

SA's fruit sector showcases innovation, trade, and sustainability

South Africa's fruit industry took centre stage at the Western Cape Media Day, highlighting the sector's growth, sustainability initiatives, and technological advancements. The event theme, "Reframing the Narrative on South Africa's Fruit Sector," aimed to reposition the industry in the public narrative by emphasising its economic value, innovation, and social impact.



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The event took place at Percheron Hall, Elsenburg, on Thursday, 23 October 2025.

Temba Msiza, Agbiz digital communications manager, opened the programme by introducing the day's focus on reshaping perceptions through proactive storytelling, innovation, and collaboration.

Driving growth and food security

Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of the Citrus Growers Association of Southern Africa, delivered the keynote, highlighting the sector's contribution to South Africa's agricultural success and global competitiveness. Mecia Petersen, CEO of the South African Table Grape Industry, explored how fruit exports support local food security and economic inclusion.

Michael Esmeraldo, managing director of Netafim Southern & East Africa, discussed water innovation and technology in sustainable fruit production, while Wolfe Braude, Agbiz fruit manager, presented trade, logistics, and export opportunities. Fhumulani Ratshitanga, CEO of Fruit South Africa, provided an overview of the fruit value chain and its role in fostering economic and social impact.

Petru Du Plessis, horticultural advisor and Hortgro Stone producer council member, conducted a demonstration on fruit grading and handling, bridging field practices and market-ready products.

Collaboration and resilience in agriculture

The panel discussion, "Realities, Regulations, and Resilience – How Agriculture Brings Safe Food to Our Tables," featured Annelize Crosby, Dr Ilse Trautmann, Paula Bester, Roleen La Grange, and Kol Hartman. Panellists shared insights on food safety, crop protection, regulatory alignment, and collaborative approaches to strengthening consumer trust in South African fruit.

"This Media Day demonstrated how South Africa's fruit industry continues to innovate and evolve, leveraging technology and trade to sustainability and food systems," said Wolfe Braude. "It's vital that we continue to tell these stories to ensure accurate representation of the sector's impact."

The event concluded with a networking session, providing attendees the opportunity to connect directly with industry experts and leaders.

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