

PRESS RELEASE

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Grain SA celebrates South Africa's distinguished grain producers with the announcement of the 2015 Grain Producer of the Year

Grain SA celebrated the successes of their grain producers during a prestigious gala event, held at The Theatre on the Track in Midrand on Friday, 16 October 2015. This year's awards ceremony commemorated the 16th year of the gala awards, since replacing the previous Maize Man of the Year in 2000, and was attended by Members of Parliament, representatives of the various Agricultural Trusts, organised agriculture and government, as well as academia, fellow industry leaders and guests of honour – grain producers from around the country.

The event, which coincided with World Food Day, awarded Grain SA the opportunity to give recognition to grain producers who form the basis of food security in South Africa. In addition, the finalists serve as excellent role models to the younger generation of producers whilst the image of the grain producer is enhanced. The judges were once again faced with a difficult task as all the finalists proved to be exceptional producers with diverse management styles. This category gives recognition to successful grain producers who manage their businesses with such passion and dedication, so as to set an example and serve as inspiration to other producers.

The **2015 Grain SA/Syngenta Grain Producer of the Year** was awarded to Genade Boerdery, from the Douglas district in the Northern Cape. On the banks of the Orange River, Vickie Bruwer and his sons, Gerhard, Hannes en Klein Vickie run a growing, modern and highly diversified farming operation. The Bruwer's grow mainly maize, wheat, alfalfa and cotton, as well as peanuts, seed sunflower and potatoes on high potential land and constantly strive to maintain and manage the balance between soil, crops and nature effectively. Maize and wheat are harvested twice a year and a basic, but flexible, crop rotation system is followed with attention given to product price and sustainability. Diversification plays an important role in the economic sustainability and risk management of this successful farming operation. The other finalists in this category were Henk Michau from Modimolle and Niel Neethling from Potteberg.

The **2015 Grain SA/ABSA/John Deere Financial New Era Commercial Farmer of the Year** was awarded to Solomon Masango from Carolina in Mpumalanga. And, for the first time in the history of the competition, Masango won a John Deere 5403 MFWD tractor sponsored by John Deere Financial in partnership with ABSA. Joining the Grain SA Farmer Development Programme in 2012 and the Carolina study group in 2014, Masango increased his average yield on maize from 3.5 tons/ha to 6 tons/ha. Overjoyed with his award, Masango thanked the Lord and his wife for the support and encouragement. "All the other jobs that I have done before

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becoming a farmer, was just the start of my career, and where I am now, lies my passion”, Masango said. The other finalists in this category were Vuyani and Lungelwa Kama from Maclear and Maseli Letuka from Kestell.

The **2015 Grain SA/Syngenta Smallholder Farmer of the Year** was awarded to Daliwonga Nombewu from Mthatha. Following a career as a taxi driver, Nombewu developed an interest in farming and joined a Grain SA study group and attended various training courses. Nombewu planted 13 ha of maize and is expecting an average yield of 4.5 tons/ha. The other finalists in this category were Salphanus Motswenyane from Lichtenburg and Lawrence Mtsweni from Nigel.

The **2015 Grain SA/ABSA Subsistence Farmer of the Year** was awarded to Ngubengcuka Christian Moyo from Maclear. Realising he can make a living through farming, Moyo left his job at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and started farming in 2008 on communal land. Ngubengcuka planted 2.5 ha of maize on dryland. Implementing no-till practices from the 2013/2014 planting season, he believes that tractor implements destroy his lands and plants by hand. The other finalists in this category were Jabulani Abednego Mbele from Winterton and Musawenkosi David Ntombela from Bergville.

In addition to these awards, Grain SA also used the opportunity to honour Dr Julian Jaftha with the 2015 Grain SA Inspiration Award, in appreciation of his continuous contributions to the grain industry, excelling to achieve extraordinary results and inspiring the industry to be more competitive in its commitment to excellence. Dr Jaftha, Chief Director: Plant Production and Health in the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has assisted Grain SA with various issues regarding production, inputs and regulatory aspects, such as reviewing the pre-breeding wheat platform, as well as ensuring the farmers’ privileges remain in the Plant Breeders Act. “When working with Julian, we don’t refer to Grain SA and DAFF, but rather to “us” as partners in the grain- and oilseed industry” Jannie de Villiers, CEO of Grain SA said.

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Further enquiries:

Alzena Gomes, Public Relations Officer, Grain SA
086 004 7246
www.grainsa.co.za



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