



Media Release

For Immediate Release

To: All Media

Date: 5 August 2019

Attention: News Editors / Agricultural writers / African Invertebrates

Memorandum of Understanding between ARC and Victus Bio (Pty) Ltd August 2019

South Africa's premier agricultural research science institution, the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), has entered into a licensing agreement with Victus Bio (Pty) Ltd on the development and production of a biological product for the management of crown gall on vines and is currently involved in collaborative extensive trailing in the Western Cape. Victus Bio recently invested in the design and construction of a state-of-the-art bioreactor for the purpose of formulating biological products with excellent quality and shelf-life.

In accordance with the bio-economy strategy of the Department of Science and Technology, the benefit of the National Collections should be developed to support agricultural productivity in South Africa, while simultaneously supporting and growing the National Collections within the required legislative framework. To this end the ARC has partnered with Victus Bio, a commercial organization with extensive experience and competencies in the biological product formulation area, focusing specifically on the formulation of biological Plant Health products.

This capability combined with the extensive resources in the National Collections offer exciting prospects for the future that include a nitrogen fixating bacterial strain on rooibos and a legume specific strain of bacteria that is currently being evaluated for efficacy.

This collaboration between the ARC and Victus Bio aims to benefit the expansion and development of the National Collections as the South African national depository of microbial diversity, while delivering sustainable crop production solutions to the agricultural sector. The ARC's Campus responsible for Plant Health and Protection are the custodians of various National Collections, which include the South African Rhizobium Culture Collection (SARCC) that include nitrogen fixating bacteria and other beneficial rhizobacterial strains with plant growth promotion traits.

As part of the collaboration between the two organizations, scientists from Victus Bio (Pty) Ltd and the Agricultural Research Council are working closely to screen and develop new biological products that will contribute to sustainable crop production practices and mitigate environmental risks in agriculture.

Dr Ansa van Vuuren, "The ARC and Victus Bio's partnership are an indication that the public and private sectors can successfully work together to meet the demands of the National Development Plan goals and thus benefit South Africa in the present as well as leaving a strong legacy."

Ends

Issued by:

ARC Marketing and Communications

For further information, please contact:

Technical inquiries

Dr Elna van der Linde (ARC)

VDLindeE@arc.agric.za

Philip Spies (Victus)

philip@victus.co.za

Media inquiries

Ms. Mpho Ramosili

Senior Manager: Marketing and Communications

Tel: 012 427 9905

Cell: 066 475 6885

E-mail: ramosilim@arc.agric.za

Notes to the Editors

About the Agricultural Research Council

The Agricultural Research Council is a premier science institution that conducts research with partners, develops human capital and fosters innovation in support of the agricultural sector. The ARC provides diagnostic, laboratory, analytical, agricultural engineering services, post-harvest technology development, agrochemical evaluation, consultation and advisory services, food processing technology services as well as various surveys and training interventions. For more information visit the ARC website at: www.arc.agric.za