PIETER VAN ROOYEN MOVES ON

Dr Pieter van Rooyen's contract as head of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture for the past 8 years expired at the end of November. One of his most significant recent contributions to agriculture in the Province has been the initiation of the Western Cape Government's African Agricultural project. The purpose of this project is to give fruition to the objectives of NEPAD with regard to agriculture on the continent. He also initiated the Three Provinces Project whereby the agricultural departments of the Western, Northern and Eastern Cape Provinces joined hands with the aim of strengthening agricultural capacity within the provinces through joint programmes. Van Rooyen also lead a delegation that gained international funding with a possibility of future support from the European Union for the implementation of this project. For the next two years he will concentrate on the expansion of these programmes as well as on the mentoring of the new head of department.

Van Rooyen, a well-known figure in agricultural circles is a soil scientist with a Ph.D. (agric) from the University of Stellenbosch who, over the years, has published widely about this and various other agricultural subjects including viticulture, oenology and fruit.

His career started in 1968 at the Stellenbosch-Elsenburg Agricultural College (then still part of the University of Stellenbosch) as researcher and assistant director. From there he moved to the Oenological and Viticulture Research Institute as assistant and later deputy director.

From 1985 to 1987 he served the Fruit and Fruit Technology Research Institute as deputy director after which he was appointed as director of INFRUITEC in Stellenbosch.

He enjoys special recognition for his intense interest in and the important contribution he has made to the wine industry of South Africa. He has been chosen as the only person from the Southern Hemisphere to be a member of the International Wine Academy where he serves the interests of our local wine industry.