



## **Press Release: Diploma and Certificate Opening Ceremony 2024**

**19 February 2024**

### **Bloemfontein- based private agricultural college opens their academic year with the largest student intake since inception.**

The Peritum Agri Institute opened the academic year at a formal function held for parents and students in Bloemfontein on Monday, 19 February. Amongst the 250 guests were 95 excited first year students who attended the function with their parents.

Peritum is the largest private agricultural college in South Africa to offer vocational tertiary education on a part-time basis. Emmie Pietersen, Founding member and Director referred to the annual opening ceremony as a celebration of the cultivation of young minds in agriculture. Students from all provinces in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana has enrolled for studies at the Peritum Agri Institute. She referred to 2024 as a special year. 'In 2024 we celebrate a decade of delivering work-ready graduates to the agricultural sector. But this year is also significant as we have our largest intake of students since college inception. This includes 95 first years; 42 Peritum diplomandi enrolling for a second qualification; and 105 second year students at the college.'

Pietersen told the audience that Peritum will be in Windhoek in a weeks time for the opening of the academic year of Peritum programmes what will be run under the ROOTS COLLEGE brand. 'This is one step closer to fulfilling our vision of being the most respected vocational higher educational institution for agricultural studies in SADC.'

Brenda Myburgh, programme director referred to agricultural studies at Peritum as a way of life, that teaches you not only to cultivate land, but to cultivate your mind.

Odette Shepperson, Marketing Manager referred to the unique nature of the programme: 'Despite the part-time nature of the programme, we pack your study weeks with practical exposure and opportunities to learn from no less than 40 highly respected experts and successful farmers. People with years of experience that will share their success stories, their models and their expertise with you . In the 13 academic weeks that you will visit the college, you will have the opportunity to

participate in 24 specially planned practical sessions. These include, amongst others sheep shearing, wool classification, soil profiling, feed milling, laboratory work, integrated pest control in crops, vaccination programmes for livestock, feedlot models, precision agriculture, agricultural technology and many more.'

Shepperson also referred to the alternative assessment method that is more accommodating to diverse learning needs. "The best part of the diploma, I believe, for most students is the fact that there are no formal examinations. You will be assessed through submissions of a Portfolio of Evidence, which you will build to demonstrate how you have mastered learning outcomes. Students smile from ear to ear when they hear this," she said.

Prof. Frikkie Maré, chief executive officer of the Red Meat Producers Organization (RPO), attended the opening ceremony as an honorary guest and key-note speaker. Prof. Maré not only entertained the guest with his interesting stories from a lecturer's point of view, but he also left the audience with an important message. "Who you are, your name, race, where you are from does not determine what you will become. Through hard work and perseverance, you can become what you have the potential to be."

Peritum thanked strategic partners RPO, John Deere, Senwes Equipment, and Aeres University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, for their valuable contribution towards building a better future for agriculture in South Africa.

Newly enrolled first year students were excited after the ceremony. Ruan Groenenstein from Bloemfontein said "I grew up with my father being a farmer, I have always had an interest in tractors and after the drought in South Africa forced my father to sell his sheep, I realized the importance of an agricultural qualification. I want to help build agriculture in South Africa"

Letlotlo Likhi, also from Bloemfontein said that he is enrolled for the National Diploma in Animal production. Even though he is not from a farming background, he has always had an interest in agriculture and sees forward to the agri-business part of the course as well as what Peritum partners, such as the RPO has to offer.

Jacoleen Louw is from a long line of agriculturalists. "I am originally from Upington. My family used to farm next to the Orange River. I studied and worked as an accountant, but realized that it is of utmost importance to have educated agriculturalists in South Africa. It saddens me that all the bright young people want to leave small, farming communities when South Africa really needs, young, intelligent farmers to take over the reigns from the previous generation. I hope to contribute positively to my own farming community"

ISSUED FOR: Peritum Agri Institute

WEBSITE: <https://www.peritumagri.com/about-us/>

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**The students, class of 2024, together with Belinda Louw (Director:Peritum Agri Institute), Frikkie Maré (Chief Executive Officer: RPO), Emmie Pietersen (Director: Peritum Agri Institute) and Philip Du Plessis (Senior Territory Manager: John Deere Africa and Middle-East)**



**The handing over of the Bursaries to John Deere and The RPO. From left to right – Frikkie Maré (Chief Executive Officer: RPO), Odette Shepperson (Marketing Manager: Peritum Agri Institute) and Philip Du Plessis (Senior Territory Manager: John Deere Africa and Middle-East)**