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New local leader for IFPA

The International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) appointed Jane Strijdom as the new manager for the South African IFPA branch. Said Strijdom: "I hope to leverage the success of IFPA's past to enable our current and future members to build strategic local and international relationships within the fresh produce industry going forward."

Strijdom said IFPA welcomes anyone who is involved in the fresh produce industry, since it is the only association that caters to the entire fresh produce supply chain. IFPA's mission is to deliver value to its members and connect them with the industry.

Even though IFPA is based in the United States (US), the association strives to be an organisation that represents members internationally. "We operate in China, Chile, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Europe and South Africa. Therefore, we can help local companies with queries surrounding market access, protocols, retail information, international trends and much more in any of our operational countries," Strijdom said.

The association invested additional resources to provide comprehensive support to the local IFPA team. The goal is to develop marketing and communications resources, which will in turn meet the needs of members. – *Susan Marais, Plaas Media*

New nematode species discovered

The University of California Riverside's (UCR) scientists have discovered a nematode that infects and kills insects. The new species is a member of a family of nematodes called *Steinernema* that have long been used in agriculture to control insect parasites without pesticides. *Steinernema* are not harmful to humans or other mammals and were first discovered in the 1920s.

"We spray trillions of them on crops every year, and they are easy to buy," said UCR nematology professor, Adler Dillman, whose laboratory made the discovery. "Though there are more than 100 species of *Steinernema*, we are always on the lookout for new ones because each has unique features. Some might be better in certain climates or with certain insects."

They have named the new species *Steinernema adamsi* in recognition of the American biologist, Byron Adams, who is the chair of the Biology Department at Brigham Young University. – *Phys.org*

InteliGro leadership changes

WinField United South Africa (WUSA) and InteliGro jointly announced that Gideon Hefer, managing director of InteliGro, has decided to step down from his position effective 1 April 2024.

Hefer, a qualified chartered accountant from the University of Johannesburg, joined the then Terason in 2001 and was part of the team that established InteliChem in 2012. He played a key role in the merger of Terason and TechniChem, forming the well-known industry leader, InteliGro, in 2016. Being appointed as chief executive officer (CEO) of InteliChem in 2017, he joined the WUSA executive management team as managing director of retail in 2021.

Jan Vermaak, CEO of WUSA, confirmed that Hefer will remain within the group, taking on a different role to support strategic initiatives. – *Winfield United*

PepRSV: Kwarantynmaatreëls gelig

Aartappels SA het ongeveer 'n jaar gelede die pepper ringspot-virus (PepRSV) by aartappels in Suid-Afrika waargeneem. Aangesien dit die eerste keer is wat die virus in Suid-Afrika opgemerk word, is dit as 'n kwarantynsiekte geklassifiseer en produ-sente mag nie aartappels met tekens van PepRSV bemark nie.

Opnames deur die Landbounavorsingsraad het egter getoon dat die virus wydverspreid was, veral op tafelaartappels. Na gesprekke met die Departement van Landbou, Grondhervorming en Landelike Ontwikkeling (DALRRD) is besluit om die kwarantynmaatreëls op tafelaartappels op te hef. DALRRD sal voortgaan om PepRSV ingevolge die *Wet op Landbouplae, 1983 (Wet 36 van 1983)* te reguleer. – *Elmarie Helberg, Plaas Media*

North America's ammonia plans

North America is set to lead the global ammonia industry capacity additions with a share of 44% by 2028, by gaining capacities from new build and expansion projects between 2024 and 2028, according to GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company.

GlobalData's latest report, *Ammonia industry capacity and capital expenditure forecasts with details of active and planned plants to 2028*, reveals that the total ammonia capacity of new build and expansion projects in North America is expected to be 31.19 million tonnes per annum by 2028.

Ammonia is a widely used chemical in various end-use industries. The demand for ammonia in North America is driven by the growing use of nitrogen-based fertilisers in the agricultural industry in North America. The other factors contributing to the growth of ammonia are the low-cost feedstock and the emergence of end-users with decarbonisation goals. – *GlobalData*



Meshack Ndongeni (middle) from KwaZulu-Natal was named Potatoes SA's third Enterprise Development Farmer of the Year. With him is (left) Rendani Murovhi, Potatoes SA's transformation manager, and Thandi Moyo, deputy director-general of rural development at DALRRD.

Development farmer dreams big

Meshack Ndongeni, a potato farmer from KwaZulu-Natal, has been crowned the third Enterprise Development Farmer of the Year during the seventh Potatoes SA Transformation Symposium held on 15 February this year. Ndongeni dreams of expanding his potato farming operation to another region, which would enable him to deliver potatoes to market for more months of the year. Currently, he is only able to supply the market with potatoes for six months of the year. – Susan Marais, Plaas Media

Read our complete report on the Transformation Symposium elsewhere in this issue.

North American production in 2023

The United States Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with Statistics Canada and Servicio de Información Agroalimentaria y Pesquera, has released a comprehensive report detailing the potato production figures for the US, Canada and Mexico. The 2023 combined production for the US and Canada is estimated at 570 million cwt (hundredweight), showcasing an 8% increase from the 2022 estimate.

Breaking down the figures, the US alone has achieved a 10% increase in potato production, with an estimated output of 441 million cwt. Meanwhile, Canadian potato growers have also contributed notably to this increase, with a harvest of 129 million cwt, marking a 4% rise from the previous year.

In contrast, the 2022 potato production for the US, Canada and Mexico combined had seen a decline, totalling 567 million cwt, which was 2% lower than the 2021 estimates. During that year, the US experienced a 3% decrease in production, with an output of 402 million cwt. However, Canadian growers had a slight increase of 2%, harvesting 124 million cwt. Mexico's production faced a downturn, with a 4% decrease, resulting in a harvest of 41.4 million cwt. – Potato News Today

European Union scraps pesticide proposal

The head of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has announced plans to scrap a proposal halving pesticide use across the European Union (EU). The move is an apparent concession to producers who have been protesting in many EU countries against regulations, including the planned reduction in pesticide use.

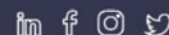
Von der Leyen said the proposal had become a "symbol of polarisation". The reversal still needs to be formally approved. Pesticide reduction is among a number of grievances that producers in countries including France, Belgium and the Netherlands have been demonstrating against.

They argue that reducing the amount of pesticide they are allowed to use, will negatively impact their crops and therefore put food production in the EU at risk. "Our producers deserve to be listened to, Von der Leyen told the European Parliament recently. "I know that they are worried about the future of agriculture and their future as producers."

Von der Leyen also said the issue of pesticide use has not gone away and that further conversations would be needed before a new proposal to reduce them could be put forward. The EU aims to halve the use of the chemicals by 2030 as part of its Green Deal, which is aimed at tackling climate change. – BBC



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**WES-VRYSTAATSE KULTIVARPROEWE
BY BULTFONTEIN EN KROONSTAD
IN 2023**

**FEEDBACK REPORT ON
POTATOES SA'S 2024
TRANSFORMATION SYMPOSIUM**

Moerkwekers inspireer:
Top tien aangewys

Control strategies
for potato early dying

What we spend
on protecting potatoes