

# SMARTagri BAROMETER



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first SmartAgri Barometer! It is with great excitement that we launch this quarterly newsletter which we hope will help to drive and energise the collaborative implementation of SmartAgri - the Western Cape agricultural sector's response to climate change. When the SmartAgri Plan was launched in May 2016, little did we know how serious the extended drought would become. Climate change is suddenly very real, and this is adding greatly to the urgency in making rapid progress on implementation of the Plan.

While the Western Cape Government's (WCG) Department of Agriculture (DoA) has been actively engaging with key departments and interest groups within the WCG and beyond (we report on these activities in this Barometer), every participant in this sector has a role to play. This could be on-farm, within businesses servicing agriculture, in universities and research institutions, or within NGOs and rural communities. We warmly invite you to find out how you can get involved and help to make agriculture resilient to the changing climate. Enjoy the read!



## SMARTAGRI - PUTTING THE PLAN IN ACTION



The SmartAgri plan, launched in May 2016 (refer to Departmental Quarterly Magazine Agriprobe Vol 13 No 2, 2016 – also available in e-format on [www.elsenburg.com](http://www.elsenburg.com)) and with the vision “Leading the way to a climate-resilient agricultural future for the Western Cape with a coordinated sector plan”, has set the scene for focussed action and implementation in the agricultural sector. The plan has been widely acknowledged by the agricultural sector as one of the best plans developed for the sector. Furthermore, owing

to its position as a highly vulnerable sector, agriculture is the first sector in the province to benefit from a sectoral climate change response framework and plan.

The plan presents the “road map” for the agricultural sector to travel towards a more productive and sustainable future, despite the uncertainties around specific climate projections. The detailed background to the plan, its four strategic focus areas, six priority projects, regional and commodity briefs and case studies, as well as proposed actions, are available on [www.greenagri.org.za](http://www.greenagri.org.za) in printable format.

## Some immediate actions after the launch

After intensive stakeholder engagements the SmartAgri plan was developed, and has to be “taken back” to the sector with focussed and well-coordinated actions to enhance the resilience of our farmers and other stakeholders. In this regard the DoA will play a coordinating and catalytic role to give impetus to the implementation of the plan.



### 1) Drought Dialogue 2016

Shortly after launching SmartAgri, the 2015/2016 drought and heat wave led to extensive losses in the agricultural sector. DoA, in partnership with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEADP) – also a partner in developing the SmartAgri plan – hosted a provincial multi-stakeholder Drought Dialogue in June 2016 as part of the SmartAgri roll out to discuss the current drought, lessons learnt and ways to mitigate drought conditions in the future.

During the Drought Dialogue, agreement was reached on a set of 32 high-priority, actionable interventions for the provincial government to strengthen the response to the current and future droughts. These were further refined to five areas for immediate attention.

An action plan for these priorities has been developed under the guidance of the Drought Task Team of DOA, in partnership with Agri Western Cape and AFASA. The Drought Dialogue priorities aligned closely with key areas identified in the SmartAgri Plan and were testimony to the valuable input of our stakeholders during the development of the plan. Click on the link to the drought communique <http://www.elsenburg.com/emailmarketing/droughtdialogue/droughtdialogue1.html> and visit [www.greenagri.org.za/smartagri/drought\\_dialogue\\_2016](http://www.greenagri.org.za/smartagri/drought_dialogue_2016) for all the presentations and details of the event.



### 2) Appointing a SmartAgri coordinator

In order for the SmartAgri plan to be rolled out in a more effective way, Prof Stephanie Midgley,

former project leader during the development of the SmartAgri plan, was appointed as a specialist advisor to DoA for a period of 12 months, commencing 1 September 2016. Since her appointment, Prof Midgley has assisted the department with presentations at various internal departmental events, commodity organisations, study groups, stakeholder organisations, municipalities, commented on climate change documents and proposals and attended various meetings on national level. Various popular publications were also published on climate-smart production practises. The SmartAgri Steering Committee and Prof Midgley continue to convene quarterly to keep the momentum going on the implementation of the plan.



in the Western Cape, senior officials from the Department of Local Government and selected Heads of Departments from the Western Cape Government. The theme for this specific meeting was on 4th Generation Integrated Development Plans (IDP) with the objective to 1) share policy shifts/priorities across various sectors and 2) share progress on the preparation of the 4th generation IDPs. Andre Roux, Programme Manager: Sustainable Resource Management (DoA) made a presentation on water security and Management of Drought Implications with specific reference to Disaster risk mitigation and the impact of Agricultural drought on Agri-processing.” Each municipal manager was also provided with a SmartAgri pack with information on SmartAgri and specific climate change advisory for their municipality compiled by the Directorate Climate Change of DEADP, also a partner of the SmartAgri project.

### 3) Taking SmartAgri to municipalities

On 27 February 2017, an Extended Minister and Mayors Technical Forum (MINMAY TECH) took place in Stellenbosch. The meeting was organised by the Department of Local Government and was attended by the municipal managers of the 30 municipalities



By aligning SmartAgri and GreenAgri – a website with curated and reliable information for sustainable agriculture - there is detailed, specific information to help farmers become more competitive, both in the short and in the long term. These SmartAgri resources, among others, are available on [www.greenagri.org.za](http://www.greenagri.org.za), or on the [GreenCape website](#).

The strong linkages GreenCape has to green technology suppliers and service providers is also of benefit in terms of ensuring strategic knowledge transfer, and open agriculture to new and appropriate high-tech solutions to improve climate resilience and reduce related risks for the sector.

DoA has committed its continued financial support to the GreenAgri portal and Agri-sector desk hosted by GreenCape to act as a support tool to our stakeholders enquiring on and operating in the green and climate-smart space. As part of our SmartAgri role out, the GreenAgri portal is continuously updated with new and exciting developments and features.

### 4) Strengthening the partnership with GreenCape

For the last 7 years, GreenCape has been working closely with DoA to try and understand the impact of water shortages, spiralling energy costs and carbon trade barriers to the sector, to name but a few. GreenCape has over the last few years assist farmers and other agricultural stakeholders in the Western Cape understand what they can do – also on farm – to enable their continued and enhanced competitiveness and climate resilience. This also includes driving the uptake of green technologies, practises and systems to reduce the resource and carbon intensity of Western Cape agriculture.

## Invitation

### Smart Agri event | First Thursdays | Cape Town | 3 August 2017

The Ministry of Economic Opportunities, GreenCape & the Department of Agriculture invites you to the First Thursday "Smart Agri" event on **Thursday 3 August**, held at the **Ministry of Economic Opportunities**, 142 Long Street, Cape Town from **5-9pm**.

Come experience the exciting developments in smart technologies for sustainable agriculture! This includes the application of drones & satellite technology to improve water management, as well as the application of hydroponic systems for urban agriculture.

These evenings are a **free Western Cape Government initiative** to increase their accessibility to residents & ensure we are 'Better Together'. They also offer guests the opportunity to engage Minister Winde one-on-one.

For more information and the opportunity to exhibit contact [jana@greencape.co.za](mailto:jana@greencape.co.za)

'First Thursdays Cape Town' is an experience where art galleries & other attractions in the Central and East city districts stay open late on the first Thursday of every month. Minister Alan Winde, responsible for the portfolios of Agriculture, Economic Development & Tourism, has joined the First Thursdays initiative. The aim is to give **entrepreneurs & businesses** the **opportunity & platform** to **promote & exhibit** products & services to invitees, government officials & the broader public. These evenings are a **free Western Cape Government initiative** to increase their accessibility to residents & ensure we are 'Better Together'. They also offer guests the opportunity to engage Minister Winde one-on-one.



## PRIORITY PROJECTS

The SmartAgri Plan includes six Priority Projects (PP) that have been chosen to catalyse the early adoption of important climate change responses with high impact. The six Priority Projects were identified through extensive engagement with stakeholders and evaluation of each response option according to its scientific, agricultural and socio-economic merits. The DoA has started a

series of internal workshops with the objective of identifying or establishing the structures (e.g. existing Directorate, or Community of Practice) which can "adopt" each PP and ensure that it is rolled out.

**The following progress has been made with the priority projects:**

### PP1: Conservation Agriculture (CA) for all commodities and farming systems

The Conservation Agriculture (CA) Priority Project aims to build on existing programmes aimed at transitioning from conventional production systems to conservation agriculture across the Western Cape Province. A meeting was convened with DoA staff involved with Conservation Agriculture to discuss the steps needed to achieve this PP. The outcome was an agreement to establish a Conservation Agriculture Community of Practice (CACoP), and the draft Terms of Reference for the CACoP were drafted. The group will consist of member institutions and individuals that have a vested interest, personal or professional knowledge and/or experience directly or indirectly related to the sustainable development and transformation of Conservation Agriculture. A Core Team will

coordinate the CACoP and provide on-going direction, support, feedback and evaluation to the DoA. The department also approved two new climate-smart research projects, i.e. the "Rehabilitation of abandoned potato circles in the Sandveld area of the West Coast" and "Quantifying between and within animal components of variation in common indicators of heat stress in Western Cape resource flocks".

For more information on the [Conservation Agricultural Western Cape \(CAWC\)](#) Association and get access to their newsletters

## PP4: Energy efficiency and renewable energy case studies to inspire the transition to low-carbon agriculture

This Priority Project seeks to stimulate efforts to reduce demand, increase energy-use efficiency, and transition to cleaner, renewable forms of energy such as wind, solar, hydropower and biomass, by providing better access to trustworthy information and professional service providers. The WCG Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) hosts the Energy Security Game Changer. With its goal “To minimise the impact of power shortages and load shedding on the economy and employment over the next 5 years, and put the region on a path to a lower carbon, more efficient, energy secure future”, this Game Changer is well

positioned to assist with the implementation of SmartAgri PP4. Assistance will also be provided by GreenCape, a sector development agency, to work with business, government and academia to support the growth of the green economy in the Western Cape. The DoA has held initial meetings with, and will continue to work closely with both groups, to ensure that PP4 gains momentum. The first step was the completion of four Case Studies on renewable energy options, which will be published and disseminated (see GreenAgri portal – [www.greenagri.org.za](http://www.greenagri.org.za))

## PP6: An integrated knowledge system for climate smart agricultural extension

This Priority Project aims to empower the agricultural (and related conservation) extension and advisory system to become the first port of call for farmers requiring relevant information and decision-support on climate-smart agricultural practices and technologies. The SmartAgri team had a productive first meeting with senior staff of the DoA's Programme Farmer Support and Development (FSD), including all District Managers, to introduce PP6. The discussion focused on the proposed activities, linkages with current and planned activities and projects of the FSD Extension and Advisory Services, and how to roll out this Project. In addition, the upcoming Departmental Extension Symposium 2017 with the theme ‘Appropriate Pluralistic Extension Messages for Adaptation to Climate Change’ was discussed, including possible sub-themes. This Symposium will provide an excellent opportunity to drive the uptake of climate change adaptation and mitigation within agricultural extension in the DoA to the benefit of all our farmers.

The Western Cape Provincial Department of Agriculture has been hosting an Annual Extension and Advisory Symposium for the past seven years in order to develop the capacity of especially the extension practitioners in the province in line with the Extension Revitalisation Programme of Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP). The purpose of the

Symposium is to engage extension and advisory staff on the collaboration between departmental programmes and the agricultural sector in order to address the important role of extension to develop a sustainable agricultural sector in the Western Cape. At the 2017 Symposium, from 19 to 21 July 2017, the focus will be on climate smart agriculture, as part of the role out of SmartAgri.

Presentations will be delivered in the following sub themes:

1. Impacts of climate change on primary agricultural, value chain and food security in the Western Cape.
2. Climate change mitigation strategies – case studies
3. Scalable CSA (Climate Smart Agriculture) technologies and innovations
4. Capacity Development for scaling up CSA innovations
5. Water use strategies for the current drought situations in the Western Cap

## SMARTAGRI PRESENTED AT AFAAS AFRICA EXTENSION WEEK IN DURBAN



Officials of DoA are part of the organising committee and will also deliver climate smart agriculture presentations at the DAFF (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries), AFAAS (African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services) and SASAE (SA Society for Agricultural Extension) 2017 Conference at the AFAAS Africa Extension Week to be held in the week of the 29th of October 2017 to the

3rd of November 2017 in Durban. The theme of the Conference is “Scaling up climate smart agriculture: integrating youth, women, and the digital revolution”. The SmartAgri project, the process to develop the plan, its outputs and roll out into the sector, will be presented during the conference.

For more information, see [www.sasae.co.za](http://www.sasae.co.za)

### RESEARCH NEEDS

An important additional output of the SmartAgri project was the compilation of a document summarising the research needs for Climate Smart Agriculture in the Western Cape. These include research needs contained in the SmartAgri Plan, as well as additional research needs which were suggested by the stakeholders consulted during the project. Many of the research gaps fall within Strategic Focus Area 1 ‘Promote a climate-resilient low-carbon production system that is productive, competitive, equitable and ecologically sustainable across the value chain’ and Strategic Focus Area 3

‘Strengthen monitoring and data and knowledge management and sharing, and lead strategic research regarding climate change and agriculture’. All researchers in agriculture and related disciplines are warmly encouraged to engage with this document and identify areas of research where they could contribute to the knowledge base. Interested researchers or research consortia can contact Dr Trautmann or Prof Midgley for further engagements.

**SmartAgri Research  
Needs June 2016**

### RESEARCH NEEDS

Interested persons who would like to get more information on SmartAgri and its related actions, are invited to contact Dr Trautmann and Prof Midgley. Please subscribe to the SmartAgri Barometer if you would like to be updated on a regular basis.

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