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ELSENBURG AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE DELIVERS EXCELLENT GRADUATES FOR THE JOB MARKET

The 122nd annual graduation ceremony of the Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute was held on the 7th of December at Elsenburg.

The Institute once again proved that it is a leader in quality agricultural training and skills development when it achieved an overall pass rate of 80.25% across the various courses offered in 2011.

In the higher education and training programmes, a total of 128 registered students received their certificates, diplomas and degrees. No less than 8 students passed their course *cum laude*. Students graduated in the following courses (pass rates in brackets): Higher Certificate in Agriculture (73.8%); B. Agric (79.72%); Diploma in Agriculture (100%); Diploma in Cellar Technology (58.33%); Diploma in Extension (83.33%); Equine Studies (83.33%).

For the first time in the history of Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute, certificates for Equine Studies (Horsemastership and Riding Instruction) were handed over to the City of Cape Town Metro Police. Seven police officials received their certificates. They are currently some of the highest qualified equestrian units in all the Metro's.

In the further education and training band, certificates in five different types of learnerships were awarded. The Learnership Programme proved to be especially successful, with 27 distinctions in various learnership types, an overall pass rate of 79% of which the top 6 students obtained above 80% and 11 learners have been articulated to Higher education ranging from B.Agric to Higher Certificate in Agriculture for 2012.

In total, 19 special awards, mostly sponsored by agri-business and the private sector, were awarded to deserving students. The dux awards were handed over by the Head of Department, Western Cape Agriculture, Ms Joyene Isaacs to Charlton Bowkers for the best learnership student, Karel Abels for the Higher Certificate Programme, Petrus Johannes Botha for Cellar Technology, Adriaan Johannes Louw for being the best Agricultural Diploma student and Ellen Louise Lubbe received the Farmers Weekly Medal for the Dux Student in the B.Agric Programme.

The key note address was delivered by Ms Leonora Sauls, manager of the Ackerman's/Pick & Pay Foundation. She lauded the graduates for making the right decision by starting their adult

life with an education which gives options and opportunities. She urged them to use their skills, not only to make money, but also for the benefit of other people in their respective communities. "Be a change agent, driving positivity" was her overarching message to the new graduates.