



CITRUS RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL'S FEEDBACK TO THE CITRUS INDUSTRY: Ninth Citrus Research Symposium

LIEZL VAN DER LINDE



Exhibitors hall.



Buttress hall.



Jakkie Stander from CRI.



All citrus producers and role-players in the dynamic and competitive South African Citrus industry, value opportunities for scientific information and feedback regarding the latest research results. That is exactly what Citrus Research International has been doing with its biennial Citrus Research Symposium.

This year's symposium was the ninth CRI Citrus Research Symposium and it took place from 21 to 25 August at the Champagne Sports Resort in the Drakensberg. CRI's dedicated team of researchers, as well as other stakeholders such as universities, the Agricultural Research Council and the private sector, play a pivotal role in scientific innovation and world class research in the citrus industry. As in every industry, constant innovation and dynamic advancement are necessary in order to face challenges both locally and internationally. This is exactly what CRI accomplishes with its dedicated resources of research partners and staff, who generate scientific findings that guard and enhance the survival and success of the industry.



Antonio Parenti from BASF, the main sponsor of the symposium.

The objective of the biennial symposia is to share the previous two years' research and new expertise with producers and industry role-players. Therefore, the symposium is attended by a wide spectrum of industry role-players, including citrus producers and technical staff, citrus consultants (SASCCON), citrus exporters, the citrus nursery industry (SACNA), the Citrus Improvement Scheme (CIS), members of the CRI Postharvest Technical Forum (CRI-PTF), which includes packhouses and paper and carton manufacturing companies, DAFF representatives, PPECB and logistics service providers, the chemical industry and delegates from other related industries, such as the suppliers of spraying, fertilising and irrigation equipment.

This year, six international and three South African keynote speakers were hosted at the symposium. The sessions were divided according to the wide-ranging specialist fields, including the Citrus Improvement Scheme, Graft Transmissible Diseases, Integrated Pest Management, Soil Health and Water Use, Postharvest Disease Management, Pre-harvest Disease Management (particularly Citrus Black Spot), Horticulture: Pre- and Postharvest, Cultivars, Climate Change and World Market Trends.

More than 79 talks were presented by specialists in their respective areas of expertise over a three-day period. Thirty research-related posters could also be viewed in the exhibition hall. The sessions were extremely informative and provided critical feedback to the delegates on citrus research and innovation.



Technical Merit Award, Dr Tian Schutte with Dr Vaughan Hattingh.



André Oberholzer from Sappi, main sponsor of the Gala dinner.

In recognition of citrus technical excellence the CRI also presents their Technical Merit Awards every two years to certain individuals who have made a substantial difference or contribution to the citrus industry with their expertise and knowledge. This year Technical Merit Awards were presented to Dr Tian Schutte, Dassie Smit and Mike Holtzhausen.

The symposium would not have been possible without the generous support of all the sponsors. These include the main sponsor: BASF, Golf day sponsor: Noordchem, Welcome Dinner: Arysta Life Science, the well-known happy hour: River Bioscience and the prestigious gala dinner by Sappi. Villa Crop Protection sponsored the entertainment during the gala dinner, ending the 2016 symposium on a high note. All the Gold, Silver and Bronze Sponsors also participated to ensure the success of an event of this magnitude.

The work that emanated from the symposium will help to maintain and support a viable industry, secure substantial exports, and retain the jobs that hinge on the success of the industry. For this reason, CRI will continue striving to bring innovative research to the Southern African citrus industry. The citrus industry generates an annual revenue of R9.4bn, 90% of which accrues from exports. In addition to being Africa's leading citrus exporter, the South African Citrus industry also provides jobs to 100 000 South Africans.

Apart from the CRI Research Symposium, where the focus is on research feedback, CRI also presents various regional workshops each year in the main citrus production regions of South Africa with the focus on extension. These workshops have become the premier technology transfer vehicle for the producers and related role-players. These workshops focus on the specific technical aspects of the industry and they also strive to bring updated and relevant information to the producers and stakeholders.

The industry faces major challenges, but with support from government, research alliance partners, universities, the Agricultural Research Council and private research service providers, CRI will continue to execute world-class research and bring this information to the producer at ground level in order to ensure a lucrative industry for South Africa.



Hannes Bester, Sean Moore, Vaughan Hattingh, Paul Fourie, Hoppie Nel, Jon Pinker, M.C Pretorius, Tim Grout (CRI personnel).



Keynote Speakers, Georgios Vidalakis, Megan Dewdney, Peter Johnson, Tim Williams, Evan Johnson, Magally Williams, Jim Graham, Graham Barry (Absent in photograph : Wilma du Plooy and Zak Laffite).



Noordchem Golf day Participants.