

Celebrating skills development through strategic investment

The citrus industry remains steadfast in its commitment to developing future talent. By **Sam Louw**



Sam Louw

The Citrus Academy Bursary Fund is celebrating its 20-year anniversary. Established in 2006, the Fund was launched by the Citrus Growers' Association to address critical skills shortages in production, equity, and technical expertise.

Over two decades, it has grown into one of primary agriculture's largest private bursary programmes, supporting students at undergraduate, postgraduate, and BEE-enterprise level.

The past 20 years have seen R34.98 million invested in bursaries, resulting in 1 093 awards that benefitted 390 individual students pursuing citrus-related studies. This backing is vital in sustaining a steady stream of skilled agricultural professionals and technicians into the citrus value chain.

Experiential learning remains a key pillar of the Bursary Fund. Over the past 20 years, the citrus industry supported 82 internships, 24 graduate placements, and 180 vacation-work opportunities. Alongside these, a broad range of industry-exposure activities was delivered, helping students interact with industry leaders, engage with real-world citrus operations and gain deep insight into the value chain.

Transformation is central to the Bursary Fund strategy. Among the Fund beneficiaries, 73.3% identify as black, 24.1% as white, 1.8% as coloured, and 0.8% as Indian. Women make up 56.2%, while men

represent 43.8 %, underscoring steady progress in gender equity.

Together, these investments and initiatives reflect the citrus industry's long-term vision: to maintain a diverse, skilled, and future-ready workforce, built on two decades of committed support. ▶

The Citrus Academy Bursary Fund addresses critical skills shortages in production, equity, and technical expertise.



Left: Heaven-Leigh Ndlazi with Aruna Manrakhan and team during vacation work in 2023. **Middle:** Jacomien de Klerk (left), Theron Maphanga, Olivia Selowe, Sonwabo Ncera and Desiree Schonken at the AgriSETA Excellence Awards in 2015. **Right:** Tshegofatso Maaga and Thandekile Makate during vacation work at CRI.



Betroubare Monitoring. Volhoubare Besluite.

Wanneer dit by jou gewasse kom, maak dit saak wie jy met advies vertrou.

Pesmonitering vorm die basis van geïntegreerde plaagbeheer.

Deur gereelde en noukeurige inspeksies versamel produsente noodsaaklike inligting om gewasbeskermingsbesluite te neem, 'n kritieke stap om plase se risiko's betyds te verstaan en ingeligte besluite te neem.

Hoekom prioriteit gee aan pesmonitering?

Die proses verseker:

- **Proaktiewe risikobepaling** – jy weet betyds waar peste en siektes begin ontwikkel.
- **Ingeligte besluitneming** – data lei jou wetenskaplike besluite, nie aannames nie.
- **Koste-effektiwiteit** – voorkom oorbodige beheermaatreëls en beperk gewasverliese.
- **Volhoubare praktyke** – monitering ondersteun verantwoordelike, ekosisteem-gesentreerde bestuur.

Wat stel ons voor?

- **Bou inkrementeel:** Begin klein en verbeter stelselmatig.
- **Kies die regte mense:** Gebruik opgeleide, betroubare moniteerders.
- **Belê in opleiding:** Verseker dat moniteerders die nodige kennis en vaardighede het om monitering te doen en die data akkuraat vas te lê.
- **Standaardiseer & belê in toerusting:** Gebruik 'n vaste metodiek en die regte toerusting.
- **Digitaliseer data:** Stoor inligting georganiseerd, digitaal sodat dit maklik ontleed kan word en gedeel word.
- **Besluit saam:** Interpreteer data met ervare gewas-kundiges.
- **Gebruik drempelwaardes:** Pas dit gereeld aan volgens gewas- en koste-realiteit.
- **Leer voortdurend:** Evalueer besluite en verbeter jou proses.
- **Oorweeg die ekosisteem:** Hou peste, voordelige organismes en gewasfasies in konteks.

Nexus^{AG} CropLife-geakkrediteerde gewasadviseurs kan jou help met kundige advies en maatpas gewasbestuursprogramme wat jou unieke omgewing en spesifieke omstandighede in ag neem.



nexus^{AG}
CUSTOMISED CROP SOLUTIONS

KONTAK ONS VIR MEER INLIGTING:
☎ 021 860 8040 🌐 www.nexusag.net