



MEDIA RELEASE

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SIYABONGA Day: Join conversation about opportunities in the wine industry

The South African wine industry is currently experiencing unprecedented challenges, but a low often also provides opportunities for growth. This is the theme of Agri-Expo's first SIYABONGA Day for 2021, which follows on the success of their first three SIYABONGA Days presented in 2020.

The Wellington SIYABONGA Day takes place on Wednesday 31 March at Thokozani Conferencing at Diemersfontein Wine and Country Estate but is also broadcast live so that farmers and new entrants to agriculture from all over can participate.

SIYABONGA creates an innovative platform for the agricultural community to talk about challenges and opportunities in the industry, says Breyton Milford, Operations Manager of Agri-Expo. "The SIYABONGA Days provide basic agricultural information in a unique format where farmers share a platform with industry experts, get the opportunity to ask questions and thus broaden their knowledge to eventually be more productive."

According to Milford, the word SIYABONGA, which means thank you, is also an acronym for "Sharing Information to Improve Yields in Agriculture for a Better-Off Next Generation of Agriculturalists": "Our programme content focuses on key factors that can strengthen the agricultural industry, including involvement of women, opportunities for young people, empowerment, as well as alternative ways of thinking and doing."

During the Wellington SIYABONGA Day, four experts will share advice and insight on empowerment in the industry, as well as on opportunities for women and young people:

- The award-winning Denise Stubbs, Managing Director of Thokozani Wines, will talk about transformation in the industry. Thokozani Staff Holdings, an empowerment company owned by 65 Diemersfontein employees, recently became the majority shareholder of the Diemersfontein brand.
- Wendy Petersen, Operations Manager of the SA Wine Industry Transformation Unit (Sawitu), will share a vision for the future of an inclusive industry. Petersen has more than 27 years of experience in the wine industry. At Sawitu, she focuses on ensuring that black-owned enterprises and farms receive the necessary mentorship, funding, marketing and technical support to ensure that their enterprises are sustainable.
- Inspiration comes from 24-year-old Kelsey Shungking, who has been a protégé of the Cape Winemakers Guild for the past three years. Shungking, who is currently doing an internship at

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WWW.AGRIEXPO.CO.ZA

KAAP DIE GOEIE HOOP
LANDBOUGENOOTSKAP | 1831 | CAPE OF GOOD HOPE
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

TEL: +27(0)21 975 4440/1/2/3

P.O. BOX 988, DURBANVILLE 7551 | 11 QUEEN ST, DURBANVILLE 7550 | Fax: +27(0)21 975 4446 | E-mail: admin@agriexpo.co.za

Mullineux & Leeu Family Wines, will talk about her experience of opportunities for women winemakers.

- Brenton Maarman, lecturer in microbiology and viticulture at Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute, will focus on training and career opportunities for young people. Maarman was a recipient of the Cape Winemakers Guild's Protégé Scholarship in 2011 as a BSc Agric student in viticulture and oenology at Stellenbosch University, where he also obtained a master's degree in wine microbiology.

The SIYABONGA Days are presented with the support of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, with whom Agri-Expo has been collaborating since 2014 to provide information to small farmers in the Western Cape in particular. "As the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, we want to provide the necessary support to our farmers to improve productivity and ensure food security," said Dr Mogale Sebopetsa, the Head of the Department. "The agricultural sector is the sunshine sector that is key to the economic recovery of not just the Western Cape but for South Africa. The SIYABONGA Days create an ideal platform to reach more people with this message."

Only a limited number of people can attend the event on the day due to Covid-19 regulations, but those interested can join online for free from 10:00 to 13:00, ask questions and be part of the conversation by registering at www.siyabongadays.co.za.

The programme is presented in English, but questions can also be asked in Afrikaans. Recordings of the previous SIYABONGA Days are still available at no cost at www.agriexpo.co.za and www.livestock.org.za. For more information, contact Agri-Expo on 021 975 4440 or admin@agriexpo.co.za and follow @AgriExpo1 on social media.

Photo captions:

Photo 1: Protégé winemaker Kelsey Shungking is a speaker at Agri-Expo's Wellington SIYABONGA Day that can be attended online for free.

Photo 2: Wendy Petersen, Operations Manager of Sawitu, will share a future vision for an inclusive wine industry at Agri-Expo's Wellington SIYABONGA Day, which can be attended online for free.

ISSUED BY

Isabeau Botha

Corporate Communication Manager

Agri-Expo

isabeau@agriexpo.co.za

021 975 4440

072 247 5868

www.agriexpo.co.za