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Wheat Industry Revitalisation Programme get support from British High Commission Science and Innovation

A South African group of wheat scientists has just returned from a highly successful visit to the UK. The trip led to intense scientific discussions and crucial information exchange. The positive results and fruitful discussions will contribute towards strengthening the ties between UK and SA scientists.

As part of the Wheat Industry Revitalisation Programme, Mariana Purnell, General Manager of Agbiz Grain has negotiated with Dr Xolelwa Zulu, the Science and Innovation Attaché at the British High Commission in Pretoria to sponsor a South African team to visit the UK. The aim of the visit is to learn about the latest technologies in yield improvement of winter grain crops and to establish research collaboration – both for technology exchange as well as skills development – with the ultimate intent of accessing international donor funding.



Mariana Purnell and
Xolelwa Zulu

Agbiz Grain led the SA team of four top researchers in wheat and barley to visit the select group of UK research centres from 24 February to 2 March 2018 to discuss scientific collaboration on winter cereals in order to improve crop yields for South African farmers.

The group held discussions with experts in the James Hutton Institute and the University of Dundee in Dundee, Scotland, the John Innes Centre, Earlham Institute and the Centre for Crop Health and Protection in Norwich on the east coast, the University of Bristol on the west coast as well as the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in London. Despite severe weather conditions and many challenges, the group also went Rothamsted in Harpenden.



The South African team of four wheat and barley researchers who visited the UK are fltr: Dr Xolelwa Zulu, Science and Innovation Attaché at the British High Commission, Dr Renée Prins, Director CenGen (Pty) Ltd, Dr Francois Koekemoer, Director R&D Sensako, Mariana Purnell, General Manager Agbiz Grain, Willem Botes, Head of SA Wheat breeding program platform, Department of Genetics, Stellenbosch University and Dr Toi Tsilo, Manager Small Grain Institute, Agricultural Research Council

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