

## **Focus on Food Security in Africa**

*Mariana Purnell, General Manager Agbiz Grain*

To enhance sustainable food security, access to credible and usable information is vitally important. This was the focus of a recent conference on Integrated Food Security in Africa, organised by the African Centre of Excellence for Information Ethics at the University of Pretoria and the Institute for Development Assistance at the University of Fort Hare. It was the first such conference on the African continent and brought together United Nations structures, African academics from at least 15 African countries, government officials and role players in the agricultural sector. Mariana Purnell of Agbiz Grain attended the conference and gave an overview of how [Big Data and the Internet of Things](#) would influence the future from an agricultural perspective. To illustrate the progress with relevant research in South Africa, she also presented highlights illustrating the [implementation of new technology](#).

It is important to integrate information related to climatology, geology, management, demography, household management and also to access the appropriate information on all levels of society. Such information could also include weather patterns as well as energy resources, minerals and development of infrastructure. In addition, information has to be accessible on a practical platform to households, farmers and governments in Africa. Dr F Lategan of the Western Cape Agricultural Extension Department discussed the fundamental [complexities of providing information](#) to agricultural producers. World-wide it is a major problem to bring basic production information to stakeholders in order to escalate smallholders to the commercial level.

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### **ENQUIRIES:**

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