

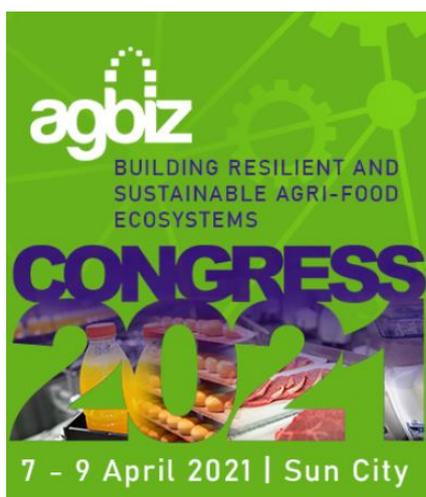


e-Newsletter

02/2021

22 January 2021

## Agbiz Congress 2021 postponed



To say we are living in unprecedented times is an understatement. As we are now facing the reality of the second wave of infections driven by a new Covid-19 variant, governments and individuals worldwide are assessing risks and acting to mitigate the spread and to protect lives and livelihoods. The uncertainty about what the future holds in terms of Covid infections as well as when the current regulations on social gatherings might be lifted has an obvious impact on the Agbiz Congress 2021 that was scheduled to take place from 7 to 9 April 2021 at Sun City. The health and safety of our members, employees, and partners is our highest priority, and in response, Agbiz has decided to indefinitely postpone the event. The way forward and the best possible solutions in terms of the current commitments of registered delegates, sponsors, and exhibitors will be discussed at the Agbiz Steering Committee meeting on 27 January 2021. We will communicate the recommendations of the Steering Committee with you through emailers and our other communication platforms.

We appreciate your flexibility and continued support in this regard.

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## BUSA Covid-19: Cargo movement update



The *BUSA Covid 19: Cargo movement update* — the 21st of its kind — contains a consolidated overview of the South African supply chain and the current state of trade internationally. Since the previous version, new cases of Covid-19 have continued their unprecedented second-wave surge, averaging approximately 18 031 per day (up from 12 000 during the previous week). In terms of the total number of cases, South Africa remains in 16th position globally, although the gap between Iran is rapidly closing. The total number of cases recorded in South Africa has now amounted to 1 296 806 at the time of writing. With the disturbing news this week around delays

in concluding various vaccine deals, the country's current health situation and outlook are at a precarious juncture. Please [click here](#) to peruse.

## AGRIBUSINESS RESEARCH

### Higher food prices look set to ease in second quarter



Higher grain prices and a decline in cattle slaughtering activity over the past few months have started to transmit into the prices of products consumers pay when doing their grocery shopping. In the fourth quarter of 2020, SA's food price inflation was on an upwards trajectory, with the December print accelerating to 6.2% year on year, from 5.9% year on year in the previous month. This is the highest rate since July 2017, when food price inflation was at 6.8% year on year. Read more in the [linked article](#) by Agbiz chief economist Wandile Sihlobo, written for and first published in *Business Day*.

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### After a solid performance in 2020, SA agricultural machinery sales to cool off in 2021



Higher agricultural output gains in 2020, coupled with relatively higher commodity prices, improved South African farmers' finances. The allied industries benefited from this windfall. A case in point is South Africa's agricultural machinery market which registered a notable improvement from the previous year. Tractor sales amounted to 5 738 units, up by 9% from 2019, with combine harvester sales up by 23% from the same year, amounting to 184 units. These sales are nearly as high as in 2018, which was also supported by higher grains output in the 2016/17 production season. Wandile Sihlobo discusses this subject

in the [linked article](#), written for and first published on *Fin24*.

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### How sub-Saharan Africa can rethink its approach to agriculture



In response to the economic devastation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, most sub-Saharan governments are developing economic recovery plans. These will require some different thinking, particularly when it comes to agriculture. In an article, written for and first published on *The Conversation*, Agbiz chief economist Wandile Sihlobo, explains to Michael Aliber, a professor of agricultural economics at the University of Fort Hare, what that new thinking might look like. Please [click here](#) to peruse.

## LABOUR RELATIONS

### How to draft employment policies properly



Changes in the way work is arranged have been happening more rapidly over the last year than what many employers are used to. Aside from remote working (which has become a regular addition to workplaces), there are also matters such as health and safety during a global pandemic and even the decriminalisation of marijuana to contend with. What do all these issues have in common? Employers need to draft workplace policies to deal with them. Workplace policy drafting should not be a complicated matter. It is essentially stating the employer's rules in clear, understandable terms and ensuring that these are communicated to employees.

Policies are not meant to be a word-for-word regurgitation of the law and they should be rooted in fairness, which is the cornerstone of labour law. Jahni de Villiers of Labour Amplified discusses this subject in the [linked article](#).

## OTHER NEWS

### Karaan had a vision for land and a knack for telling homespun stories



On January 13 we lost a good friend and the country lost a pre-eminent policy adviser in the fields of agricultural development and land reform. Yet another victim of the Covid-19 scourge. Mohammad Karaan was one of those rare policy advisers who combined practical experience with academic excellence, as a farmer (first in essential oils in the Caledon district, then in olives in Robertson); as a policy analyst (at the Development Bank of South Africa and the Rural Foundation); as an administrator (as chair of the National Agricultural Marketing Council and dean of the faculty of agrisciences and vice-rector at Stellenbosch University); and as a business person

(director of numerous public, private and state entities, and executive manager of a range of enterprises). In the [linked article](#), written for and first published in *Business Day*, Prof. Nick Vink, Wandile Sihlobo and Prof. Johann Kirsten pay tribute to the late Prof. Karaan.

## Fast-tracked adoption of second-generation resistant maize varieties key to managing maize lethal necrosis in Africa



Scientists are calling for accelerated adoption of new hybrid maize varieties with resistance to maize lethal necrosis (MLN) disease in sub-Saharan Africa. In combination with recommended integrated pest management practices, adopting these new varieties is an important step towards safeguarding smallholder farmers against this devastating viral disease. A new publication in *Virus Research* shows that these second-generation MLN-resistant hybrids developed by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) offer better yields and increased resilience against MLN and other stresses. The report warns that the disease remains a key threat to food security in eastern Africa and that, should containment efforts

slacken, it could yet spread to new regions in sub-Saharan Africa. Read more in the [linked article](#), first published on *Africa.com*.

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## Rift Valley fever vaccination



The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) would like to remind owners of cattle, sheep and goats to vaccinate their animals against Rift Valley fever (RVF). The current rainfall predictions indicate that good rainfall might occur in certain areas of the country as a result of a La Niña weather event. This will result in an increase in the number of mosquitoes. RVF is a serious viral disease that is spread by mosquitoes that can carry the disease from infected animals to healthy animals. RVF may cause abortions and deaths in cattle, sheep and goats. People coming into contact with the blood and other body fluids of infected animals may also

develop RVF. Read more in the [DALRRD media statement](#).

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## Virtual wine harvest commemoration 2021: industry transforms with four awards



On Tuesday 2 February 2021, the South African wine industry commemorates the first vintage on South African soil 362 years ago on the same day in 1659, as recorded by Jan van Riebeeck in his diary. The annual Wine Harvest Commemorative Event is hosted at Groot Constantia, South Africa's oldest wine estate for the 10th consecutive year. The event will however be presented virtually this year. This event involves three aspects, namely the Blessing of the Harvest, the commemoration of the wine industry's 362nd year of existence, and the honouring of role players. Every year a wine icon or institution receives the special 1659 Visionary Leadership Award for his or her or

their contribution to the industry. Three new awards will also be introduced this year as part of the Wine Harvest Commemorative Event. Numerous people make invaluable contributions to the advancement of

the wine industry. The goal with these three new awards is to broaden the pool of recognition. These awards cover the categories Diversity and Transformation; Wine Appreciation and Wine Advancement; as well as Viticulture and Wine Creation. Please click [Agri-Expo media statement](#) for more information.

## MEMBERS' NEWS

### Weekly newsletter from CGA

Justin Chadwick, CEO of the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern African, shares the latest news in the citrus industry in his weekly update - *From the desk of the CEO*. Please [click here](#) to peruse.

### The latest news from the pork industry

Read more about the latest developments and news in the pork industry in the South African Pork Producers' Organisation's (SAPPO) newsletter, [SAPPO Weekly Update](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Second International Congress of Biological Control (ICBC2)

26-30 April 2021 | Davos, Switzerland

[More information](#)

### 2020 AgriAllAfrica Agribusiness Conference - POSTPONED TO 2021

Theme: "Imagined responses to Covid-19: Progress with the development of solutions"

6 May 2021 | CSIR | Pretoria

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## AGBIZ MEMBERSHIP

### Why join Agbiz?

- Agbiz is the only organisation that serves the broader and common over-arching business interests of agribusinesses in South Africa.
- Agbiz addresses the legislative and policy environment on the many fronts that it impacts on the agribusiness environment.
- Agbiz facilitates considerable top-level networking opportunities so that South African agribusinesses can play an active and creative role within the local and international organised business environment.
- Agbiz research provides sector-specific information for informed decision-making.
- Agbiz newsletter publishes members' press releases and member product announcements.

[Please visit the Agbiz website for more information](#)



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