

Media Alert

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## **AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH COUNCIL HOSTS FIRST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (PDP) CONFERENCE**

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) is one of the first places you can look for agricultural career development opportunities. Established on 1 April 1992, it is South Africa's principal agricultural research organisation and has Institutes across the country.

The PDP initiative was created during 1996 to attract young graduates from previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa into the Agricultural Research Council.

The programme aims to capture, nurture and develop scientific knowledge and skills of PDP post graduate students by exposing them to various methodologies, projects, principals of agricultural research and development, scientific paper presentations, conferences, workshops and university degree courses.

Since its inception in 1996, 325 students were trained and 60% of them were absorbed back into the ARC as researchers and/or technicians. Currently, there are 197 PDP students in the system that are funded by the ARC or NRF (National Research Foundation).

This mentorship programme also exposes graduates to excellent partnerships, networking sessions and collaborations with various local, national and global industries, universities, funding organizations, embassies, local and national government departments and other science councils.

The research breakthroughs of the students lead to new discoveries, venture creation, innovation platforms, new health & food security systems and solutions to alleviate poverty and improve our environment for a better life for all.

The conference took place at the Olive Grove at ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij in Stellenbosch on 26 June 2014. Graduates made presentations or showcased posters which were judged by a panel.

### **THE WINNERS:**

#### **Post-Doc Category**

##### First prize

Sorghum proteomics and the molecular biology of novel stress responsive proteins. T. Mulaudzi-Masuku, B.K. Ndimba

##### Second prize

Isolation of phenolic compounds from indigenous *Cyclopia species*, *C. genistoides* and *C. subternata* (honeybush). E.L. Willenburg, D. de Beer, C.J. Malherbe, E. Joubert

## **PhD Category**

### First prize

Comparative analysis of sugar biosynthesis-related proteins of *Sorghum bicolor* (L) Moench and investigation of their role in drought stress tolerance. A.P. Njokweni, B.K. Ndimba

### Second prize

Proteome analysis of guayule: Towards its cultivation and processing in SA. R.D. Mutepe, T. Mulaudzi-Masuku, K. Cornish, B.K. Ndimba

### Third prize

*Cyclopia genistoides* (honeybush) – a rich source of bio-active xanthenes and benzophenones. T. Beelders, D. de Beer, D.J. Brand, E. Joubert

## **Masters Category**

### First prize

Development of a reporter system for the analysis of *Xylophilus ampelinus* Type III Secreted effectors. N.P.P. Nyembe, Y. Petersen, B.K. Ndimba

### Second prize

Development of in vitro methods for interspecific hybridization using embryo rescue and chromosome doubling of *Prunus* spp. T.C. Mabiya, S.B.D. Shange, E.L. Mansvelt, B.K. Ndimba

### Third prize

Detection and differentiation of CTV genetic variants using metagenomic next-generation sequencing. T. Jooste, J.T. Burger, G. Cook, H.J. Maree

## **Poster Category**

### First prize

Characterization of a novel salt-responsive germin-like protein from *Sorghum bicolor*. Jemone Witbooi, Takalani Mulaudzi, Marshall Keyster and Bongani Ndimba

### Second prize

Proteome analysis of guayule bark. Mbavhalelo Vele, Rendani Mutepe, Takalani Mulaudzi and Bongani Ndimba

### Third prize

Development of a protocol to manufacture rubber products from guayule. M.Dudley,<sup>1</sup> S. Mkoka,<sup>1</sup> S. Chigome,<sup>3</sup> B.K Ndimba<sup>1,2</sup> and K. Cornish<sup>3</sup>

Chemical composition and antifungal activity of citrus and lemongrass essential oils in combination with cold storage regimes against *Botrytis cinerea*, *Penicillium expansum* and *Neofabraea alba*. 25  
N. Mbili<sup>1,2,\*</sup>, F. Vries<sup>1</sup>, U.L. Opara<sup>3,4</sup>, C. Lennox<sup>1</sup> 25

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**Issued on behalf of ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij.**

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