

Developments in grain qualifications

The grain depot manager qualification has been recommended to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for registration on the national qualifications framework under the occupational qualifications sub-framework. The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) will inform AgriSeta once the qualification is registered. This is the only grain depot manager training material that will be registered by SAQA. Please inform your training service providers about the latest developments. – *Agbiz Grain*

For more information on the study material for the grain depot manager qualification, click here.

Follow this link to access the study material for the grain grader (part qualification).

Nico Hawkins greets the grain industry

The name Nico Hawkins is synonymous with the grain industry, where he played a major role in establishing structures to assist farmers after the deregulation of a controlled agricultural market. After 39 years in the industry, Hawkins has retired from his position as the general manager of the South African Grain Information Service (SAGIS).

After studying agricultural economics, he joined organised agriculture in 1983, starting his career at the old South African Agricultural Union. He joined Grain SA in 1999 and took up the reins at SAGIS in 2012.

Hawkins says the establishment of structures to help grain farmers transition from a controlled market to a free

market is one of the highlights of his career. The data analysis of grain trading will always be his passion, and this is what he will be keeping himself busy with now that he has stepped down from the industry. – *Ursula Human, Plaas Media*

Click here to listen to Lise Roberts talking to Nico about his career.

Reporting of intentions to import or export wheat

Although the reporting of intentions to import or export wheat would be beneficial to the management of resources, there may be possible legal ramifications. It must be ensured that the proposed statutory

measure will not contravene the provisions of the *Competition Act, 1998, (Act 89 of 1998)*.

The National Agricultural Marketing Council has been requested to obtain a formal

opinion from the Competition Commission to advance with the introduction of a statutory measure regarding the reporting of intentions to import or export grains and oilseeds. – *Agbiz Grain*

Identified research needs for the storage sector

Agbiz Grain and stakeholders with interests in the grain handling and storage sector, listed several research needs to be considered for the development of research proposals and funding. Interested research institutions are encouraged to discuss research proposals with

the Agbiz Grain Research Committee by emailing Annelien@agbizgrain.co.za.

The following research needs were identified: storage capability of malting barley cultivars; storage capability of maize cultivars; pest control in stored grain;

pre-harvest management practices affecting germination capacity and germination energy of malting barley; optimised storage practices with available infrastructure; and an analysis of the average grain-handling losses for maize and soya beans. – *Agbiz Grain*

Agbiz Grain membership base growing

The Agbiz Grain membership base is growing. Silostrat has announced that the company will be joining Agbiz Grain as a main storage member, as well as Agbiz as a corporate member from 1 March 2022. Agbiz Grain's first applications for associate membership from Agri-

Enviro Solutions (AES) and Santam Agriculture have also been approved.

The recruitment of associate members is an ongoing process and various companies have shown interest after being contacted in January 2022. Follow-up meetings

will be scheduled with those companies that need clarity on their benefits and questions. – *Agbiz Grain*

You can access the contact details of Agbiz Grain's associate members by clicking here.



Amendments to grading regulations for maize

The amendments to the grading regulations for maize were submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. The amendments are anticipated to be implemented before the commencement of the new marketing season on 1 May 2022.

Agbiz Grain, in collaboration with grading experts, has identified additional elements that could be considered for further revision within the grading regulations to be submitted. All industry role-players, including Agbiz Grain, will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the revised regulation before the implementation thereof. – *Agbiz Grain*

EISA online workshop to be hosted in 2022

AgriSeta will request two proposed dates from the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) for Agbiz Grain to set up an external integrated summative assessment (EISA) online workshop in the first quarter of 2022. The session will be facilitated by QCTO.

Joining the session will be members of the Community of Expert Practitioners (CEP), appointed by the grain handling industry via Agbiz Grain, which will consist of subject matter experts in grain handling and storage. Lizelle Jacobs and Herman van Deventer of AgriSeta will act as moderators.

Training providers are required to register with Agbiz Grain via Annelien@agbizgrain.co.za to attend the EISA online workshop in 2022. – *Agbiz Grain*

Follow the link to access the contact details of the training providers listed with Agbiz Grain.

Considerations needed regarding the GSCI

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) can easily adopt the Grain Storage Cost Index (GSCI) to update the annual change in the JSE storage rates. However, the GSCI is published only once a year compared to the monthly publication of the producer price index (PPI).

The JSE has three different marketing years starting on the first trading day of March, May and October. An agreement is needed on how the annual publication of the GSCI will be implemented to adjust the annual storage rate of the JSE at the start of each marketing year.

The industry, as represented by the JSE Advisory Committee, needs to be convinced that the introduction of the GSCI will be an improvement in the interest of all stakeholders. The JSE also needs to agree on the adoption of the GSCI. The GSCI proves to be less volatile than the respective PPI's applicable to March, May and October. – *Agbiz Grain*

Statutory measure for weekly producer deliveries of grains

The administrator of the Maize and Winter Forum Steering Committee has drafted letters in support of the statutory measure for the weekly producer deliveries of soya beans, sunflower seed, maize and wheat expected to be introduced in 2022. This follows after Agbiz Grain indicated early in 2021 that the voluntary submission of the weekly producer deliveries for soya beans and sunflower seed will be discontinued by the end of February 2022, maize by the end of April 2022, and wheat by the end of September 2022. Currently the voluntary submission of the weekly producer delivery information is not inclusive throughout the industry. – *Agbiz Grain*

Comments to be submitted on SOP for assignees

On 13 December 2021, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) requested that affected stakeholders submit their comments on the Standard Operating Procedure or SOP for assignees. The comments are necessary in order to reach agreement on modalities for the introduction of inspection services in the grain handling and storage sector. The DALRRD indicated that it will not accept any request for meetings with sectors before comments have been received from stakeholders by 15 February. – *Agbiz Grain*

Introduction of inspection services unlawful

The appeal board that was appointed by the director-general of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) to rule on the implementation of the inspection services on grain and oilseeds, announced that it was unlawful and not procedurally fair. The board found that the fees cannot be rationally linked to the capabilities that need to be exercised, or to the duties that need to be performed. The board received five applications against *Notice 382*.

This follows the appointment of Leaf Services in 2016, as an assignee of the DALRRD, to render inspection services on behalf of the department. It was announced in the *Government Gazette* of 25 June 2021 that inspection fees on grain and oilseeds will be applicable from 12 July 2021. The inspection fees would have been R1,80/ton on raw grain and oilseeds, and 2c per bread.

Agbiz Grain opposed the introduction of inspection services and argued that the sectors

in the grain value chain are sufficiently self-regulated. None of the sectors required the introduction of inspection services by the DALRRD and there is no evidence of complaints or transgressions submitted that justifies the inspection of stakeholders. The introduction of inspection services will lead to 13 000 inspections. Although it can be legally justified, it is not justifiable to add a layer of cost of about R74 million on the food value chain.

Agbiz Grain declared that the association proposed to Leaf Services to consider a volume-based approach to collect the fees at the first point of sale. It will be the most efficient way to collect the money in line with how statutory levies are collected according to the *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act, 1996 (Act 47 of 1996)*. It should be noted that different statutory levies are collected for different products, while Leaf Services proposed a single levy of R1,80/ton across different commodities. Imposing a single levy across commodities

would impair certain product types while it would benefit others. This will lead to cross-subsidisation that will not result in a fair outcome. In addition, care must be exercised not to subsidise the tariffs on processed products from the tariffs raised on raw commodities.

Agbiz Grain has also raised the concern that Leaf Services may accumulate and control potential reserves and made proposals on how this can be addressed. Finally, Agbiz Grain objected against a couple of procedural issues, how the R1,80 per ton was determined and emphasised the fact that Leaf Services failed to reach an agreement on the frequency of inspections needed before they decided to announce it in the *Government Gazette*.

The board further recommended that the director-general should consider additional regulations to facilitate appeals of this nature, as the current arrangements are insufficient. – *Agbiz Grain*

Palmer amaranth threat increases

Palmer amaranth or *Amaranthus palmeri* has been regarded as the most threatening weed in the US since 2005 and is especially destructive in maize, cotton and soya bean fields. Research has shown this weed to be highly resistant to a number of herbicides, including glyphosate.


The weed was first detected in South Africa in 2018 in a cotton field in the Douglas district in the Northern Cape. Since then, it has also been detected in Howick in KwaZulu-Natal, in the

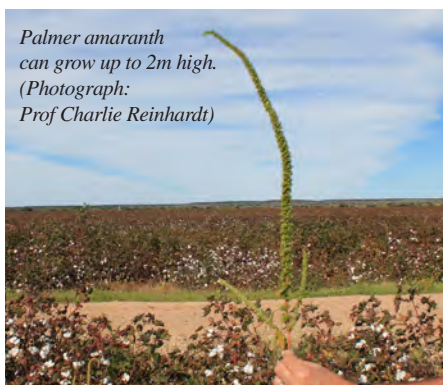
northern parts of the Kruger Park, at Kasane in Botswana, and more recently in the Potchefstroom district.

Its resistance to herbicides that are usually known for its good control of amaranth types is a major cause for concern. The weed has proven resistance to a total of nine important herbicide modes of action or sites of action. Another major threat, says Prof Charlie Reinhardt of the North-West University, is the possibility of hybridisation between common pigweed (a type of amaranth) and Palmer amaranth. Prof Reinhardt is the project leader of the South African Herbicide Resistance Initiative (SAHRI) at the University of Pretoria.

Researchers at SAHRI have conducted research into herbicide resistance in Palmer amaranth since it was first confirmed in South Africa and, to date, 14 herbicide actives have been assessed. Resistance to two herbicides, glyphosate and chlorimuron-ethyl, was confirmed

while varying tolerance levels were recorded for other herbicides. On the positive side, several of the herbicides tested provided good control.

South Africa is home to approximately 17 other types of amaranth, which makes it difficult to identify Palmer amaranth. For this reason, SAHRI has developed a guide for the identification of Palmer amaranth. In addition, readers are also encouraged to contact the researchers should they come across possible Palmer amaranth infestations. – *Plaas Media* 



Palmer amaranth can grow up to 2m high. (Photograph: Prof Charlie Reinhardt)

The guide is freely available and contains photographs and descriptions of Palmer amaranth in various stages. The guide will be regularly updated.

Click here for a free copy of the guide.

Contact Prof Charlie Reinhardt at 083 442 3427 or email dr.charlie.reinhardt@gmail.com. Photographs of suspected Palmer amaranth can also be sent to him via WhatsApp.