*Media release*

# DECIDUOUS FRUIT INDUSTRY AWARDS EXCELLENCE 2020

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**List of award winners 2020**

- Specialist Agricultural Worker: **Rudowaan Rayneil Isaacs**
- Advanced Agricultural Worker: **Lance du Toit**
- New Generation Award: **Dirk Louw**
- Research and Technology Award: **Phyllis Burger and Andries Daniels**
- Industry Leader Award: **Alexander "Boetie" Kriel**
- Izethelo Media Award: **Lizma van Zyl**
- Special Industry Award: **Colleen Goosen**

PAARL – The worldwide coronavirus pandemic has forced the South African deciduous fruit industry to present its annual awards digitally this year. "We decided to announce the winners in a press release and to hand over the awards during a virtual event that will replace the 45th gala evening," said Jacques Jordaan, chairman of the awards committee and CEO of the Canning Fruit Producers Association.

The deciduous fruit industry includes apples, pears, apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, prunes, cherries, table grapes and dried grapes - grown mainly in the Western, Eastern, and Northern Cape.

"Earlier this year we almost cancelled the event, but felt that despite the COVID-19 outbreak, the industry as an essential service, needs to acknowledge hard work, skills development and community involvement that are all key to a successful season," Jordaan said.

Three people received awards for outstanding performance working on deciduous fruit farms specifically and five for their direct and indirect contributions to the industry:

**Rudowaan Isaacs from Graymead Farm (Fruitways Farming) near Vyeboom** received the merit award for Specialist Agricultural Worker of the Year for his exceptional work ethic, creative and goal-driven mentality. This 28-year old youngster started off as a pest and disease monitor for Fruitways Farming in 2015. He was promoted a year later and became a quality assessor. The following year Isaacs became the first quality assurer for the Fruitways group. His job entails to oversee the quality of production activities such as picking, pruning and thinning.

His manager described him as a rare human being with exceptional communication skills. In this regard he helps management to set the right expectations for employees, effective communication between individuals and teams; to foresee that performance standards are met; and assist in individual and team training.

Being a true Millennial Isaacs took initiative and started using technology to improve quality aspects on the farm. He believes communication is the key driver for any business.

**Lance du Toit from Graymead Farm (Fruitways Farming), Vyeboom** received the Advanced Agricultural Worker of the Year merit award for his incredible management skills, planning abilities and strong belief in empowering local workers. Du Toit had to overcome many obstacles in his life. He is physically disabled after contracting polio as a young child, and even though farming is physically challenging, nothing could deter him from his dream of becoming a farmer.

He started as a general worker at Molteno Brothers in 1992 and performed numerous tasks such as pruning, tractor driving, team leader and foreman. In 1998 he got the opportunity to further

his studies at Elsenburg, and in 2005 he received his diploma in pomology. As production manager at Graymead he strongly believes in empowering workers within the area of employment to become skillful leaders. During the 2020 picking season he selected spray drivers to act as supervisors instead of contracting supervisors from outside. He is responsible for 65.44 hectares of apples and 5.33 hectares of pears and he uses a quad bike to negotiate his disability in the orchards.

Du Toit is also chairman of the health and safety committee for the past five years and involved in all safety aspects of the business. In his free time Du Toit is a serious golfer and regularly takes part in the SA Disabled golf open. He has also won numerous golf awards. Du Toit believes that regardless of physical disability, "it's your character on the golf course that mirrors your behaviour in life".

**Dirk Louw dried grape grower from Upington, Northern Cape,** received the New Generation Award for his exceptional performance as a new entrant in the agricultural arena, and as a true leader in his community. Louw, who was born and raised in the Northern Cape, was always fascinated by farming. He started out as a general agri worker and completed various informal agri related training programmes. Louw joined a farming initiative in the Groblershoop region, but the group struggled with cash flow. Many of the other members decided to leave, but it made Louw more determined to "get going". He took full ownership of the project and production activities, and soon the initiative started to blossom. Since then, Louw has made significant strides to establish himself as a farmer in the region.

The Northern Cape department of agriculture played a pivotal role in supporting the initiative. In 2017 he used funds from Raisins SA to plant 2.5 ha Selma Pete plus another 2 ha Sultana, and in 2018/2019 he continued to acquire an additional 50 ha's irrigation in the surrounding area, consisting mainly of rotational crops.

Louw is focussed and determined to make a success of his farming endeavours, but never forgets his humble beginnings and is active in his community to help make a difference.

**Phyllis Burger and Andries Daniels** received the Research and Technology Award. This Agricultural Research Council (ARC) breeding and evaluation team was recognised for their exceptional work on Sundowner (a dried grape variety) and for their contribution to the South African raisin grape industry.

For many years, until recently the South African raisin grape industry depended mainly on a single cultivar, namely Sultana. However, this cultivar had a number of shortcomings.
Although other cultivars became available from international breeding programmes, South African conditions are unique and there still wasn't a suitable replacement for Sultana.

Over the past three decades, the Dried Fruit Industry and the ARC, partnered in a breeding and evaluation research initiative, which invested in a project to develop new raisin grape cultivars in South Africa under local climate conditions. The latest grape cultivar named Sundowner came out of this programme, and is the first ever South African bred raisin cultivar to be commercially registered with the registrar of plant breeders' rights of South Africa.

The name Sundowner was suggested as it depicts the reddish blush on the ripe berries, which resembles the sunset. Sundowner was launched earlier this year by the ARC, RaisinsSA, and Culdevco Pty Ltd, at a cultivar information day near Upington.

As with most breeding projects, the development of new cultivars is a time-consuming process starting with the performing of hand pollinations, rescuing the embryos from seedless grapes and growing these embryos into viable plants in tissue culture. These seedlings are then planted out in tunnels to acclimatise, where after they are planted in a seedling blocks.

This particular cultivar was selected in 2002 and promoted to semi-commercialisation in 2006. Plant breeders' rights were applied for in 2017 and awarded in 2019, a long way from 1994 when the first crosses were made.

**Alexander (Boetie) Kriel** was awarded the OSH Reinecke Frontrunner Award as industry leader of excellence in 2020. Kriel was a well-known farmer, entrepreneur and mentor from the Hex Valley, Worcester, and is honored posthumously for his selfless service to the South African deciduous fruit industry, specifically table grapes, and the significant difference he made in the lives of many agricultural workers.

He did this by devising clever plans, challenging the right people and not accepting "no" for an answer. His greatest contribution is the many agricultural workers he motivated and helped to become co-owners of table grape farms. As a mentor, he did everything in his power to help people. He once got into his *bakkie* drove all the way to Piketberg to help a new entrant farmer who was in a pickle. There are also many other stories of the sacrifices he made to make the industry more inclusive. Truly selfless service that everyone should strive for.

Kriel was a leader who believed in action. When the need was great, he rolled up his sleeves and did what was necessary to ensure that a harvest came in, to save farms and that agricultural workers could reap the fruits of their labour. Kriel also helped establish the Hex Valley Table Grape Association's agricultural workers' competition - which would later become the biggest competition of its kind, albeit under a different name.

He was also an industry visionary and a big proponent of area-wide sterile insect technique (SIT). In this regard, he played a crucial role in the founding of FruitFly Africa. In this respect and his contribution to the Hex Valley Producers Association, he was a legend in his own time. He has also served on various industry structures for many years and has played an active role in various industry initiatives. His passion was to make a difference in his environment and to create a better life for the whole community.

The example set by Boetie Kriel, his willingness to help his fellow man, and his foresight on industry issues, make him a worthy winner of the Deciduous Fruit Industry's OSH Reinecke Industry Leader Award in 2020.

• Boetie Kriel (63) is survived by his wife Christa, son Pieter and daughter Corné (who lives in America with her husband Jan) and grandchildren. Kriel farmed with his son Pieter with table grapes in De Doorns and De Wet just outside Worcester as well as with sheep in Touws River.

**Lizma van Zyl** received the Izethelo Media Award for presenting the RSG radio programme *Die Kwik Styg*. This series, the brainchild of Dr Ilse Trautmann of the Western Cape department of agriculture, focused on the impacts of climate change on agriculture and the rest of the world. Over a two year period, Van Zyl spoke to more than a hundred experts that highlighted future challenges.

Van Zyl is a veteran radio news journalist and also the founder member of Smile 90.4 FM, a commercial Cape Town radio station.
Her interest in local and international events and commitment to uncovering and telling human interest stories have taken her to exotic and dangerous places such as Antarctica and the Pakistan/Afghanistan border.

Van Zyl is the presenter of the kykNET series, Hond se Gedagtes. She lives by the motto: honour the process in pursuit of the outcome. She holds a Master's degree in Journalism from Stellenbosch University.

**Colleen Goosen** received a Special Industry Award for 34 years of service to the South African Fruit Journal. Goosen became the layout artist for the industry magazine, then named Deciduous Fruit Grower, in May 1986. "In those 'Unifruco days', each page was separately designed and type set, the photographs were scanned, where after the galleys were paste up for the repro house who would get the positives ready for printing," remembers Goosen.

"Lots of manual proof reading and checking took place and many trips were made to Durbanville (which seemed like it was deep in the countryside in those days) to meet with everyone. The whole technical section was in both Afrikaans and English - in two columns next to one another."

With the deregulation of the industry in 1987 the Deciduous Fruit Producers' Trust was formed and the magazine's name changed to the SA Fruit Journal. The head office moved to Paarl, and by that time Goosen was doing the layout on computer.

"I thoroughly enjoyed working for the fruit industry and got to know many people through the pages of the Journal - although often they didn't know me. I saw their work and watched them grow older in their photos. I had a wonderful time at the magazine and wish the industry well for the future."

*Persverklaring*

# SAGTEVRUGTEBEDRYF VEREER BUITENGEWONE PRESTASIES IN 2020

*Ondersteun deur* Standard Bank

## Lys van 2020 pryswenners

- Spesialis Landbouwerker: **Rudowaan Rayneil Isaacs**
- Gevorderde Landbouwerker: **Lance du Toit**
- Nuwe Generasie Toekenning: **Dirk Louw**
- Navorsing en Tegnologie Toekenning: **Phyllis Burger en Andries Daniels**
- Bedryfsleier Toekenning: **Alexander 'Boetie' Kriel**
- Izethelo Media Toekenning: **Lizma van Zyl**
- Spesiale Sagtevrugtebedryf Toekenning: **Colleen Goosen**

PAARL - Die wêreldwye koronavirus pandemie het die Suid-Afrikaanse sagtevrugtebedryf genoop om vanjaar sy jaarlikse toekennings digitaal te oorhandig. "Die wenners word vandag bekend gemaak en 'n virtuele oorhandigingseremonie vervang die 45ste gala-aand," het Jacques Jordaan, voorsitter van die toekenningskomitee en uitvoerende hoof van die Inmaakprodusente Vereniging (IVP) gesê.

Die sagtevrugtebedryf sluit appels, pere, appelkose, perskes, nektariene, pruime en pruimedante, kersies, tafeldruiwe en gedroogde druiwe in, en word veral in die Wes-, Oos- en Noord-Kaap verbou.

"Weens die COVID-19 inperkinge het ons byna vanjaar die toekennings gekanselleer. Ons het egter gou besef dat landbou as 'n noodsaaklike diens, nie anders kan as om juis in diè tyd harde werk, vaardigheidsontwikkeling en betrokkenheid by die gemeenskap te erken nie. Dit is per slot van sake die sleutel tot 'n suksesvolle seisoen," het Jordaan gesê.
Drie mense het toekennings ontvang vir uitmuntende prestasies en wat spesifiek op sagtevrugteplase gewerk het, en vyf vir hul direkte en indirekte bydraes tot die bedryf:

**Rudowaan Isaacs van Graymead Farm (Fruitways Farming) naby Vyeboom** het die merietetoekenning ontvang vir Spesialis Landbouwerker van die Jaar vir sy besonderse werksetiek, sy kreatiwiteit en doelgerigte mentaliteit. Hierdie 28-jarige jongeling het in 2015 as 'n plaagmonitor vir Fruitways Farming begin werk. Binne 'n jaar word hy bevorder tot gehaltebeoordelaar, en nog 'n jaar later word Isaacs die eerste gehalteversekeraar vir die Fruitways-groep. Sy werk behels om toesig te hou oor die kwaliteit van produksie-aktiwiteite soos pluk, snoei en uitdun.

Sy bestuurder beskryf hom as 'n seldsame mens met buitengewone kommunikasievaardighede. In hierdie verband help hy die bestuur om die regte verwagtinge vir werknemers te stel, effektiewe kommunikasie tussen individue en spanne; om te voorsien dat prestasiestandaarde nagekom word; en help met individuele- en spanopleiding.

As 'n ware Millennial het hy inisiatief geneem en tegnologie begin gebruik om kwaliteitsaspekte op die plaas te verbeter. Hy meen kommunikasie is die belangrikste drywer vir enige onderneming.

**Lance du Toit van Graymead Farm (Fruitways Farming), Vyeboom** het die Merietetoekenning vir Gevorderde Landbouwerker van die Jaar ontvang vir sy buitengewone bestuursvaardighede, beplanningsvermoë en sterk geloof in die bemagtiging van plaaswerkers. Du Toit moes baie struikelblokke in sy lewe oorkom. Hy is liggaamlik gestremd nadat hy as jong kind polio opgedoen het, en hoewel boerdery fisies uitdagend is, het niks hom van sy droom om 'n boer te word, afgeskrik nie. Hy het in 1992 as algemene werker by Molteno Brothers begin werk

en het verskeie take verrig, soos snoei, trekkerbestuur, spanleier en voorman.

In 1998 kry hy die geleentheid om verder te studeer aan Elsenburg, en in 2005 ontvang hy sy diploma in pomologie. As produksiebestuurder by Graymead glo hy sterk daarin om werkers van die omgewing te bemagtig en om van hulle vaardige leiers te maak. Gedurende die 2020-plukseisoen het hy spuitbestuurders gekies om as toesighouers op te tree pleks van toesighouers van buite te inkontrakteer. Hy is verantwoordelik vir 65,44 hektaar appels en 5,33 hektaar pere. Hy gebruik 'n vierwielmotorfiets om hom te help om oral in die boorde te kom.

Du Toit is ook die afgelope vyf jaar voorsitter van die gesondheids- en veiligheidskomitee en betrokke by alle veiligheidsaspekte van die onderneming. In sy vrye tyd is Du Toit 'n ernstige gholfspeler en neem hy gereeld deel aan die SA Gholf Ope vir Gestremdes. Hy het ook talle gholftoekennings gewen. Lance glo dat, ongeag liggaamlike gestremdheid, "dit jou karakter op die gholfbaan is wat jou gedrag in die lewe weerspieël".

**Dirk Louw droogdruifboer van Upington** het die Nuwe Generasie Toekenning ontvang vir sy uitsonderlike prestasie as 'n nuwe toetreder tot die landbou-arena, en as 'n ware gemeenskapsleier en ambassadeur vir landbou. Louw, wat in die Noord-Kaap gebore en getoë is, was altyd gefassineer deur boerdery. Hy het as 'n algemene landbouwerker begin en verskillende informele opleidingsprogramme vir landbou voltooi. Louw het by 'n boerdery-eenheid in die Groblershoop-streek aangesluit, maar die groep het gesukkel met kontantvloei. Baie van die ander lede het tou opgegooi, maar dit het Louw net meer vasbeslote gemaak om sukses te behaal. Hy het volle eienaarskap van die projek en produksie-aktiwiteite oorgeneem en binne ‘n kort tydjie het die boerdery-eenheid begin blom. Sedertdien het Louw aansienlike vordering gemaak om homself as boer in die streek te vestig. Die Noord-Kaapse departement van landbou (NKDL) het 'n belangrike rol gespeel in die ondersteuning van dié eenheid.

In 2017 gebruik hy fondse van Raisins SA om 2,5 hektaar Selma Pete asook nog 2 hektaar Sultana aan te plant. In 2018 verkry hy 'n bykomende 50 hektaar se besproeiingsgrond in die omgewing, wat hoofsaaklik uit wisselbougewasse bestaan. Louw is vasberade sy boerdery te laat slag. Hy sal egter nooit sy nederige begin vergeet nie en is aktief in sy gemeenskap betrokke, om 'n verskil te maak en ander te help.

**Phyllis Burger en Andries Daniels** het die toekenning vir navorsing en tegnologie ontvang. Hierdie teel- en evalueringspan van die Landbounavorsingsraad (LNR) word erken vir hul uitsonderlike werk aan Sundowner ('n droogdruif) en vir hul bydrae tot die Suid-Afrikaanse droogdruifbedryf.

Vir baie jare was die Suid-Afrikaanse droogdruifbedryf hoofsaaklik afhanklik van een enkele kultivar, naamlik Sultana. Hierdie kultivar het egter 'n aantal tekortkominge gehad.
Alhoewel ander kultivars vanaf internasionale teelprogramme, beskikbaar was, is Suid-Afrikaanse klimaatstoestande uniek en was daar geen geskikte plaasvervanger vir Sultana nie.

Die afgelope drie dekades het die droëvrugtebedryf en die LNR saamgewerk aan 'n navorsingsinisiatief vir teel en evaluering. Die doel was om 'n nuwe droogdruifkultivar gepas vir Suid-Afrikaanse omstandighede te ontwikkel. Die nuutste droogdruifkultivar met die naam Sundowner het uit hierdie program gekom en is die eerste Suid-Afrikaans-geteelde droogdruifkultivar wat kommersieël by die registrateur van planttelersregte in Suid-Afrika geregistreer is.

Die naam Sundowner is weens die rooierige blos op die ryp bessies, wat aan sonsondergang herinner. Sundowner is vroeër vanjaar deur die LNR, RaisinsSA en Culdevco Bpk. Tydens 'n kultivarinligtingsdag naby Upington bekendgestel.

Soos met die meeste teelprojekte, is die ontwikkeling van nuwe kultivars 'n tydrowende proses wat begin met handbestuiwings, waarna embrio's van saadlose druiwe geoes word. Hierdie embrio's

groei in ‘n kweekmedium tot lewensvatbare plante. Saailinge word dan in tonnels uitgeplant om te akklimatiseer, waarna dit in 'n saailingblokke uitgeplant word.
Hierdie spesifieke kultivar is in 2002 geselekteer en in 2006 tot semi-kommersialiseringstatus bevorder. Daar is in 2017 aansoek gedoen vir planttelersregte en in 2019 is dit toegeken. Voorwaar 'n lang pad vanaf 1994 toe die eerste kruisings gemaak is.

**Alexander (Boetie) Kriel** was ‘n bekende boer, entrepreneur en mentor van die Hexvallei, Worcester, en word in postuum vereer vir sy onbaatsugtige diens aan die Suid-Afrikaanse sagtevrugtebedryf, spesifiek tafeldruiwe, en die wesenlike verskil wat hy in die lewens van menigte landbouwerkers gemaak het. Dit het hy gedoen deur slim planne te beraam, die regte mense uit te daag en om nie “nee” vir ‘n antwoord te aanvaar nie.

Sy grootste bydrae is die vele landbouwerkers wat hy gemotiveer en gehelp het, om mede-eienaars van tafeldruifplase te word. As mentor het hy alles in sy vermoë gedoen om mense te help. So het hy op ‘n keer van ‘n bruin produsent van Piketberg gehoor wat in die moeilikheid was. Hy het net daar in sy bakkie geklim en gaan help. Daar is ook vele ander stories oor die opofferings wat hy gemaak het om die bedryf meer inklusief te maak. Voorwaar onbaatsugtige diens waarna almal kan strewe.

Kriel was ‘n leier wat geglo het in aksie. Wanneer die nood hoog was, het hy self moue opgerol en gedoen wat nodig was om te verseker dat ‘n oes inkom, om plase te red en dat landbouwerkers die vrug van hul arbeid kon pluk. Kriel het ook gehelp om die Hexvallei Tafeldruif Assosiasie se landbouwerkerskompetisie te stig – wat later die grootste kompetisie van sy soort sou word.

Hy was ook ‘n bedryfsvisionêr en groot voorstander van area-wye steriele insektegniek (SIT). In diè verband het hy ‘n deurslaggewende rol in die stigting van Vrugtevlieg Afrika (FruitFly Africa) gespeel. Hy het ook jare lank op verskeie bedryfstrukture gedien en het ‘n daadwerklike rol in verskeie bedryfsinisiatiewe gespeel. Hy het daarna gestrewe om ‘n beter gemeenskap vir almal te help bou. Hy was ‘n legende in sy eie tyd.

Die voorbeeld wat Boetie Kriel gestel het deur bemagtiging uit te leef in woord en daad, sy bereidwilligheid om sy medemens te help, en sy vooruitdenkendheid oor bedryfskwessies, maak hom 'n waardige wenner van die Sagtevrugtebedryf se O.S.H. Reinecke Bedryfsleiertoekenning in 2020.

- Boetie Kriel (63) word oorleef deur sy vrou Christa, seun Pieter en dogter Corné (wat in Amerika woon met haar man Jan) en kleinkinders. Kriel het saam met sy seun Pieter met tafeldruiwe geboer in De Doorns en De Wet net buite Worcester asook met skape in Touwsrivier.

**Lizma van Zyl** het die Izethelo Toekenning ontvang vir die aanbieding van die RSG-radioprogram *Die Kwik Styg*. Hierdie reeks, die geesteskind van dr. Ilse Trautmann van die Wes-Kaapse departement van landbou, het gefokus op die impak van klimaatsverandering op die landbou en die res van die wêreld. Van Zyl het in die twee jaar wat die program uitgesaai is, met meer as 'n honderd eksperts oor die uitdagings van klimaatsverandering gepraat.

Sy is 'n veteraanradionuusjoernalis en ook die stigterslid van Smile 90.4 FM, 'n kommersiële Kaapstadse radiostasie. Haar belangstelling in plaaslike en internasionale nuusgebeure en toewyding om stories te vertel, het haar na eksotiese en gevaarlike plekke soos Antarktika en die grens tussen Pakistan en Afghanistan geneem.

Van Zyl is die aanbieder van die kykNET-reeks, Hond se Gedagtes. Sy leef volgens die leuse: eer die proses om die uitkoms na te streef. Sy het 'n meestersgraad in joernalistiek aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch behaal.

**Colleen Goosen** het 'n spesiale bedryfstoekenning ontvang vir 34 jaar diens aan die Suid-Afrikaanse Vrugtejoernaal. Goosen word in Mei 1986 die uitlegkunstenaar vir die destydse bedryfstydskrif, Die Sagtevrugteboer.

"In daardie Unifruco-dae is elke bladsy afsonderlik ontwerp en opgestel. Die foto's is geskandeer, voordat negatiewe vir die drukwerk gemaak is," onthou Goosen.

"Alles is met die hand gedoen. Daar was baie proeflees en kontrolering en baie besoeke aan die kantore in Durbanville, wat in daardie platteland was. Die hele tegniese afdeling van die tydskrif was in beide Afrikaans en Engels - in twee kolomme langs mekaar."

Met die deregulering van die bedryf in 1987, word die Sagtevrugteprodusentetrust gestig en die naam van die tydskrif verander na die SA Vrugtejoernaal. Die hoofkantoor verskuif na die Paarl, en teen daardie tyd het Goosen uitleg op rekenaar gedoen.

"Ek het dit baie geniet om vir die vrugtebedryf te werk en het baie mense deur die bladsye van die Joernaal leer ken - hoewel hulle my dikwels nie geken het nie. Ek het hulle loopbaanontwikkeling mee gemaak en ook gesien hoe hulle op hul foto's ouer word. Ek het 'n wonderlike tyd by die tydskrif gehad en wens die bedryf sterkte toe vir die toekoms."