

Western Cape teachers exposed to careers in the agricultural sector

Close to 100 teachers throughout South Africa's Western Cape province attended the Teachers' Recognition Lunch on 6 June 2019 in Stellenbosch that was hosted by PMA Southern Africa and the Faculty of AgriSciences at Stellenbosch University (SU).

The Teachers' Recognition Lunch forms part of the local Center for Growing Talent (CGT) by PMA programmes funded by AgriSETA.

"The objective of the lunch session was to empower teachers teaching agricultural sciences, life sciences and life orientation to raise awareness under learners about career opportunities in the sector," said Lindie Stroebe, General Manager for PMA in Southern Africa.

"High school learners often rely on teachers for career advice, and teachers are seldom recognised and supported in this responsibility," she said.

The following speakers presented at this event

- Devin Osborne at Aerobotics astonished guests with his presentation on how drones are used to collect data of crops on farms and the various career opportunities in this high-tech field.
- Unathi Mantshongo at Vinpro, a non-profit company that represents South African wine producers and cellars, inspired teachers with her own career path story, and in addition shared some information about the fields of expertise involved in Vinpro and the wine industry at large.
- Marianne van der Laarse owner of Agrijob, a recruitment company specialising in agriculture, explained the shortage of the right skills to fill available jobs in agriculture.
- Monika Basson at SU's Faculty of AgriSciences informed teachers that this is the only university in South Africa with a faculty of agricultural sciences. Other universities have merged their faculties of agricultural sciences with those of natural science. Furthermore, SU's Faculty of AgriSciences was ranked the best on the African continent and under the top 50 worldwide.

The event was concluded with a networking lunch where teachers interacted with representatives from the university, PMA, as well as the speakers.

Many positive comments and words of appreciation were received from those present at the event.

"Thank you so much for a very informative session. It really drew our attention to fields out there that were previously not very well known to us," said Nichola Petoors at Blackheath High School.

"I can't wait to share this information with my class," said Elsabe Kruger at Parel Vallei High School.

"It was fascinating hearing from the speakers. I wish we could invite them to speak to our own students. I learned a lot and will certainly be able to 'inject' my lessons with relevant input to hopefully inspire future agricultural scientists," said Fiona Earl at Bergvliet High School.