

# Potatoes SA Congress 2024: Mission accomplished, now for the work!

By Willie Jacobs, CEO, Potatoes SA

After what felt like a year of planning, pleading, begging and promoting, it is suddenly all over. The 2024 Potatoes SA Congress and Seed Potato Growers' Forum certainly was one for the record books. Held in Cape Town, the event had a substantial budget and it took maximum effort from Dirk Uys, Hanrie Greebe, and the organising team to source financial support to deliver an effective congress. And did they perform!

We had to accommodate more than 80 additional attendees, which required us to reconfigure the seating for the gala event at the last minute. Our sponsors stepped up spectacularly, helping us to break even – something we've never achieved until now.

## Working towards a goal

What excites me most is not only the quality produced by our team and partners, but the fact that we have a mission and a purpose. While the congress might be over, the work now has to start at an accelerated pace. Our goal is to get South Africa and our potential markets to EAT MORE SOUTH AFRICAN POTATOES!

Through the intense dialogue at this event we now have a clear understanding of how to give the Potatoes SA support model forward momentum. Here are just some of the ways:

- Protect our producers from losing critical inputs, and promote and support the adoption of new solutions at improved rates.
- Demystify new technology in biological pest and disease control to the extent that it can be safely incorporated into existing integrated pest management systems, along with real financial benefits for the producer.
- Serve as an intermediary between data and system providers to mitigate the overwhelming influx of agricultural applications.
- Distilling market-proposed opportunities to identify those that truly make a difference, add value, and reduce effort.
- Connect producers with the end users of their product by tracking the product throughout the value chain and investigating opportunities at each level.
- Launching sales campaigns to determine opportunities and the scale of possible impact, and sharing the results with our producers.
- Keep all value chain participants informed of product volumes and flow so as to reduce volatility for retailers, stabilise offerings for consumers, and drive increased sales volumes to benefit producer profitability.
- Continuously seek alternative uses and export opportunities through our partner support.

During this year's congress we delved into greater detail regarding specific identified opportunities. As we enter the planning phase for next year's budget, we will take this journey to our regional meetings as well as organise a board strategy session.

Our goal is to develop a systematic programme that addresses the action list by exploring the proposed solutions discussed at the congress. Your involvement in this journey is crucial. [🔗](#)

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