



*The Grain and Oilseed Industry  
of South Africa*

**A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME**

**CHAPTER 9**

# 9 Top producers and role-players HONOURED

*Something that was an established custom in other industries, namely to recognise the achievements of producers and role-players in the industry, only started in the grain industry in the early 1980s. Seen as a whole it made a strong contribution towards improving the image of the grain producer over the past 35 years.*

Apart from the fact that the quality of the South African producer was remarkable even in those years, the general image of the farmer in the late seventies was rather one of a person in overalls and a brimmed hat behind the steering wheel of a tractor than one of a business man who feels at home in the boardrooms of the country. The initiative of the maize industry with an image-building action undoubtedly paved the way for building the image of agriculture by placing its achievers in the spotlight.

After the maize fight between the members of SAMPI and SAMSO, the members of the united NAMPO had reason to show what stuff people in the grain industry were made of. Dr Piet Gous, first General Manager of NAMPO, saw the value of an offer from Three Ships Whisky to sponsor the Maize Man of the Year from 1980 – and from 1982 also the Maize Scientist of the Year. This same Dr Gous was



**Dr Piet Gous**

## “LET’S MAKE A DOP...”

An excerpt from an article which appeared in the *Farmer’s Weekly* of 22 March 2011

*Farmer’s Weekly’s* editor in 1978, Lionel Mundell, contacts public relations man Hans Lombard. Three Ships Whisky wants to promote their product among the farming community, and Lionel has told them Hans is the best in the business. Which leaves Hans with a slight problem. How does one promote alcohol?

Later, while chatting to the management of Three Ships down in Stellenbosch, Hans is told the whisky is made from South African maize. It gives him an idea. How about a “Maize Man of the Year” sponsored by Three Ships, offering an agricultural (whisky) study tour of the Scottish Highlands?

Hans phones Dr Piet Gous, then General Manager of NAMPO, and suggests to him that the maize producer’s organisation should nominate such a Maize Man of the Year, and that Three Ships would sponsor it. The idea goes off like a bomb.

A few days later Hans is meeting with Dr Gous in his office at Bothaville to discuss the nominations. Then Dr Piet Gous asks, rather sheepishly, “I have never heard of Three Ships Whisky. Who are they?”

Hans smiles. “Kom ons gaan maak ’n dop. Ek wys jou.” At which point both men duly set off to the local pub where the final arrangements for the Maize Man of the Year are made over a few tots of Three Ships Whisky – produced from maize, mind you.



**Mr Crawford von Abo**

nominated as NAMPO's first Maize Man of the Year in 1980, principally as a result of his key role in the successful forming of NAMPO.

In 1981 Mr Crawford von Abo – a founder member of SAMPI and Chairperson the Maize Board – was crowned Maize Man, and in 1982 this honour went to Mr Hennie de Jager, Chairperson of NAMPO.

When Mr Giel van Zyl, former General Manager of NAMPO and later of Grain SA, was appointed as administrative manager at NAMPO in 1983, a part of his task was to take the Maize Man awards to the next level. After the constitution of a representative panel of independent experts to assess the nominees according to credible criteria, the practice was established at the time for the panel to visit every nominee. The voting was by secret ballot and the winner was only announced on the evening of the prestige event. The awards ceremony was also changed from a semi-formal function to a formal black-tie event in one of the trendsetting five star hotels in Johannesburg.



**Mr Hennie de Jager, Chairperson of NAMPO, who was selected as the NAMPO Three Ships Whisky Maize Man of the Year (1982), Mr Greyling Wentzel, Minister of Agriculture, and Dr HO Gevers, who was selected Maize Researcher of the Year (1982). Dr Gevers is known for the important breakthrough that he made with the development of the high-lysine yellow maize hybrid.**

### DR WILHELM REMEMBERS...

Dr Wilhelm Snyman, former director of the ARC Research Centre for Grain Crops, was part of the selection panel since the institution of NAMPO's Maize Man project until the end of 1989. He thinks back to those years with a nostalgic sparkle in his eye and shares a few of the humorous and exceptional incidents from that period.

The judging process often took more than a day and members of the selection panel therefore had to stay over. Snyman says that they were received warmly and hospitably like only the South African farming community can. 'Never in my life was I so overwhelmed with top-notch meals and snacks accompanying the regular coffee and tea. Instead of a night cap, Eno was a popular item on our medicine list!'

Another incident that Dr Snyman will always remember is the 'high-octane mampoer' that one of the members offered early in the morning 'for cleaning the teeth!' Not used to 'such strong medicine', Snyman stopped coughing only much later that day. It was so bad that one of the panel members asked him whether he had whooping cough.

He also remembers the woman who very discreetly asked that they please come for another visit soon. She said that it was the first time in years that the farmyard was not an embarrassment to her. The cleaning up had even the farm workers asking whether the farm was being sold and they were moving!

What impressed him the most was the contributions of the finalists' spouses – especially with regard to moral and loving support to their husbands. 'In the middle of one of the worst droughts I ever experienced in the Western Transvaal we arrived on the farm of one of the participants one morning. The farmstead looked like a sheep pen – the only patch of green was a bright green piece of lawn approximately two metres by two metres against the wall of the house.' Later the evening Snyman asked the woman of the house about this piece of lawn. She said that she took all the used dishwater and laundry water and poured it onto this patch of grass below their bedroom window. Her husband had the habit of looking out of the window when he got up in the morning. She wanted to let him see something green before he started his day.

There also was the youngish couple whom they visited. The wife told them that she was a city girl who did not yet know much about farming. Her husband invited the panel members to go and inspect the feedlots. Snyman said that at one stage he looked back seeing how this city girl struggled to walk with them through the feedlots – high heels and all. 'What a lucky man,' he pondered.



**Sound bite: The image of the farmer had to be improved – Mr Giel van Zyl.**



**Mr Giel van Zyl**

**TABLE 1(a): AWARDS MADE BY NAMPO, 1980 - 1999**

|      | <b>Main sponsor of Maize Man of the Year dinner</b> | <b>Maize Man of the Year</b>  | <b>Researcher/Maize Scientist of the Year</b>                         | <b>Golden Maize Kernel Award – NAMPO’s highest honour</b>  |
|------|---|---|---|--|
| 1980 | Three Ships Whisky                                  | <b>Dr Piet Gous</b> – General Manager: NAMPO                                |   |  |
| 1981 | Three Ships Whisky                                  | <b>Crawford von Abo</b> – Bothaville  |   |  |
| 1982 | Three Ships Whisky                                  | <b>Hennie de Jager</b> – Bothaville   | <b>Dr HO Gevers</b> – Department of Agriculture                       |  |
| 1983 | Three Ships Whisky                                  | <b>Willie van der Ryst</b> – Koster   | <b>Carel Koch</b> – Fedmis  |  |
| 1984 | Three Ships Whisky                                  | <b>Toppie van der Linde</b> – Vierfontein                                   | <b>Dr Mart Farina</b> – Department of Agriculture                     |  |
| 1985 | Case SA   | <b>Dirkie Serfontein</b> – Koppies, Free State                              | <b>Prof Hekkie Harmse</b> – PU for CHE                                | <b>Cerneels Claassen</b><br><b>Hennie Delpont</b><br><b>Gerrit Green</b><br><b>Cornelis Leonard</b><br><b>Willie van der Ryst</b><br><b>Boetie Viljoen</b><br><b>Mof Visser</b><br><b>Crawford von Abo</b> |
| 1986 | Case SA   | <b>Hilliard Cumin</b> – Koster  | <b>Prof JM de Jager</b> – UOFS  |  |
| 1987 | Case SA   | <b>Ollie Botes</b> – Hoopstad   |   |  |
| 1988 | Foskor  | <b>Danie le Roux</b> – Bultfontein  | <b>Dr Kit le Clus</b> – NAMPO   |  |
| 1989 | Foskor  | <b>Johannes van der Merwe</b> – Kroonstad                                   | <b>Prof Alan Bennie</b> – UOFS  |  |
| 1990 | Foskor  | <b>WH van Zyl</b> – Wesselsbron   |   |  |
| 1991 | Foskor  | <b>Boetie Viljoen</b> – Syferbult   |   |  |
| 1992 | Foskor  | No award as result of severe drought. Foskor still donated R50 000 to NAMPO | No award  |  |
| 1993 | Foskor  | <b>Jan Kirsten</b> – Makwassie  | <b>Dr Jan Dreyer</b> – Institute for Vegetables and Ornamental Plants |  |
| 1994 | Foskor  | <b>Justus Bergh</b> – Leeudoringstad  | <b>Prof Boet Human</b> – UOFS   |  |
| 1995 | Foskor  | <b>Koot Claassen</b> – Delmas   |   |  |
| 1996 | Foskor  | <b>Ivor Eden</b> – Hennenman  | <b>Dr Org van Rensburg</b> – ARC-GCI                                  | <b>Bully Botma</b><br><b>Cerneels Claassen</b><br><b>Japie Grobler</b><br><b>Pieter Meyer</b><br><b>Jan Schabort</b>   |
| 1997 | Foskor  | <b>Francois Haasbroek</b> – Bothaville                                      | <b>Prof Gert Erasmus</b> – UOFS                                       |  |
| 1998 | Novartis  | <b>Michael de Klerk</b> – Frankfort   | <b>Prof Piet Geertsen</b> – ARC-GCI                                   |  |
| 1999 | Novartis  | <b>Hans Janse van Rensburg</b> – Bronkhorstspuit                            | <b>Dr Jos de Kock</b> – ARC-GCI                                       |  |



**TABLE 1(b): AWARDS MADE BY NAMPO, 1987 - 1995**

|      | Junior Maize Man of the Year           | Agricultural Personality of the Year                                 | Maize Personality of the Year                   | Certificates of honour for the leadership's contribution over many years |
|------|--|--|---|--|
| 1987 | <b>Japie Grobler</b> – Bothaville      | <b>Kobus Jooste</b> – President SALU                                 |   | <b>Fanie Ferreira</b><br><b>Crawford von Abo</b>                         |
| 1988 | <b>Martiens Prinsloo</b><br>– Hoopstad |  |   |  |
| 1989 | <b>Glen Easton</b> – Koster            |  |   |  |
| 1990 |  | <b>Dries Bruwer</b> – TLU  |   | <b>Boetie Viljoen</b>  |
| 1991 |  | <b>Dr WP Grobbelaar</b> – Department of Agriculture and Water Supply |   |  |
| 1995 |  |  | <b>Giel van Zyl</b><br>– General Manager: NAMPO |  |

This abstract from *Mielies/Maize* magazine of December 1985 gives an indication of the stature that the awards developed: 'When one speaks of the South African golf champions and Currie Cup champions you can speak about the maize farmer and maize researcher in South African agriculture at the same time these days. These are the most sought-after awards in agriculture today for which producers and researchers compete. When someone is nominated as winner in one of the two divisions, they are champions in their own right.' (See **Table 1[a]** and **1[b]** for a summary of the awards by NAMPO until 1999.)

Grain SA has built on this basis since 1999. Even today the taxing assessment for this award demands a lot from finalists, as nearly every part of the farming operation is evaluated. However, the value of the feedback and positive inputs by experts is invaluable to the participant.

**Table 2** provides a summary of the awards made by Grain SA since 2000.

## SPONSORS

Three Ships Whisky sponsored the Maize Man Award for five years since its inception, after which Case and later Foskor acted as main sponsors. The NAMPO Executive decided to divide the prize money equally between the Maize Man and the Agriculture Researcher of the Year.

In 1985 JI Case took over the sponsorship and a condition was that the prize money had to be used to investigate an aspect of maize farming abroad and then make a report available to South African maize farmers afterwards.

Through the years many amendments were made to the competition – sponsors changed, prizes became more attractive, the name was changed to suit the current agricultural environment and additional awards were introduced to include emerging farmers and those who made special contributions to the agricultural sector. By 1989, when Foskor entered as sponsor, the prize money for the Maize Man of the Year was improved with two return tickets for the winner and their spouse to New York.



**Sound bite: The evaluation process was a frightening but enriching experience for participants – Mr Giel van Zyl.**



**TABLE 2: AWARDS MADE BY GRAIN SA (1999 - 2015)**

|      | <b>Main sponsors</b>                    | <b>Grain Producer of the Year</b>                        | <b>Grain Scientist/Agriculturist of the Year</b>                 | <b>Developing Grain Producer of the Year</b>               |
|------|---|--|--|--|
| 2000 | Novartis                                | <b>Pieter Gildenhuys</b><br>– Heidelberg, Southern Cape  | <b>Dr Klaus Pakendorf</b><br>– ARC-GCI                           |  |
| 2001 | Syngenta                                | <b>De la Rey Tonkin</b><br>– Standerton, Mpumalanga      | <b>Dr Carel Johan Swanevelder</b><br>– ARC-GCI                   |  |
| 2002 | Syngenta<br>Land Bank                   | <b>Deon Bothma</b><br>– Mareetsane, North West           | <b>Dr Cobus le Roux</b> – ARC-GCI                                | <b>Karabo Peele</b> – Ventersdorp, North West              |
| 2003 | Syngenta<br>Land Bank                   | <b>Manny and Johnny da Costa</b> – Nigel, Gauteng        | No award   | <b>Menyatso Matsididi</b><br>– Tweespruit, Free State      |
| 2004 | Syngenta<br>Land Bank                   | <b>Japie Grobler</b><br>– Bothaville, Free State         | <b>Prof Johann Kirsten</b><br>– University of Pretoria           | <b>Paul Morule</b> – Putfontein, North West                |
| 2005 | Syngenta<br>Land Bank                   | <b>Kobus Dannhauser</b><br>– Parys, Free State           | No award   | <b>Moss Malo</b> – Delareyville, North West                |
| 2006 | Syngenta<br>Land Bank                   | <b>Willem de Waal</b><br>– Swartland, Western Cape       | <b>Dr Tom Drinkwater</b><br>– ARC-GCI                            | <b>Lasarus Mothusi</b> – Weltevreden, North West           |
| 2007 | Syngenta<br>Absa                        | <b>Kobus Wessels</b><br>– Caledon, Western Cape          | No award   | <b>Lepati Macaphasa</b><br>– Phuthaditjhaba, Free State    |
| 2008 | Syngenta<br>Land Bank                   | <b>Schalk Stapelberg</b><br>– Piet Retief, Mpumalanga    | <b>Dr Mike Hardy</b> – Department of Agriculture, Western Cape   | <b>Labious Manoto</b> – Lichtenburg, North West            |
| 2009 | Syngenta<br>Absa                        | <b>Jaap van der Westhuizen</b><br>– Heilbron, Free State | <b>Martiens du Plessis</b> – NWK                                 | <b>Sameul Moloi</b> – Fouriesburg, Free State              |
| 2010 | Syngenta<br>Absa                        | <b>Pien Bester</b><br>– Morreesburg, Western Cape        | <b>Prof Koos van Rensburg</b><br>– ARC-GCI                       | <b>William Matasane</b> – Senekal, Free State              |
| 2011 | Syngenta<br>Absa                        | <b>Vlakplaas Boerdery</b><br>– Hoopstad, Free State      | <b>Prof André Agenbag</b><br>– Stellenbosch University           | <b>Koos Mthimkulu</b> – Senekal, Free State                |
| 2012 | Syngenta<br>Absa                        | <b>Gilly Scheepers</b><br>– Fouriesburg, Free State      | <b>Prof Maryke Labuschagne</b><br>– University of the Free State | <b>Israel Mothlabane</b><br>– Wesselsbron, Free State      |
| 2013 | Syngenta<br>Absa                        | <b>Rhys Evans-groep</b><br>– Viljoenskroon, Free State   | <b>Kobus van Zyl</b><br>– Omnia Fertiliser                       | <b>Maurice Mthandeki Boki</b><br>– Matatiele, Eastern Cape |
| 2014 | Syngenta<br>Absa                        | <b>Richard Hobson</b><br>– Setlagole, North West         | No award   |  |
| 2015 | Syngenta, Absa and John Deere Financial | <b>Genade Boerdery</b><br>– Douglas, Northern Cape       | No award   |  |

|      | <b>Main sponsors</b>                    | <b>New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year</b>     | <b>Small-scale Farmer of the Year</b>                        | <b>Subsistence Farmer of the Year</b>               |
|------|---|--|--|---|
| 2014 | Syngenta<br>Absa                        | <b>Ralph Swart</b> – Elim, Western Cape          | <b>Lungelwa Kama</b> – Maclear, Eastern Cape                 | <b>Enoch Khumalo</b> – Piet Retief, Mpumalanga      |
| 2015 | Syngenta, Absa and John Deere Financial | <b>Solomon Masangu</b><br>– Carolina, Mpumalanga | <b>Ngubengcuka Christian Moyo</b><br>– Maclear, Eastern Cape | <b>Daliwonga Nombewu</b><br>– Mthatha, Eastern Cape |

In 2000, when all the producer organisations under the National Grain Producers' Organisation (later Grain SA) were amalgamated, the Maize Man Award was replaced by the Grain Producer of the Year Award. The format of this project by Grain SA, aimed at recognising producers who manage their businesses to serve as an example and inspiration to other producers, increased over the years.

Since 2002 a Developing Grain Producer of the Year Award was also made. The first recipient was Mr Karabo Peele, a leader farmer from Ventersdorp, who proceeded to serve the industry in more than one capacity, of which a considerable period was as trustee and later as Chairperson of the Maize Trust.

In due course the small-scale and subsistence farmers informed the management of Grain SA's Farmer Development Programme of their need for their own competition as they could not compete directly with the bigger new-era producers. In reaction to



Messrs Monwabisi Fandeso, Managing Director of the Land Bank, and Mr Karabo Peele, Developing Grain Producer of the Year of 2002.

the farmers' request the Developing Grain Producer of the Year Award was adjusted from 2014 to have three categories to enable producers at different levels to take part – Subsistence Farmer of the Year (0 ha to 10 ha), Small-scale Farmer of the Year (more than 10 ha, but less than 250 tons) and New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year (more than 250 tons).

The first winners of these awards for 2014 were as follows:

- Grain SA/Absa Subsistence Farmer – Enoch Khumalo from Piet Retief
- Grain SA/Syngenta Small-Scale Farmer – Lungelwa Kama from Maclear in the Eastern Cape
- Grain SA/Absa New Era Commercial Farmer – Ralph Swart from Swart Boerdery in Elim, Western Cape.

At this award ceremony in 2014 Jannie de Villiers, CEO of Grain SA, said that this organisation believed in the development of ways to bridge the gap between small



A page from the SA *Graan/Grain* magazine of November 2014. It was the first time that the Developing Grain Producer of the Year Award was adapted to make provision for three categories – Subsistence Farmer of the Year, Small-scale Farmer of the Year and New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year.



Labious Manoto from Lichtenburg in North West and Schalk Stapelberg from Piet Retief, Mpumalanga were respectively the Developing Grain Producer and Grain Producer of 2008.

**TABLE 2B: OTHER AWARDS MADE BY GRAIN SA**

| Inspiration Award | Awards to individuals or industry role-players  | Recognition for excellence of Grain SA's Executive members   |
|-------------------|---|--|
| 2005              | <b>Bully Botma</b> for dedication, loyalty, service and leadership in the grain industry for many years   |  |
| 2010              | <b>Louw Steytler</b> for involvement in organised agriculture   |  |
|                   | <b>Vic Mouton</b> for involvement and positions occupied in organised agriculture   |  |
| 2011              | <b>Dr Jan Dreyer</b> and <b>Prof Alan Bennie</b> – received Grain SA honours awards for their expertise and work as judges on the selection panel of Grain Producer of the Year for many years                      |  |
| 2012              | Trophies presented to the <b>ambassadors of Mexico, China</b> and <b>South Korea</b> as export countries of South African maize   |  |
| 2013              | Certificate of honour to <b>Leon du Plessis</b> as administrator of the Sorghum Trust and Maize Trust   | <b>Anton Botha</b> (Region 20), <b>Willie Linde</b> (Region 15) and <b>Cobus van Coller</b> (Region 23) shared the award |
|                   | Award of special appreciation to <b>Charmian Swart</b> of Transnet Freight Rail for exceptional service to the grain industry with imports and exports  |  |
| 2014              | <b>Prof Ferdi Meyer</b> – BFAP  | <b>Jaco Minnaar</b> (Region 22)  |
|                   | <b>Gert Pretorius</b> (posthumously) – leadership during unification and founding of Grain SA   |  |
|                   | <b>Neels Ferreira</b> – vision, exceptional leadership<br><b>Fanie van Zyl</b> – leadership on the Management Committee and Audit Committee of Grain SA   |  |
| 2015              | <b>Dr Julian Jaftha</b> – Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries   | <b>Andries Theron</b> (Vice-chairperson: Grain SA)   |
|                   | <b>Dr Cobus le Roux</b> – lifelong dedication to research and development of grain and industrial crops   |  |
|                   | <b>Department of Science and Technology</b> – investment in grain research and new technology<br><b>Department of Rural Development and Land Reform</b> – contribution to the Grain SA Farmer Development Programme |  |

and commercial farmers. 'Agriculture is the backbone of rural communities and the grain industry is the primary provider of food security.'

In 2015 Syngenta, Absa and John Deere Financial were the main sponsors of the Grain Producers Awards, the formal awards ceremony that took place in Midrand. John Deere Financial was also the main sponsor of the Farmer Development Division's annual Day of Celebration. Syngenta has been the main sponsor of the Grain Producer of the Year Award for the past 15 years. Absa and the Land Bank were respectively also sponsors of the Developing Grain Producers Awards since 2002.

More information about the annual Day of Celebration of Grain SA's Farmer Development Programme is included in Chapter 8.

### SCIENTIST/AGRICULTURIST OF THE YEAR

From 1982 NAMPO also nominated a Researcher of the Year. This award was later retained by Grain SA and expanded to Grain Scientist/Agriculturist of the Year. The aim of this was to honour grain scientists and agriculturists who make a major contribution to the industry. Dr HO Gevers, who was at the Department of Agriculture at the time, was nominated as the first Maize Scientist of the Year in 1982.

Dr Jan Dreyer, former head of the ARC-Grain Crops Institute who received this award in 1993, is of opinion that this did not necessarily open new doors, but it did grant



Sound bite: NAMPO also began to recognise the Scientist as well as the Personality of the Year – Mr Giel van Zyl.





At the Grain Producer of the Year function of 2014 are: (from the left) Antonie Delpont (Syngenta), Louw Steytler, Lungelwa Kama (Small-scale Farmer of the Year), Ralph Swart (Grain SA/Absa New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year), Jannie de Villiers and Enoch Khumalo (Subsistence Farmer of the Year). In front sits Richard Hobson (Grain Producer of the Year).



Dr Jan Dreyer

more credibility. Prof Alan Bennie, former professor in Soil Science at the University of the Free State who was named Researcher of the Year in 1989, is of the opinion that his nomination in part led to him subsequently being appointed to the Grain Producers' selection panel.

### CRITERIA

Judging criteria for grain producers include the following: Business involvement outside of agriculture, production and tillage practices, fertilisation policy, cultivar choices, pest and weed control, financial management, mechanisation management, labour management, community involvement, marketing and hedging of products.

Prof Bennie was part of the selection panel of the Maize Man and Grain Producer of the Year competitions for 22 years. He said that selectors visited the nominees on their farms and awarded marks according to the list of criteria. The three top candidates were then selected, after which each of the members of the selection panel cast a secret vote. It was only at the awards ceremony that they knew who the winner was.

Dr Dreyer thinks that one learns from the process over the years which skills and characteristics producers should have to be successful. According to him it is essential for the producer always to be in control, creative and passionate.

He also thinks that there has been a shift in emphasis from a family industry with a patriarch at the head to that of a business. It is necessary today for a producer to build a support network. The years in which he could do everything on his own are something of the past. Producers must also be much more conscious of the environment than formerly.

‘The winning producers are realistic, but stay unbelievably positive and have the ability to handle risks.’

## OTHER AWARDS

From 1996 the National Oilseeds Producers Organisation (NOPO) awarded honorary membership to producers and role-players in the industry in recognition of exceptional and excellent service to the organisation. Developing sunflower and groundnut producers were also honoured from 1999. Mr Basie Ntsimane, well-known in agricultural circles, was named Developing Sunflower Producer of the Year, and Mr Edmund Tsogang as Developing Groundnut Producer of the Year. Criteria included successful production practices, involvement with study groups and support to other producers.

When asked, Mr Anton Nebe from Potchefstroom, who is actively involved in the grain sorghum industry, confirmed that there no awards had been made to excellent producers in this industry before the establishment of Grain SA. Andries Beyers, the last Chairperson of the Winter Grain Producers Organisation (WPO), also confirmed that no awards had been made by the WPO to outstanding producers. However, in the wheat industry a Wheat Man of the Year was selected in the past. That was an initiative by three agribusinesses in the Cape.

There were also sporadic awards for the Agricultural Leader of the Year as well as the Maize Personality of the Year. For example, Mr Giel van Zyl, former General Manager of NAMPO/Grain SA, was selected as Maize Personality in 1985. Particularly since 2010 special tributes or certificates of honour were presented to agricultural leaders or industry role-players by Grain SA during Congress or during the Grain Producers’ function.

The Golden Maize Kernel Award – a real gold maize kernel that could be worn as lapel badge – was the highest honour that NAMPO presented. This award was apparently only made twice, namely to the eight producer members who resigned from the Maize Board in 1985 (Messrs Cerneels Claassen, Hennie Delpont, Gerrit Green, Cornelis Leonard, Willie van der Ryst, Boetie Viljoen, Mof Visser and Crawford von Abo), and again in 1996 to the five persons who had served on NAMPO’s executive committee for seven consecutive years since 1989. The latter were Messrs Cerneels Claassen, Jan Schabert, Japie Grobler, Bully Botma and Pieter Meyer. Claassen was therefore the only person who received the Golden Maize Kernel twice.

The Agricultural Writers Shield and the Koster Shield were also presented annually. The Agricultural Writers Shield went to the best speaker at the annual congress,



Developing Groundnut Producer of the Year Edmund Tsogang receives a certificate from Mr Gert Pretorius, NOPO Chairperson.



Messrs Francois Basson and Louis Joubert (both from Advanta) and Basie Ntsimane, Developing Sunflower Producer of the Year.



The Koster Shield annually goes to the best series of articles that appeared in SA Graan/Grain.

**TABLE 3: AWARDS MADE BY NOPO (1996 - 1999)**

|      | Honorary membership  | Developing Groundnut Producer of the Year  | Developing Sunflower Producer of the Year          |
|------|--|--|--|
| 1996 | <b>SJ Malherbe</b> – Chairperson: Sunflower Industry Congress                    |  |  |
| 1997 | <b>JE Grobler</b> – Member of the Management Committee and Vice-chairperson NOPO |  |  |
|      | <b>Dr CJ Swanevelder</b> – Groundnut expert ARC-GCI                              |  |  |
| 1998 | <b>PJ Wessels</b> – National Agricultural Marketing Council                      |  |  |
| 1999 | <b>J du Plessis</b> – Oilseeds Board   | <b>Edmund Tsogang</b> – Genesa Study Group | <b>Basie Ntsimane</b> – Bafokeng North Study Group |

while the Koster Shield went to the best series of articles in the magazine. These awards have been presented during Grain SA's congress since 1999.

## INSPIRATION AWARD

Grain SA's Inspiration Award was introduced to show appreciation for ongoing contributions to the grain industry by individuals in organisations and who continue to achieve exceptional results and inspire the industry to be more competitive in its commitment to excellence. The first recipient of the Inspiration Award was Prof Ferdi Meyer of the BFAP in 2014.

In addition, during Grain SA's Congress as well as the Grain Producers' Award function, recognition is given to individuals who served the grain industry with excellence and contributed to its wealth with their time, support and dedication.



The first recipient of the Inspiration Award was Prof Ferdi Meyer of BFAP (right) in 2014. Mr Andries Theron, Vice-chairperson of Grain SA, presented him with this.



Grain SA gave recognition for excellence to serving Executive members for the first time in 2013. Anton Botha (Region 20), Willie Linde (Region 15) and Cobus van Coller (Region 23) shared the trophy.

Since 2011 Grain SA has said farewell to retired executive members and their spouses during a special evening function at NAMPO Park. 'In every organisation there are people who are prepared to travel thousands of kilometres and attend hundreds of meetings. Grain SA has to acknowledge those who are prepared to do that, as well as the women who enable their husbands to make these sacrifices for something greater,' was the message of Mr Louw Steytler, former Chairperson of Grain SA, during a function on 29 July 2014 at NAMPO Park, where some of the retiring members of the Executive were bid farewell.

During the 2013 event Mr Jannie de Villiers, CEO, announced a 'recognition of excellence' award to serving Executive members. This award is made to someone who has made their mark in the organisation, who shows character and inspires the staff with their contribution. Messrs Anton Botha (Region 20), Willie Linde (Region 15) and Cobus van Coller (Region 23) were the first Executive members who received this award. They shared the award.

Recognition for years of service is also presented to the staff of Grain SA at this event.

Solomon and Christina Masango are the proud owners of a brand new John Deere 5403 MFWD 48 kW tractor sponsored by John Deere Financial in partnership with Absa. Jurie Mentz (Grain SA Development Coordinator) and Jane McPherson present them with the keys. >>>

## LIGHTER MOMENTS DURING THE SELECTION PROCESS

Members of the selection panel of the Maize Man and Grain Producer had to visit every nominee on his farm, and naturally they were received and treated with generous farmer hospitality.

Of course there were many lighter moments during the strict selection process. Dr Jan Dreyer, who was a member of the selection panel for about 25 years, remembers one incident clearly. A farmer's wife treated the panel very elegantly to tea and refreshments. Her little daughter clearly wanted to chat to the panel members. Dr Jan recounts that the mother tried to herd her away 'like a sheepdog herding sheep'. In an unguarded moment this young miss grabbed the opportunity, looked panel member Prof Ockie Bosch in the eye and declared: 'Oom, my mother borrowed these little golden teaspoons and she said if one of them should disappear she would personally *dônn*er the people who came for tea.'

All that Prof Alan Bennie, who served on the selection panel for 22 years, wanted to share was that the selectors spent a lot of time in each other's company and then 'people become a bit silly'.

Dr Dreyer also remembers the time when their team went to the farmstead for coffee after their visit. There the farmer's wife said that she wanted to thank them, because she had been asking her husband for thirty years to remove a heap of rubbish from the yard. Just before the panel's visit it was removed at last...

It was also clear that absolutely nothing was left undone before these visits of the selection panel. At some farms that they visited the paint on the walls was still wet, Dr Jan continued.

In the beginning members of the panel went to the farms by car and this led to racing. One man allegedly set the speed control of his car at 180 km/h! A former member of the panel said that he was always very grateful when he came home in one piece after such a trip. The organisers fortunately made minibuses available for this purpose later on.

