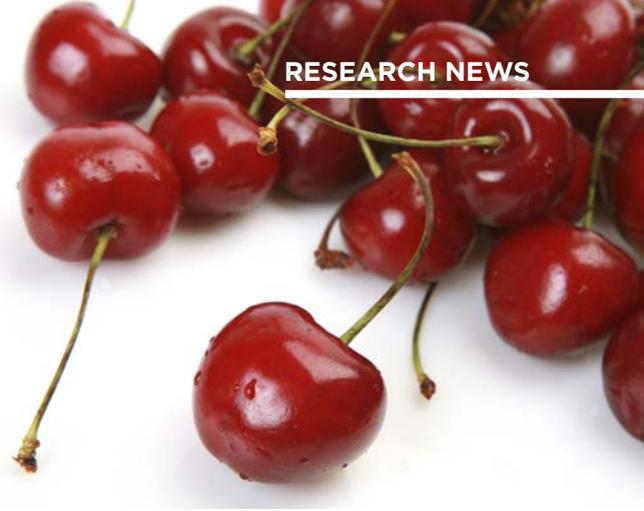


ACF supports climate smart production, job creation and economic growth

A progress report

by Dr Ilse Trautmann

"In a South African first, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture has launched a R3 million dedicated research fund to boost exports and bolster land reform around the province's alternative crops," said Alan Winde, Minister of Economic Opportunities, at the launch of the Alternative Crops Fund (ACF). The Western Cape Government



Cherries (*Prunus*). For more information on alternative crops and its uses, scan the QR code or visit <https://agriorbit.com/kyk-30-mei-2017-op-grootplaas>

for interviews after the feedback meeting of the ACF during May 2017.

would partner with the fruit industry to explore smaller industries with projected high returns for job creation and growth. Alternative, smaller crops include berries, fynbos, honeybush and pomegranates, to »



The second alternative crops book from the pen of "Oom" Koos Lötter, *Die Persimmon in Suid-Afrika*, was launched during the feedback meeting with the alternative crop industries during May 2017. His first book, *Die Vy in Suid-Afrika*, was released in 2014 at the launch of the Alternative Crops Fund. From left: Anton Rabe, executive director Hortgro, Koos Lötter and Minister Alan Winde, Western Cape Minister of Economic Opportunities.

name but a few. These crops have high market value and are export-orientated. An amount of R3 million is the allocation for this financial year and Minister Winde said the fund would pioneer innovative funding models between the Western Cape Government and the industry.

The ACF is one of the financial support mechanisms of the department and furthermore supports climate-smart agricultural production of alternative crops as one of the proposed activities of the SmartAgri plan (refer to pages 64-65, Western Cape Climate Change Response Framework and Implementation Plan for the Agricultural Sector - 2016, see www.greenagri.org.za and also refer to the SmartAgri Barometer launched in this edition of *Agriprobe*).

Since the launch, three calls for proposals were offered to the alternative crops industries, each to the value of R3 million. Only projects submitted by these industries were considered for funding against a set of criteria and evaluated by the Steering

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Committee, consisting of representatives of the department and Hortgro, the coordinating organisation for the fund. This was necessary to ensure industry research needs are addressed and that the results of these research projects were to the benefit of the entire industry and not to individual farmers or companies.

It was evident that some of the alternative crops industries are not organised due to their size and number of producers, and funds were also allocated to get the

Table 1. Support from the ACF per industry over the last three funding cycles

ALTERNATIVE CROPS FUND (2014 - 2017)				
Industry	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	Total
Honeybush	R723 223	R220 113	R407 600	R1 350 936
Cherries	R122 500	R327 890	R20 000	R470 390
Cape Flora	R1 082 955	R334 000	R741 000	R2 157 955
Persimmons	R145 000	-	-	R145 000
Figs	R80 000	-	-	R80 000
Pomegranates	R125 000	R240 000	R255 456	R620 456
Berries	-	R80 000	R420 000	R500 000
Prunes	-	R327 000	-	R327 000
Guavas	-	R299 000	-	R299 000
Pecan nuts	-	-	R20 000	R20 000
Total	R2 278 678	R1 828 003	R1 864 056	R5 970 737



Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*).



Persimmon (*Diospyros*).

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organisations to operate as legal entities. During the 2014/2015 financial year, the Programme: Research and Technology Development Services was the sole funder, but in 2015/2016 the programmes: Farmer Support and Development and Agricultural Economics Services became funding partners with R1 million respectively.

The major challenges encountered by the smaller industries include the limited administrative capacity to manage their industry and research needs. However, the continued support from the department has ensured the forming of legal entities for these industries, the updating of their industry statistics and addressing their most crucial research needs. **AP**



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