold, he gathered her in his arms and started walking through the puddles. The blonde objected at first, but the strong arms of the farmer quickly put her mind at ease and it seemed that she was starting to enjoy the treatment.

Things went well with the carrying part – up to the last step that was already covered with water at that time – and just then our gallant friend missed the step and he and the blonde took the fall together. Soaking wet and with her white suit now covered in brown mud and her expensive hairdo of the morning now clinging to her face, the visitor quickly departed – furious. Where and how she became dry and clean again they do not know, but they did not see her again.

A few weeks later the Harvest Day Committee received a letter from her in which she insisted on compensation for the damage to her clothes, and probably also to her honour and status. They had to let her know that it was not in the gallant gentleman's job description to carry out such duties and that the Harvest Day management therefore could not take responsibility for that. It seems that it was especially the rain that caused many funny stories.

Mr Kobus van Zyl, grain producer who has been involved with the Harvest Day for years,

remembers the guys using the pub for cover against the torrential rain one year – sometimes for longer than necessary. At one point he stepped out on the stoep to see how hard it was raining and there was one of the chaps with a fishing rod that he had found goodness knows where. At the end of the line he had secured a banana and he was joyfully fishing in the water that made a good 10 cm deep puddle on the Free State plains.

It was – and probably still is – the habit of volunteers to sleep in the caravan park in tents and caravans. Van Zyl recounts that one year they were *braaiing* something after a hard day's work when a visitor, who should not have been in the grounds any more, walked over to them. When they asked him why he was still there, he slurred that he just wanted to ask their advice. Now what kind of advice does he need that time of the night, they asked. No, he just wanted to ask in which direction was KwaZulu-Natal. If they could point him in the right direction, he would manage by himself. It transpired then that the man had come from northern KwaZulu-Natal with a busload of friends and he had missed the return bus, which had departed early that afternoon.

'I waved him in an easterly direction where I thought KwaZulu-Natal lay. We just heard maize stalks crunch when he disappeared more or less in that direction through the maize fields. What became of him we do not know to this day, but we never heard from him again.'



Mr Jan Combrink, another one of Grain SA's members with years of service at the Harvest Day, has a number of funny stories from the vicinity of the 'buighuis', like the one about the chap who was crawling around on all fours in the parking area late at night, looking for his car, when they went to make sure that all the vehicles were gone from the grounds. It was a Citroen, he indicated, but they could not find such a car. Quite some time later they found his friends trying to find him, but quite awkwardly as a result of too much to drink. They were actually driving a Cortina! 'I probably should not have turned right there' explained the man who was staggering around drunkenly.

And Mr Vic Mouton, former Harvest Day Chairperson, also tells about one of his good friends who had them helping him search for his 'white car' after he had spent quite some time in the pub, and when they eventually found the car it was blue!

Klub 200 was the restaurant where important guests were usually entertained. Shortly after the 1994 election the former premier of the Free State, Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, was entertained there by the committee when the power went

out. People who know the place will know when the power is out it is not only pitch dark, but the fans that have to extract the smoke from the grills stop working and the venue is rapidly covered in smoke. When that happened, Lekota's body guards stormed inside – very prepared with cocked weapons and all. Things could have gone very wrong, recounts Mr Jub Jubelius, former Chairperson of the Harvest Day Committee, if it had not been for his wife who yelled through the darkness and the smoke that it was only the power that had gone out and that everyone had to calm down. 'It could have turned ugly, but today we can just laugh about the body guards who were so ready to start shooting.'

He also tells the anecdote about one of the members of the Ladies' Committee who had to make an announcement about the Ladies' Programme. Dressed very elegantly and with a perfect hairdo she walked to the front on her high heels, but at the stage she stumbled over a grand handbag in the aisle and fell down so that everyone could see whether she had dressed in all her clothes that day! But she was not at a loss for words. She started her announcement with '*dan val ek sommer met die deur in die huis...*'.

2016

