CITRUS ACADEMY BURSARY FUND: Industry Exposure Programme

After the resounding success of the Industry Exposure Programme in 2008, during which the collaboration between the Citrus Academy and the Industrial Development Corporation provided twenty bursary students with opportunities to attend seven national and international conferences and symposia, we once again received a very generous sponsorship from the IDC in 2009 to continue the programme.

The purpose of the Industry Exposure Programme is to give recipients of Citrus Academy bursaries opportunities to be exposed to the citrus and wider agricultural sector, while they are studying. This assists them with integration into the industry and gives them an impression of the environment in which they will find themselves once they start working.

According to the students who have taken part in the Industry Exposure Programme to date, the biggest benefit of attending such events is that it gives them context for their theoretical studies. Students start realising what role and function they can fulfil in the industry after graduation, and they make the contacts necessary to achieve success.

Some postgraduate students have also been asked to present their research findings at these conferences, and the resulting boost in self-confidence for these students is noticeable. Undergraduate students who are considering postgraduate studies also get the opportunity to assess what it entails.

On a social and personal level the Industry Exposure Programme has had some unexpected benefits. Bursary students from different provinces and institutions get to interact and exchange experiences and knowledge, forming lasting friendships and a more cohesive group of future industry leaders. In addition, their horizons are broadened by the adventure of travelling to parts of the country – or the world – they have never seen, and probably never would have. All in all, the value of the Industry Exposure Programme cannot be overestimated.

So far this year, IDC funding has been used to benefit a number of students in the following ways:

- Nhlenhla Mathaba (MSc Horticulture, University of KwaZulu-Natal) attended the 6th International Postharvest Symposium in Antalya, Turkey from 8 to 12 April 2009, where he presented his research findings on the physiology of citrus chilling industry, and received glowing reviews.

- Two honours students in BSc Entomology from Rhodes University, Kirsty Venter and Lyndall Pereira, attended the National Entomological Congress in Stellenbosch from 5 to 8 July 2009.

- Tarryn Goble (MSc Entomology, Rhodes University) presented her academic work on the investigation of entomopathogenic fungi for the control of citrus pests at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Society of Invertebrate Pathology in Park City, Utah, USA. Tarryn was a sensation and made us very proud (see photo).

- Two masters students in Horticulture from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Xolani Siboza and Nhlenhla Mathaba, attended the 1st Africa Horticultural Congress in Nairobi, Kenya from 31 August to 3 September 2009 (see photo).

September proved to be a very busy month for the Industry Exposure Programme, as we had no less than 14 students...
attending four conferences and symposia in total:

- Rachel van der Walt (BSc Biochemistry, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) and Hildegard Witbooi (N Dip Horticulture, Cape Peninsula University of Technology) attended the South African Society of Microbiologists Conference in Durban from 20 to 23 September 2009 (see photo).
- Sbongiseni Mazibuko (BSc Hydrology, University of Zululand) was invited to attend the 14th SANCAHS Symposium at the University of KwaZulu-Natal from 21 to 23 September. The topic of the symposium was: “Towards Sustainable Water Quantity and Quality Management: Challenges for the Hydrological Sciences”.
- Sabelo Khumalo (BSc Agricultural Economics, University of Zululand) and Sifiso Mthabela (BSc Agribusiness, University of Zululand) attended the 47th Conference of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa in Durban from 21 to 23 September, where they rubbed shoulders with local and international experts in the field of agricultural economics.
- Eight bursary recipients who study crop and/or soil science at various universities were sponsored to attend the 9th African Crop and Soil Science Society Conference in Cape Town from 28 September to 1 October 2009 (see photo).

Two students who were selected to benefit from the Industry Exposure Programme in 2009 will only be undertaking their trips early in 2010:

- Kate Hlongo received her National Diploma in Plant Production from Lowveld College in January 2009, and is currently completing the Department of Agriculture’s Business and Leadership Development Internship. She was also the winner for best academic performance at diploma-level for three years running. Kate will be attending Fruit Logistica in Berlin, Germany, in February 2010.
- Arno Erasmus (MSc Plant Pathology, University of Stellenbosch) will travel to the USA in March 2010 to conduct research on the citrus industry in California. He will have the opportunity to meet his external academic supervisor for his PhD project, Dr. J. Smilanick, a renowned expert in the field of postharvest pathology.

Judging from the feedback received from students who have attended these events, it was a life-changing experience for most of them. It is clear from their boundless enthusiasm and appreciation that the Industry Exposure Programme is achieving all its stated aims, and more.

Our thanks go to the Industrial Development Corporation, the Citrus Growers’ Association and the Citrus Industry Trust for their continued support and assistance. A special word of thanks also goes to Rochelle Adkins for her hard work in making all the travel and accommodation arrangements.

KYK VORENTOE
in Vasbyt Tyd

Op 5 Augustus het President Jacob Zuma die implementering van n Opleiding Afleggingskema aangekondig, as deel van Suid-Afrika se antwoord op die ekonomiese uitdagings wat ons nou beleef as gevolg van die internasionale ekonomiese krisis.

Die Opleiding Afleggingskema is gemik op werkgewers wat in die moeilikheid is as gevolg van die ekonomiese toestande en hulle werkers wat gevolglik die gevaar loop om afgedank te word. Werkgewers wat in die moeilikheid is, is dié wat in finansiële verknorings is as gevolg van die ekonomie en wat afdankings en selds bankroetknap in die gesig staar.

Die skema maak dié mondeling vir werkgewers en werknemers om te onderhandel oor h se opleiding aflegging, wat tydelike opskorting van werk is wat gebruik word vir opleidingsdoeleindes. In plaas daarvan dat werkers afgedank word, word hulle werk slegs opgeskort, tesame met hulle salaris betalings, wat die werkgewer n blaaaksans gee en die geleentheid om te herstel tot die punt waar hy weer die werkers kan absorbeer.

Die Opleiding Afleggingskema voorsien van opleidingsperiodie van een tot drie maande.

Die soort opleiding waaraan werkers deelneem in hierdie tyd is buigbaar, maar dit behoort gekoppel te wees aan die behoeftes van die werkgewer, sodat dit verder die ekonomiese herstel van die werkgewer moontlik maak en die geleentheid skep vir verdere groei. Dit mag h opbou van vaardighede in h werker se huidige werk behels, of heropleiding om h werker meer in diens neembare te maak, of sels h verbetering in hulle algemene werkplekvaardighede of lewensvaardighede. Daar word van werkgewers verwag om hulle Werkplekvaardighedsklamte te hersien en om dit te bely het met die opleiding afleggingskema.

Opleiding moet verkieslik in lyn met eenheidstandaarde en kredietwaardig wees.

Gedurende die afleggingsperiode, word daar van die werkgewer verwag om steeds die werknemersoktante in stand te hou en om die volle sosiale sekuriteitbydraes te maak vir voordele wat werkers op geregistre van ten tye van die aflegging. Dit sal Werkloosheidsverekering insluit, maar mag ook ongekliktheid- en doodsoordele, en pensioen / voorsieningsfonds behels, as dit in plek was. Gedurende die afleggingsperiode, is die werkgewer verantwoordelik vir die werknemersbydraes ook.

Die werkgewer en die werknemer kan onderhandel oor ander sosiale voordele wat in plek mag wees, soos mediesevoordele en behuising.

Die werker sal h opleidingstoelaag ontvang in hierdie periode, wat befonds word deur die Nasionale Werke Fonds, gelyk aan 50% van die werknemer se basiese salaris ten tye van die werksoptorting/ onderworp aan h oorhoofde beperking volgens die WVF druppel. Dit beteken dat die maksimum maandelike opleidingstoelaag wat aan h werknemer betaal sal word, R6,239 is. Die toelaag sal gewaarborg word