

## **Western Cape-Burgundy Wine Exchange Programme.**

### **Speech by Minister Gerrit van Rensburg at the announcement of the Exchange students to depart for Burgundy.**

7 August 2009

Mr Antoine Michon, French Consul

Joyene Isaacs, the Head of Department of the Department of Agriculture.

Roderick Thyssen, Department of the Premier,

Kobus Mulder, Agri Expo,

Viticulture and Barrel making Students,

Management of the Department of Agriculture:

Ladies and Gentlemen, I think I might be even more excited than these ten farm *workers who are about to embark on an adventure of a lifetime. I am also pleased* that this exchange has been going since 2002, and hope to see it continue into the future.

My excitement has several reasons:

1. In the first place, I am excited that ten Western Cape farm workers will be exposed to the famous French wine culture, and come back with skills and experience that cannot be measured in monetary terms. It is very important for me that we train and equip our farm workers to be competitive in the job market.

2. In the second place, this exchange confirms to me that the Western Cape is part of the global wine community, and that we have something to offer our French friends in return.
3. It also excites me that South African employers, or commercial farmers to be more specific, are supporting this programme, as their financial input is quite substantial in order to make it possible for each of these workers to embark on this journey.
4. This exchange fits into the Western Cape's Government's philosophy of "Open opportunities for all", and I hope that you will grab this opportunity to create a better life for yourself and your families on your return.

To the ten lucky farm workers I want to say this:

I know that all of you deserved to be chosen for this Exchange programme, and that you had to work hard to reach this point in your lives.

In Johannes 10:15 staan: "Ek is die egte druiwestok en my Vader is die Tuinier. Elke loot van my wat nie vrugte dra nie, sny Hy af. Elkeen wat egter vrugte dra, snoei hy sodat dit nog meer vrugte kan dra".

Julle is lote wat reeds vrugte dra, en daarom is julle gekies vir hierdie program. Julle gaan nou ver reis om as te ware gesnoei te word om nog meer vrugte te kan dra.

Travelling is a wonderful experience. But sometimes you only realise it afterwards, as while you are travelling, you are too busy trying to absorb all the strange and wonderful things around you.

You will encounter new and strange food; people who do not speak any English or Afrikaans; you will be exposed to farming practises that are completely different from what you are used to. In the evenings, the stars in the night sky will look different.

All these new things will make you tired and also homesick. Do not worry about that, as that is how all travellers feel at some stage or another. Use each opportunity offered to you to ask questions and to learn about the French way of life, farming and wine making.

A personal travelling tip from me: Take a small bible with you, and when you are tired or lonely there in France, read it and remember who you are and where you come from.

I promise you that when you come back to South Africa you will see the world in a new light. You will also have a stronger love for the good things and people in your life back at home. And people will hang on your lips when you tell them about your time in France.

But more importantly: This opportunity will mean a lot for your future careers in the South African wine industry. When you return, you will be able to put on your CV's that you have had international training and work experience in viticulture.

We need you in the Western Cape to ensure that our wine industry stays competitive in the global world.

To the farmers: As your farm workers are going to be received in France, we also need accommodation for their French counterparts in South Africa. Please help us in this regard. I know you will, as us South African Farmers are known for our hospitality.

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