T
he Citrus Academy, with financial support from the Industrial Development Corporation, implemented the Industry Exposure Programme in 2008. This programme is a tool for Citrus Academy bursary recipients to be exposed to the citrus industry and wider agricultural sector, by attending industry-related conferences, symposia and workshops.

After two successful years, the Citrus Academy once again received a liberal contribution from the IDC in 2010 to support the programme. This year, Citrus Academy bursary recipients will benefit from attending three main citrus-related events – the Global Citrus Conference, the 6th Citrus Research Symposium and the International Horticultural Congress.

The Global Citrus Conference was held in Cape Town at the Bay Hotel on the 8th and 9th of July 2010. Sixteen bursary recipients from the University of Stellenbosch, Fort Cox College, the University of Fort Hare and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, were selected to attend.

Students travelled to Cape Town, some for the first time, during the final days of the World Cup. Although logistically difficult, this added to the overall excitement of the trip! Kitted out in their World Cup inspired Citrus Academy t-shirts, the sixteen delegates gained knowledge, exposure and inspiration from the various speakers, and exchanged details and ideas during the various networking opportunities.

Feedback from students has been positive and encouraging, illuminating once again the benefits of a programme of this calibre. “I believe that as the youth in the industry we can learn and do more with the knowledge and exposure we receive from such events. I thank the Citrus Academy team and their sponsors for making it possible for us to attend the conference.” Babalwa Poswa

The 6th Citrus Research Symposium is held at Champagne Sports Resort in the Drakensberg from 15-18 August 2010, with twenty Citrus Academy bursary recipients attending. Citrus Academy postgraduate students are presenting their research findings at this event. It is also a great opportunity for undergraduate sciences students to get an idea of what is in store for them should they choose to further their studies on a postgraduate level.

The International Horticultural Congress takes place from 22 to 27 August 2010 in Lisbon, Portugal. Two Citrus Academy bursary recipients, Nhanhla Mathaba (PhD Horticulture, UKZN) and Xolani Siboza (MSc Horticulture, UKZN) have been invited to give presentations at the congress. This is an honour for the students, and a proud moment for the Citrus Academy.

The Citrus Academy would once again like to express our gratitude to the Industrial Development Corporation and the Citrus Industry Trust for their ongoing contributions and support in this important work.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

planning meeting on the 15th of July 2010 at the Obone Trading in Patensie.

The Kouga Citrus Study Group

The Kouga Citrus Study Group will be composed of all government officials who are coordinating the citrus commodity in the Kouga local municipality, CRI extension officials and all the citrus growers in Hankey, Gamtoos and Patensie.

Social Facilitation

The Departments of Agriculture, rural development and land affairs and Economic development in KZN, have come together to form an entity called SPV-ADA, the purpose of which was to look at what can be done to prevent the emerging farmers from collapsing. The findings were that most of the projects that collapse are community owned projects. The CGA, in partnership with this entity, has looked at possible solutions to the problems. Ten citrus projects in the Province were focused on. The CGA conducted a social facilitation process to try and find out the root cause of the problem, which has two phases:

Phase 1:
- Information gathering of the project
- Visit to the project
- Interviews with the beneficiaries
- Compile the report for phase 1

Phase 2:
- Support needed for these projects to operate efficiently
- Draft implementation plan
- ADA to make funds available for implementation
- Time frame for support
- Accountability and reporting
- Monitoring and Evaluation

As part of Phase 2, the ADA has funded CGA with the amount of R2.8 million for the inputs and capacity building support to the two citrus projects and for capacity building for five citrus projects around KZN.

There are two projects currently funded for inputs, being Bhekishowe and Intathakusa.
Desiree Schonken left the Citrus Academy at the end of August 2010, after more than four years’ of invaluable service. Desiree took the Citrus Academy Bursary Fund from humble beginnings, with only twenty-four students on the Fund when she started, to where it stands today: the largest single industry-funded bursary scheme in the agricultural sector, with fifty-eight students in 2010. Today the Bursary Fund includes programmes for internships, workplace experience, vacation work, BEE support, and industry exposure (see accompanying article), and is regarded as the most progressive and successful in agriculture.

St. Desiree, as her ‘children’ refer to her, has put her heart and soul into building the Bursary Fund, and into providing as many young people as possible with opportunities to learn and grow. There are many good stories to be told, like the time when she arranged for a failing student to go to a free eye clinic, because she realised that he was not performing well due to the fact that he needed glasses, something that not even he knew. That level of commitment and caring is rare, and overwhelming.

Candice Sydenham is taking over the administration from the Bursary Fund. We look forward to working with her and to all the good stories that she will make over the coming years.