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Nuusbrief | Newsletter

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GRAIN SA CELEBRATES FARMER DEVELOPMENT

Jenny Mathews, Pula/Imvula co-worker

» Halala, Farmers of Grain SA! Halala, Grain SA Farmer Development Team! 1 October 2015 was a Day of Celebration and a Day to Remember!

Once again farmers, many wearing their colourful traditional outfits, gathered in Bloemfontein from all corners of South Africa to spend a happy day together, acknowledging growth, progress and hard work and to celebrate their successes. It was a DAY OF CELEBRATION for the Grain SA team and the members of Grain SA's Farmer Development program - also a day to recognise the progress at grass-roots because of the hard work of dedicated men and women who work their fields and produce food for their families and the nation.

Noticeably every nominee in this year's three categories, namely Grain SA/ABSA Subsistence Farmer of the Year (0-10ha), Grain SA/Syngenta Smallholder Farmer of the year (10ha-250t) and Grain SA/ABSA/John Deere Financial New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year, had grown their farming operations in some way or other. It is exciting to hear how a few small changes in their farming practices have resulted in dramatic increases in their returns which has motivated them to plant more crops and grow their farming operations. In the world of development it is not always the huge farming operations that count... small improvements can change lives in rural areas.

The winner of the **2015 Grain SA/ABSA Subsistence Farmer of the Year** is Ngubengcuka Moyo who is mentored by Lawrence Lutango from the Mthatha office. He does all his farming manually and has improved his yields by using a hand planter and a knapsack sprayer. He chooses to farm using no-till methods and is happy that this is helping him to conserve the land for future generations. He lives in a remote region with limited infrastructure and says his biggest challenge is in marketing his crop.

The winner of the **2015 Grain SA/Syngenta Smallholder of the Year** is Daliwonga Nombewu from the Eastern Cape. His Grain SA regional manager is Vusi Ngesi based in Maclear. Even in this dry season his 13 ha of maize yielded on average 4.5t/ha. This young farmer has been so inspired that he is planning to grow by renting additional land. He believes it is important to spread ones risks and he also grows dry beans, potatoes and spinach which are in demand locally and boosts his cash flow.

The **2015 Grain SA/ABSA/John Deere Financial New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year** is Solomon Masango. Solomon farms near Carolina and his Grain SA mentor is the recently retired, Naas Gouws. Solomon practices no-till farming and plants maize, soya and sugar beans. He emphasises the importance of good relationships with other farmers and advisors who help him with his planning. He believes it is important to look ahead and plan in advance for the next season. Solomon values his farm workers and even plants a few hectares for each of them. He has seen amazing progress and his yields have grown from 3.5t/ha to 6t/ha. No wonder he is found to be a worthy winner who is taking home the grand prize: A brand new John Deere 5403 MFWD 48kw tractor. This is the biggest prize we have ever had - thanks to the partnership between John Deere Financial and ABSA. Wow, what a celebration we had! Tears of joy and stunned disbelief were all mixed up on Solomon and his wife's faces as they let the news sink in.

Thank you to the generous sponsors of the competitions and to all the other supporters and friends of the Grain SA Farmer Development Program who came to share in this DAY OF CELEBRATION and left for home with large smiles and warmed hearts - because an encounter with the farmers of South Africa ALWAYS does that to you!



From left to right: Jane McPherson, Manager: Farmer Development, Grain SA; Ramodisa Monaisa, Executive Member, Grain SA; Jannie de Villiers, CEO, Grain SA; Ngubengcuka Christian Moyo, 2015 Grain SA/ABSA Subsistence Farmer of the Year; and Ernst Janovsky, Head of Centre of Excellence ABSA AgriBusiness



From left to right: Jane McPherson, Manager: Farmer Development, Grain SA; Ramodisa Monaisa, Executive Member, Grain SA; Daliwonga Nombewu, 2015 Grain SA/Syngenta Smallholder Farmer of the Year; Jannie de Villiers, CEO, Grain SA and Mphilo Dlamini, Corporate Affairs Manager, Syngenta



From left to right: Jannie de Villiers, CEO, Grain SA; Ramodisa Monaisa, Executive Member, Grain SA; Ernst Janovsky, Head of Centre of Excellence ABSA AgriBusiness; Solomon Masango and Wife, 2015 Grain SA/ABSA/John Deere Financial New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year; and Antois van der Westhuizen, Head Retail Finance: Sub Sahara Africa, John Deere Financial



Solomon Masango celebrates being named the New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year on his John Deere 5403 MFWD tractor sponsored by John Deere Financial in partnership with ABSA.

Watch this short video of Solomon accepting his prize here:



Also watch the short interview with Jannie de Villiers, CEO of Grain SA here:



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DROUGHT IN THE 'SWARTLAND'

Toit Wessels, Communication and Member Marketing, Cape Province, Grain SA

» The drought currently prevailing in the 'Swartland' is of great concern to the producers, whom most have already felt the severe impact thereof.

During a visit yesterday to the Moorreesburg/Hopefield area, the scene looks dire as producers have started to bale wheat, with yields a mere 115 bales/ha (± 2 tons) compared to the average of 330 bales/ha (± 6 tons). The drought will have a major impact on the crop size in the Cape, and producers who have planted several crops, including wheat, oats, barley and sweet and bitter lupins, will probably not harvest a single seed.

Rainfall at the Koperfontein silo (Hopefield area) measured only 132mm - only a third of the area's previous 15-year average of 360mm with figures probably nudging towards the lowest recorded figures of 168mm in 1932.

Producers who could make silage, should have sufficient food for the animals until April/May 2016, but are still hoping for some rains early next year to continue with pastures.



Wheat without any kernels is cut to make hay - a 35ft flat cutter is used to get the necessary materials



The 10 ft "hay bind" row is too little for the baler and hay making is impossible – the material does not even cover the shoe !!

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DELAYS IN VAT OR DIESEL REBATE REFUNDS

Corné Louw, Snr Economist: Inputs, Grain SA

» It has come to Grain SA's attention that its members are struggling with their tax and especially diesel rebate payments from SARS. Grain SA members are requested to report these instances. Grain SA may be able to help with individual cases but it further enables us to discuss the extent of the problem with SARS. Grain SA's office can be contacted or send an e-mail to come@grainsa.co.za

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Stay inspired...

'If you have faith as small as a mustard seed... nothing will be impossible for you'

~ Matthew 17:20

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