



LANDBOUSKRYWERS SA
AGRICULTURAL WRITERS SA

AGR pen

SPONSORED BY BAYER

JUNE/JUNIE 2022

260th edition of the *Agripen*

Celebrating 260 editions of *Agripen*

Time often catches up with us. When one looks back, very often the time lapse of things that you did in the past comes as a surprise.

This month, we look back at the very first *Agripen* that was sent to members of the Northern Region 22 years ago. Since then, the *Agripen* has been sent to members every month, first in the northern region and later to all members across the country.

Magda du Toit, editor of the *Agripen*, says that since the first edition, only about three or four editions were combined, but apart from that, the newsletter has been published every month.

It is with fond memories that we include the first edition in this month's *Agripen*. "It is remarkable to think that we are celebrating the 260th edition of the *Agripen*. It has been a pleasure and privilege to have been involved in each of these over the years."

Agripen

Landbouuskrywersvereniging van
Suid-Afrika (Noordelike Streek)
Agricultural Writers' Association
of South Africa (Northern Region)

Postbus 5742
Pretoria 0001
Tel (012) 519 8623
Faks/Fax (012) 523 2516

Ons bevind ons reeds in die middel van die jaar 2000 en dit is ongelooflik wat ons almal reeds gedoen en beleef het gedurende die afgelope vyf maande. Die bestuur het tydens die laaste vergadering besluit om weer in komiteeverband te werk. Dit sal die dag-tot-dag bestuur van die Vereniging net soveel makliker om doeltreffender maak.

Dagbestuur

Die dagbestuur van die Vereniging bestaan uit Charl van Rooyen wat die voorsitter is, Louise van Straten-Botha is die ondervoorsitter, en Oom Hendrik de Kock staan weer as sekretaris en aan die roer van die finansiële boot.

Komitees

Finansies: Charl van Rooyen (sameroeper), Louise van Straten-Botha, Oom Hendrik de Kock
Borge en korporatiewe ledesaak: Charl van Rooyen (sameroeper), Joël Kotzé en Rudolf Barkhuizen
Jaarboek: Don Walker (sameroeper), Charl van Rooyen, Joël Kotzé en Jan Syfert
Kompetisies: Charl van Rooyen (sameroeper), Joël Kotzé en Jan Syfert

Plattelandse skakeling: Frikkie Kotzé (sameroeper), Rudolf Barkhuizen, Johan Swiegers en Lynette van Hoven

Agripen: Magda du Toit (sameroeper) en Charl van Rooyen

Lede-aksies/funksies: Ems Coetsee (sameroeper), Johan Swiegers, Lynette van Hoven, Louise van Straten-Botha, Don Walker

Boer-van-die-jaar: Magda du Toit (sameroeper), Joël Kotzé en Charl van Rooyen.

Kompetisies

Randse Paaskou

Baie geluk aan Charl van Rooyen wat aangewys is as wenner in die foto-kompetisie en aan Hans Lombard wat as die wenner in die joernalis-afdeling aangewys is.



Biological crop protection a vital tool for export crops

By Lindi Botha



Biological solutions are proving to be a valuable tool in integrated pest management (IPM) strategies where low chemical residue levels are required for market access.

Speaking at the first in a series of webinars hosted by the Agricultural Writers SA, Rod Bell, CEO of CropLife South Africa, said that there was a concerted strategy in the industry to move towards biological solutions, and that very few export-orientated farmers were solely relying on harsh chemicals anymore.

Biological solutions include those that use plant extracts, microbes and fungi as the mode of action to deter pests.

Donvae Hooker, business communication lead at Andermatt Madumbi, said that when biological

controls first started appearing on the market, it took much convincing to show farmers that the products worked. “Now, everyone has recognised their impact and how beneficial they are, especially to export crops.

Growers listen to growers and we have found that where one farmer started using the products, word and uptake has spread quickly. The importance of root health and the value of building soil health are boosting the use of biologicals.”

Karlien Muller, an entomologist at the Komati Group, noted the increasing scrutiny fruit producers faced when exporting produce to the European Union (EU). This was with regards to the environment, and health and safety of workers. “The audits take into account what chemicals you use, their impact on the environment, and the workers who have to administer them. They want to know what our strategy is to reduce chemical usage, while still insisting on zero pest incidence.”

CORPORATE MEMBER NEWS

She said that this created significant problems because chemicals could not be used, and biological control does not provide insect-free fruit either. “The solution is to find a way to combine biological solutions with harsher chemicals to get fruit that will pass maximum residue level (MRL) inspections while keeping pests under control.”

Bell said that while such legislation pushed export-orientated farmers to reduce their chemical loads, there was little incentivising suppliers of the local market to do the same. “There needs to be a lot more education about the benefits and efficacy of biological crop protection for there to be better uptake in the local market.”

Hooker noted that one of the biggest challenges in expanding uptake for biologicals was the ensuring farmers bought legitimate products, that were then stored and applied correctly.

“Much damage has been done to the reputation of biologicals by ineffective products or those referred



to as ‘snake oils’. Farmers need to be very cautious in using only tried, tested, and registered products.”

While biological solutions do carry a larger price tag than conventional chemicals, Muller stated that rather than worry about the additional cost of biologicals, farmers should ask themselves what the cost would be if they did not switch to softer chemicals. “Every action taken on the farm will either ensure or prevent our future ability to farm there and remain sustainable. For this reason, harsh chemicals alone are no longer an option.”

Hooker added that protecting the current range of chemicals on the market was also important, and this necessitated a diversification of crop protection methods applied on a farm. “Once you take into account the bigger picture you realise what the costs are of not incorporating biologicals.” ■

