The Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa



The Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa

63rd AEASA Conference Programme

29 September – 01 October 2026

Conference theme:
GEOPOLITICS IN AGRICULTURE: STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN POLICY, MARKETS, FOOD SECURITY AND SHARED

PROSPERITY

Legend Golf and Safari Resort, Mokopane, Limpopo Province, South Africa

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2026 Annual AEASA Conference co-hosted by

University of Limpopo

Limpopo Provincial Government, Republic of South Africa — Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

University of Venda — Creating Future Leaders

AEASA-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (MANCOM) 2026/27

Prof. Jan Hlongwane

AEASA-President_2026/27



Prof. Jan Hlongwane is a Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Limpopo. He holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics, with his research focusing on agricultural production economics integrated with agricultural marketing, price analysis and macroeconomics. He has served on many committees at different levels and is widely recognised both nationally and internationally for his contributions to the field of agricultural economics, research, teaching, and academic citizenship. Internationally, he has undertaken academic visits and engagements at several renowned institutions such as Maastricht University in the Netherlands, as well as Plovdiv University in Bulgaria among others. He previously served as Vice-President of AEASA and currently serves as the President. His academic expertise, international exposure, and leadership experience have contributed significantly to the advancement of agricultural economics in South Africa and beyond.

Prof. Nicolette Matthews

AEASA-Deputy President_2026/27



Prof. Nicolette Matthews is an Agricultural Economist, academic and researcher at the University of the Free State (UFS), with more than 15 years of experience in research, teaching, postgraduate supervision and interdisciplinary collaboration. Her expertise lies in natural resource and environmental economics, with a particular focus on the economics of irrigation and agricultural resource management. She applies quantitative approaches, including bio-economic modelling, optimisation, and efficiency and productivity analysis using Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) and Stochastic Frontier Analysis (SFA). Her work spans the water–energy–food nexus, water and salinity management, agricultural non-point source pollution, agricultural productivity, and livestock economics. She has led Water Research Commission-funded research and works across disciplines to develop economically and environmentally sustainable solutions to resource-use challenges in agriculture.

Dr. Sifiso Ntombela

AEASA-Past President_2024/25



Dr. Sifiso Ntombela is a South African developmental economist and policy advisor, with keen interest in agricultural political economy and economic modelling. He is the past-President of AEASA. He currently serves as the Special Advisor to the Speaker of the National Assembly in Parliament. He is also an Interim Head of the Office of Institutions Supporting Democracy, overseeing the functioning and accountability of Chapter 09 and Associated Constitutional Bodies to Parliament.

Dr. Lindikaya Myeki

AEASA-Treasure and Secretary_2026/27



Dr. Lindikaya Myeki is the Treasurer and Secretary for AEASA as well as a Senior Lecturer at Nelson Mandela University in the Department of Agricultural Management. His professional career started in 2010 at the National Agricultural Marketing Council where he worked as an intern under the division of Markets and Economic Research Centre. In 2011, he was promoted to an Agricultural Economist – a position he held for 6 years. In 2017, he resigned from the National Agricultural Marketing Council to study MSc (Research) at the University of New England in Australia. He has been a member of Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA) for more than 10 years. His research interests include applied econometrics; agricultural economics; development economics; efficiency and productivity analysis; adoption studies and value chain analysis. He possesses a good knowledge of quantitative research on marketing of agricultural products and economic efficiency.

Prof. Eric Mungatana

AEASA- Editor-in-Chief of Agrekon_2026/27



Prof. Eric Mungatana (Stellenbosch University) serves as Editor-in-Chief of Agrekon, the official journal of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa and sits on the Advisory Board of Ambio. He is also a board member of the African Society for Ecological Economics and previously served on the board of the International Society for Ecological Economics. He contributes extensively to research leadership and policy development through his role as an AERC Group E (Agriculture, Climate Change and Natural Resource Management) Resource Person and as a past member of the NRF Specialist Committee on Economics, Management, Administration and Accounting. His international contributions include serving as Lead Author of Chapter 6 of the IPBES Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, one of the most influential global assessments on biodiversity and sustainability. In addition, he has provided technical advisory support to several prominent international organisations, including the Global Water Partnership, UNDP through its Economics of Climate Change Adaptation Capacity Building Programme in Asia, and the Ecosystem Services Economics Unit within UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya. A C2-rated scientist by the NRF, he currently serves in a multidisciplinary research programme that investigates the socioeconomic impacts of remediated acid mine drainage water in South Africa, in collaboration with the University of Copenhagen and the University of the Witwatersrand. His research continues to shape policy and practice at the intersection of environmental sustainability, natural resource management, climate adaptation, and economic development.

Prof. Grany Mmatsatsi Senyolo

AEASA-Additional Member_2026/27



Prof. Granny M. Senyolo is an Agricultural Economist, academic, researcher and project leader at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), with extensive experience in agricultural economics, agribusiness, food security, market access and sustainable rural development. She holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics and has more than 16 years of academic and research experience, including teaching, postgraduate supervision, community engagement and management of multidisciplinary projects. Professor Senyolo coordinates the Erasmus+ funded MASSTER project and has recently secured two additional Erasmus+ funded projects, VISAGE and ROOTS, strengthening her contribution to international collaboration, capacity development and sustainable agricultural and rural transformation in Africa. She serves in various professional and sector leadership roles and is committed to leveraging research, education, innovation and strategic partnerships to advance sustainable agricultural development and create meaningful impact in communities and society.

Mr. Maremo Mahlogonolo Mphahlele

AEASA-Newsletter Editor_2026/27



Mr. Maremo M. Mphahlele is an Agricultural Economist at the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), specialising in agricultural transformation, industry trusts and statutory measures where he serves as the secretary of the Transformation Review Committee of the NAMC. His work focuses on strengthening meaningful and sustainable participation of historically disadvantaged enterprises across agricultural value chains, with particular emphasis on enterprise, skills and socio-economic development. He represents the NAMC on the Transformation Committees of Raisins South Africa and the South African Pork Organisation, as well as on the boards of the Potato Industry Development Trust, Citrus Industry Trust and Deciduous Fruit Industry Development Trust. He also represents the NAMC on the Mpumalanga Provincial Agri-BEE Structure and the Agri-BEE Charter Council, contributing to national and provincial agricultural transformation initiatives. He currently serves as the Newsletter Editor of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA), where he edits the Association's quarterly newsletter, handles communications, and is responsible for maintaining and updating the Association's website.

Mr. Bonani Nyhodo

AEASA-2025 Conference LOC Chairperson



Mr. Bonani Nyhodo is a Senior Manager at the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) responsible for the portfolio covering all agricultural regulatory measures outlined within the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act, No. 47 of 1996 as amended. It is worth noting that Mr Nyhodo is the Node Coordinator of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and has been involved in coordinating in-country activities of FANRPAN. Before joining the current portfolio, Mr Nyhodo was leading the Trade Research Unit within the NAMC's Markets and Economic Research Centre (MERC). Such work compelled him to work closely with institutions such as the Trade Law Centre of Southern Africa (TRALAC), and the International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC). In 2012, he spent three months at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark as a visiting scholar working with Dr Hans Gensen and Prof Ron Sandrey. He is an alumnus of the University of Fort Hare (where he graduated with BSc – Agricultural Economics) and the Stellenbosch University (where he graduated with MSc – Agricultural Economics). He has authored and co-authored several book chapters, conference papers, working papers, journal articles (in peer-reviewed journals), and media commentaries. He had the honour of participating in the South African team of students who won the inaugural Student Case Competition of the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association (IFAMA) in Buenos Aires (2006). Mr Nyhodo prides himself on being a product of the Young Professionals Programme (YPP) of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and also the immediate Past Chair of AEASA's LOC (for the 62nd annual conference).

Local Organising Committee (LOC) for the 63rd AEASA Conference 2026

The Local Organising Committee (LOC) for the 63rd AEASA 2026 Conference is composed of representatives from universities, government departments, and professional bodies. The committee is responsible for planning, coordination, and successful delivery of the 2026 63rd AEASA conference.

LOC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	
Names	**Roles and Institutions**
Dr LJ Ledwaba	Chairperson, LOC (University of Limpopo)
Prof IB Oluwatayo	Vice Chairperson, LOC (University of Venda)
Prof N Matthews	Deputy President, AEASA (University of the Free State)
Dr R Nengovhela	Secretariat (University of Limpopo)
Prof J Zuwarimwe	Vice Secretary (University of Venda)
Prof GM Senyolo	AEASA Additional Member (Tshwane University of Technology)
Dr MA Nkoana	University of Limpopo
Dr MH Lefophane	University of Limpopo
Mrs S Makwarela	Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
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Bienvenue by Chairperson of the LOC - 63rd AEASA Conference 2026



Dear AEASA Members, Invited Guests, Student Members, Distinguished Delegates, On behalf of the Local Organising Committee (LOC), the Management Committee (MANCOM), and the entire membership of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA), it is my great honour and privilege to warmly welcome you to the 63rd Annual AEASA Conference, proudly hosted in Limpopo Province through a partnership between the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, the University of Limpopo, and the University of Venda. We are delighted to welcome you to Limpopo, a province characterised by rich agricultural diversity, vibrant rural economies, cultural heritage, and abundant natural resources. The intersection of smallholder and commercial agriculture, conservation, tourism, and rural livelihoods make Limpopo an ideal setting for meaningful dialogue on the future of agriculture and food systems in South Africa and across the African continent.

The successful organisation of this conference demonstrates the importance of partnerships between government, academia, research institutions, industry, and civil society. Such collaboration is essential to generating knowledge, informing policy, and advancing agricultural development and shared prosperity.

The theme of this year's conference, **"Geopolitics in Agriculture: Striking a Balance Between Policy, Markets, Food Security and Shared Prosperity,"** is both timely and relevant. Agriculture is increasingly influenced by global trade dynamics, geopolitical tensions, climate change, technological transformation, and supply-chain disruptions. These developments have significant implications for farmers, agribusinesses, policymakers, and consumers. As agricultural economists, this presents an important opportunity for us to engage critically with these challenges and contribute evidence-based insights and practical solutions to strengthen agricultural and food systems. We are honoured to host distinguished keynote speakers, panelists, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners who will share valuable research and experiences. The programme includes plenary and parallel sessions, policy roundtables, poster presentations, workshops and symposia, as well as the prestigious Simon Brand Memorial Lecture, upgraded paper presentations, and the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

We are particularly pleased to welcome our postgraduate students, young researchers, and first-time delegates. We encourage you to participate actively, engage with fellow delegates, and use this opportunity to build networks and research collaborations. To our senior colleagues, we encourage you to continue mentoring and supporting the next generation of agricultural economists. Beyond the academic programme, we hope you will enjoy the warmth, culture, and hospitality of Limpopo through our social activities, including the welcome cocktail and gala dinner, while creating lasting connections and memorable experiences.

Once again, **welcome to Limpopo and welcome to the 63rd Annual AEASA Conference.**

We wish you a stimulating, productive, and enjoyable conference. May our discussions generate new ideas, strengthen existing partnerships, and inspire collaborations that contribute meaningfully to the future of agriculture and food security.

On behalf of the Local Organising Committee, we thank you for your participation and wish you every success in your deliberations.

Enjoy the conference!

PROGRAMME

TIME	ITEM	
28 September 2026 - Monday		
12:00 -18:00	**Arrivals and Registrations** *@ Legend Golf and Safari Resort| Mokopane, Limpopo Province*	
29 September 2026 - Tuesday		
07:00 – 08:00	Tags collections and Online attendance registrations via the QR Code Venue: Queen of Sheba (Main Hall)	
WORKSHOPS/MINI-SYMPOSIA		
08:00 -10:00	NAMC Promoting market access for South African agriculture	*Theme: Unlocking Shared Prosperity: Value Chain Round Tables (VCRTs) as drivers of growth, competitiveness, and investments in SA Agriculture* 1. Dr. S Ngqangweni – CEO, National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) 2. Dr. S Molepo - AAMP Project Manager, NAMC 3. Mr. D Olivier - CEO, Red Meat Industry Services (RMIS) 4. Ms. F Mashau- Ratshitanga – CEO, Fruit Sourh Africa 5. Mr. R Ramabulana – CEO, Olive Black 6. Mr. J Aries – Director, Agricultural Producer Support and Development (APSD) at Western Cape Department of Agriculture 7. Mr. B Nyhodo - Senior Manager, NAMC **Venue: Limpopo Hall**

08:00 -10:00	WATER RESEARCH COMMISSION 55 YEARS Supporting Sustainable Water Futures 1971-2026 LAND BANK We stand by you	*Theme: Programmes, Products, Services and Innovations in Agriculture* **1. Prof. Sylvester Mpandeli** (Senior Research Manager: Water Use, Water Research Commission) **2. Mr. O'Brien Perel** (Agricultural Specialist: Agricultural Economics & Advisory, Land Bank) **Venue: Vaal Hall**
10:00 – 10:30	Tea Break	
10:30 – 10:45	**OFFICIAL OPENING SESSION** **Venue:** Queen of Sheba (Main Hall) *Facilitator: Dr. Lesetja Ledwaba (UL), AEASA 2026 LOC Chairperson*	
10:45 – 11:00	**Official opening of the 63rd AEASA conference** *Speaker: Prof. Nicolette Matthews (AEASA Vice President)*	
11:00 – 11:30	**Welcome address** **By** **Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Limpopo:** Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele	
11:30 – 11:40	**Introduction of keynote address speaker:** Prof Isaac Oluwatayo	
11:40 – 12:10	**Keynote address:** *Ms. Mpho Abigail Mashamba, (HoD) - Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development*	
12:10 – 12:50	**Presidential Address:** *Prof. Jan Hlongwane (AEASA President)*	
12:50 – 13:40	**LUNCH**	

13:40 – 15:25	**Plenary Session 1: Geopolitical Perspectives on Global Agricultural Trade, Market Access and Strategic Partnerships** ***Venue:*** *Queen of Sheba (Main Hall)* ***Facilitator:*** *Dr. Victor Thindisa (Senior Manager – Markets and Economic Research Centre (NAMC))* **Presentation 1**: *Middle East Conflicts and Global Trade Disruptions: Implications for Energy Markets and South Africa's Agricultural Economy* ***Mr. Wandile Sihlobo*** *– Chief Economist, Agricultural Business Chamber (Agbiz)* **Presentation 2**: *Global Trade Policy Shifts and Geopolitical Dynamics: Implications for Agricultural Trade, Market Access and Regional Integration in Africa* ***Ms. Trudi Hartzenberg*** *– Executive Director, Trade Law Centre (tralac)* **Presentation 3:** *Strategic Agricultural Markets, South–South Cooperation and Emerging Trade Opportunities in a Changing Geopolitical Environment* ***Dr. Lucius Phaleng*** *– Trade Advisor, Animal Feed Manufacturers Association (AFMA)*
15:25 – 15:35	Tea Break
15:35 – 16:55	**PRESENTATIONS OF UPGRADED CONTRIBUTED PAPERS** (25 minutes for each paper) Venue: Queen of Sheba (Main Hall) *Facilitator: Mr Elvis Nakana (National Department of Agriculture)*
	Title: Assessing agricultural employment adjustment under structural transformation in the Republic of South Africa **Authors: Dube B,** Kau J, Molepo NS, Lungwana M, Msezeni A
	Title: Trading Below the Frontier: Export Efficiency and Potential in Namibia's Live Goat Trade Using a Stochastic Frontier Gravity Model **Authors: Kalimbwe K,** Abdullahi NM, Ng'ombe JN, Mbai S
	Title: An investigation into South Africa's agricultural trade opportunities and market access alignment within BRICS+ **Authors: Schultz, K.,** Jooste, A. and Stellian, R
16:55 – 17:10	**Question and Answer session (All)**
18:00	**Welcoming cocktails @ BAOBAB BOMA (Coffee shop and halfway House)**

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MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION TO OUR PLATINUM SPONSORS

We extend our sincere appreciation to our esteemed **Platinum Sponsors** for their exceptional support of the **63rd AEASA Conference**. Your generous contribution demonstrates a strong commitment to advancing agricultural education, strengthening professional networks, and supporting meaningful dialogue and innovation within the agricultural sector. Your partnership has played an important role in making this conference possible and in creating a platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and professional development.

Thank you for your valued partnership and for investing in the future of agricultural education and the broader agricultural sector.

30 September 2026 -Wednesday	
07:30 – 08:00	Attendance registrations via the QR Code
08:00 – 09:45	**Plenary session 2: Climate-Smart Agriculture and Policy Transformation for Resilient Agri-Food Systems in Southern Africa: A Geopolitical Perspective** ***Facilitator:*** *Dr. Tshilidzi Madzivhandila (Chief Executive Officer and Head of Mission, FANRPAN)* **Venue:** Queen of Sheba (Main Hall) **Presentation 1:** *Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Preparedness in Southern Africa: Bridging Policy Gaps and Governance for Resilient Agri-Food Systems* ***Dr. Ephias Mugari*** *– Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Global Change, University of Limpopo* **Presentation 2:** *Advancing Climate-Smart Agrifood Systems in Southern Africa: Lessons from Regional Partnerships, Value Chains, and Multi-Country Implementation* ***Mr. Suwilanji Sinyangwe*** *– Programs Manager, FANRPAN* ***Reflections:*** *Advancing Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives: Lessons from Industry Practice* ***Ms. Werna Oberholzer*** *– Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer, Tiger Brands*
	Moderated Discussion: All Speakers and Audience
09:45 – 10:00	**Tea Break**

10:00 – 11:20	**PARALLEL CONTRIBUTED PAPER SESSION BLOCK 1** (20 minutes each paper)

Theme: Climate, Natural Resources and Resilient Agrarian Systems

Venue: Limpopo Hall

Facilitator: Dr JP Mokhaukhau

Title: More dangerous than drought: Pastoral households' practices, challenges, and willingness to control Ipomoea on kajiado's Communal grazing lands, Kenya.
Authors: Mersha KA, Margaret Ngigi, Raphael Gitau

Title: Factors affecting awareness, adoption, and adoption intensity of Climate Smart Agricultural technology by smallholder farmers in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. A triple hurdle model.
Authors: Jembere T, Mushunje A, and Chaminuka P

Title: Climate Change and the Future of Crops in South Africa: A Cost-Benefit Perspectives on Agricultural Adaptation
Authors: Shiba W, Matli WM, Weepener H, Mamabolo, Mboweni TJ, Sechube M, Kubheka P, and Zantsi S

Title: Influence of social capital networks on adoption of climate change adaptation strategies in OR Tambo district, South Africa.
Authors: Nhliziyo N and Mushunje A

Theme: Governance, Policy and Political Economy of Food Systems

Venue: Limpopo Hall

Facilitator: Dr K Cloete

Title: Macroeconomic Drivers of Maize Prices in South Africa: Vector Error Correction Model
Authors: Lungwana M, Kau J, Molepo S, Dube B

Title: Weaponizing wheat, Russia's Strategic Export Diversion to the Global South, Implications for Africa: Panel-Corrected Standard Error Analysis Approach
Authors: Kau J, Kubeka P, Msezeni A, Manenzhe TD, Mahlangu S

Title: Access to government agricultural financial interventions and its determinants among smallholder farmers in South Africa
Author: Maila M

Theme: Markets, Value Chains, Labour and Inclusive Rural Transformation

Venue: Vaal Hall

Facilitator: Ms SP Mabatha

Title: Digital Agriculture and Inclusive Rural Transformation: A Systematic Review of Market Access, Technology Adoption and Smallholder Livelihoods in South Africa
Authors: Belemu V, Oluwatayo IB, and Munyai T

Title: Effect of Livelihood Diversification on Farm Household Welfare: Evidence from Ghana
Authors: Mensah, Rahaman MA, Gandidzanwa C, Frederick N

Title: Who Captures the Value? Financial Viability of Hemp Fibre Production Under Alternative Enterprise Models in South Africa
Authors: Sechube, M.P, Zantsi, S, Jordaan, H. and Kubeka, P

Title: Determinants of Compliance with Food Safety and Quality Standards among Agro-Processing Enterprises in Limpopo Province, South Africa
Authors: Makwarela S, Nevhutalu T, Nengovhela R and Ledwaba LJ

Theme: Innovation, Technology, Equity and Knowledge Systems

Venue: Board Room

Facilitator: Thato Moagi

Title: Assessment of the Quality and Usability of Agricultural Statistics in South Africa: A Systematic Review
Authors: Manganyi B, Sotsha K, Thindisa V, Rambau K, and Maila M

Title: Agricultural intensification and forest conservation: A dynamic panel analysis.
Authors: Nketiah P, Ntuli H and Wale E

Title: Effect of climate change adaptation strategies on food security amounts Cameroonian households
Author: Foudjo SI

Title: Who Benefits Most? The Resilience Dividend: Using a Fractional Response Approach to Financial Inclusion in Africa
Author: Tesfay GB

11:20 – 11:35	Tea Break

11:35 – 13:00	

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Venue: Queen of Sheba (Main Hall)

----------26 CONTRIBUTED POSTER PRESENTATIONS----------

Authors	Poster Title
1. Giwu O, Mdoda L, Ntlanga SS and Loki O	Evaluating factors influencing youth participation in agricultural enterprises: implications for food security and agribusiness
2. Mdwebi P, Mamabolo M, Machethe C, Laurie S and Mashitoa M	The Role of Agro-Processing in Translating Sweet Potato Varieties into Food Security Gains: Lessons from African Countries
3. Qwabe CN, Zantsi S, Phali LE, and Walker S	What are the Implications of farmers' transitioning from conventional farming to Agroecological based farming in Sub-Saharan Africa? A Systematic Review
4. Ramakgasha MJ, Chipfupa U and Tshilowa PF	Psychological capital and climate-smart agriculture: insights into awareness and adoption among smallholder farmers in Limpopo
5. Ngcinela S, Mazwane S and Tekana SS	GM maize and yield performance in South Africa from 1995 to 2024: Evidence from Structural Break Analysis
6. Nkunjana T and Zantsi S	Should South Africa Encourage Farmers to Produce High oil Content in Order to Safeguard the Sunflower Industry in the Face of Climate Change Challenges?
7. Tjebane BM, Gidi LS and Muchopa LC	Climate Determinants and Cattle Supply in South Africa: A Timeseries Investigation (2000-2024)
8. Mboweni TJ, Shiba W, Lungwana M and Ngcobo N	Double-edged impact: The positive and negative consequences from private Animal Health Technicians (AHTs) interventions
9. Mbatha Z, Loki O and Zantsi S	A Review of Community-Based Learning Models for Rural Agricultural Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa
10. Malebati LV, Hlongwane JJ, Mmbengwa VM, Nkoana MA and Dlamini BB	A Systematic Review and Structural Design of the Maize Value Chain in South Africa: Market and Transformation Implications
11. Mashayamombe B and Mushunje A	Assessing personal transformation of Pfumvudza climate change adaptation project beneficiaries in Mutare District
12. Mashimbyi KG and Das S	Assessing AGTECH innovation ecosystems as a strategy for enhancing AGRI-SME productivity
13. Bwanaisa M, Selomane O and Gandidzanwa C	Understanding food systems resilience: A systematic review of theory, practice and assessment with insights from Malawi
14. Morepje MT, and Oladele OI	Determinants of the Commercialisation of Underutilised Leafy Vegetables in Sekhukhune District, South Africa
15. Moipolai R, Wale E and Baloyi R	The impact of input support program on household food security: the case of PESI for smallholders in North West, South Africa

16. Morwatshehla M, Lefophane MH and Mzuyanda C	Governance and Policy Support in Informal Food Systems: An Integrated Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Informal Food Traders
17. de Beer P, Hoffmann W and Cloete K	Telecoupled export markets and price-signal transmission in the South African wine value chain: implications for certification
18. Mahlangu LN, Mabote RR, Shiloane JT and Mmbengwa VM	Analysis of the relationship between exchange rate fluctuations and export competitiveness in the South African potato industry (2000-2024)
19. Grwambi B and Mmbengwa VM	Concerns over the sustainability of marketing intermediaries sourcing fresh produce from small-scale farmers in the Western Cape province of South Africa
20. Babalwa and Mdletshe STC	An assessment of the department of rural development and agrarian reform's procedures in funding smallholder farmers agricultural projects in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
21. Msezeni A, Manyike JZ, Mushunje A	Factors influencing the profitability of soybean and maize among emerging farmers in Newcastle local municipality, KwaZulu-Natal Province
22. Mlangeni AP, Seabela RV, Mashabela NR and Mmbengwa VM	Analysis of potato output and macroeconomic factors influencing the export competitiveness of the potato industry from 2000 to 2024 in South Africa
23. Shaku E, Gidi LS and Senyolo MP	Factors contributing to the success of land redistribution policy: case study of land reform beneficiaries in Capricorn District, Limpopo
24. Mendi GT, Swanepoel JW, Zantsi S and Olorunfemi OD	Agricultural knowledge systems and behavioural determinants of smallholder farmers' adoption of underutilised crops in South Africa: a KAP-based analysis
25. Munyai T, Oluwatayo IB and Belemu V	Artificial Intelligence and the Changing Agriculture and Food Security Landscape: A Nuanced Review of Emerging Concerns and Prospects in Sub-Saharan Africa.
26. Madini A, Mchani S, Seti TM and Mgidi S	Technology Adoption and Smallholder Market Participation: Evidence from Maize Farmers in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa
13:00 – 14:00	**LUNCH**

ABOUT SIMON BRAND

The Simon Brand Memorial Address honours the life and enduring contribution of Professor Simon Streicher Brand (1938–1992), a highly influential South African agricultural economist, academic and government economic advisor. Born in Pretoria, Professor Brand obtained a BSc (Agric) and DSc (Agric) from the University of Pretoria and an MA from Stanford University. His distinguished academic career included appointments at the University of Pretoria, UNISA and Rand Afrikaans University, where he served as Professor and Head of the Department of Economics from 1970 to 1973.

Professor Brand made significant contributions to agricultural economics, economic policy and development finance during an important period in South Africa's economic history. He is recognised as a pioneer of modern South African development finance and is remembered for his scholarship, leadership and contribution to economic policy.

The annual Simon Brand Memorial Address continues this legacy by providing a distinguished platform for reflection on contemporary challenges and opportunities in agriculture, agricultural economics, food systems, development and economic policy.

14:00 – 14:50	**SIMON BRAND MEMORIAL ADDRESS** **Venue:** Queen of Sheba (Main Hall) **Moderator:** Prof Nicolette Matthews **Introduction of the speaker:** Dr MH Lefophane (Senior Lecturer, University of Limpopo) **Speaker:** Prof Scott D. Rozelle (Helen F. Farnsworth Professor of International Agricultural Policy, Stanford University, USA) **Title:** China's Agricultural Development and Policies: Are There Lessons for Africa and Other Developing Countries?
14:50 – 16:10	**PARALLEL CONTRIBUTED PAPER SESSION BLOCK 2** (20 minutes each paper)

Theme: Governance, Policy and Political Economy of Food Systems

Venue: Zambezi Hall

Facilitator: Prof C Mzuyanda

Title: Assessing South Africa's Wheat Import Dependency: Trends and Geopolitical Implications
Authors: Lungwana M, Dube B, Kau J and Molepo S

Title: Agrekon and South Africa's Land Reform Debate: A Review of Agricultural Economics Scholarship, 1994–2025
Author: Zantsi S

Title: Beyond Adoption: A Double-Hurdle Analysis of Participation and Intensity in Agricultural Insurance-Input Bundles in South Africa
Authors: Mafirakurewa T, Bontsa N and Mushunje A

Title: Protection or Distortion? Welfare and political economy effects of variable import levies in South Africa's sugar industry
Authors: Mkhabela T.S, and Nyhodo B

Theme: Climate, Natural Resources and Resilient Agrarian Systems

Venue: Zambezi Hall

Facilitator: Dr LS Gidi

Title: Complementary Effects of Indigenous and Scientific Climate Knowledge on Livestock Diversification: Evidence from Smallholder Farmers in South Africa.
Authors: Msenge A. and Manyike J.Z

Title: The geopolitics of climate shocks: assessing climate change, agricultural total factor productivity, and food security dynamics in selected SADC countries (1990–2025)
Author: Moyo V

Title: Carbon Footprint Assessment of Agricultural Research. Farms: A Pathway to Low-Carbon Agriculture in the Western Cape, South Africa
Author: Barends-Jones V

Title: Approaches to promote the accessibility and use of improved seed varieties in South African smallholder farming
Authors: Myeni L, Moeletsi ME, Walker S and Tsubo M

Theme: Markets, Value Chains, Labour and Inclusive Rural Transformation

Venue: Board Room

Facilitator: Mr S Lekgau

Title: Rural Households Awareness and Willingness to Pay for Moringa Products: Evidence from Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa
Authors: Hlatshwayo NC, Ledwaba LJ and Nkoana MA

Title: Effects of farm size, on selected macro-economic variables towards export competitiveness among selected Southern Hemisphere countries: Panel Data Analysis approach
Authors: Kau J, Molepo S, Mabhunu N, Lungwana M, Dube B, Agbuba I and Moswane L

Title: The effects of African Continental Free Trade Area on South Africa's economy: Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) approach
Authors: Molepo S, Sibiya P, Zondo B, Dube B, Mnguni K, Simola A, Kau J, Lungwana M, Thindisa V and Bohlmann H

Title: Exploring individuals' perception, experience of local food environments and factors influencing food outlet choices
Authors: Zodidi C, Geza W, Ngidi M, Mudhara M, and Mabhaudhi T

Theme: Markets, Value Chains, Labour and Inclusive Rural Transformation

Venue: Vaal Hall

Facilitator: Ms R Miya

Title: Smallholder Farmers' Perceptions and Willingness to Adopt Soybean Production: The Case of Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape, South Africa
Author: Mdlakazi P

Title: Bridging the Postharvest Gap: Perceptions and Determinants of Vegetable Losses among Smallholder Farmers in eThekwini Municipality, South Africa
Authors: Qange S, Mdoda L and Mditshwa A

Title: Investigating the extent to which private Animal Health Technicians bridged the rural animal health service gap
Authors: Matli MW, Khubeka P, Mamabolo M and Shiba W

Title: Assessing the Relationship Between Non-Tariff Barriers and South Africa's ability to Access and Compete in Export Markets

Author: Mlotshwa S	
16:10 – 17:40	AEASA Annual General Meeting (AGM)- 2026
19:00 -→	Gala dinner

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MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION TO OUR GOLD SPONSORS

We gratefully acknowledge our **Gold Sponsors** for their valued contribution to the **63rd AEASA Conference**. Your support is an important contribution to the success of this gathering of academics, researchers, educators, students, industry representatives, and other stakeholders in agricultural education. We appreciate your commitment to fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the continued development of the agricultural economics community.

Thank you for partnering with AEASA and for your meaningful contribution to the success of the 63rd Conference.

01 October 2026 – Thursday	
07:30-08:00	**Registrations**
08:00-09:45	**Plenary Session 3: Financing Agriculture Amid Geopolitical and Global Economic Shifts** Venue: Queen of Sheba (Main Hall) **Facilitator:** Prof IB Oluwatayo **Speakers** **Presentation 1:** Financing Agribusinesses Amid Global Geopolitics and Trade Disruptions ***Dr Emile du Plessis*** *– Head: Behavioural Economics and Economic Insights, Standard Bank Group* **Presentation 2:** Financing Agribusinesses in a Volatile Global Environment: Modelling and Managing Risks ***Mr Paul Makube*** *– Senior Agricultural Economist, First National Bank (FNB)* **Presentation 3:** Development Finance for Agricultural Transformation in a Changing Geopolitical Environment: Balancing Inclusion and Enabling New Entrants ***Ms Shertina Maremane*** *–Limpopo Provincial Head, Land Bank*
	Moderated Discussion: All Speakers and Audience
09:45 – 10:00	**Tea Break**

10:00 – 11:20	**PARALLEL CONTRIBUTED PAPER SESSION BLOCK 3** (20 minutes each paper)

Theme: Innovation, Technology, Equity and Knowledge Systems

Venue: Limpopo Hall

Facilitator: Dr M Van Der Merwe

Title Paper: Awareness and Perception of Digital Payment Platforms Among Small-Scale Vegetable Farmers: Evidence from Vhembe and Mopani Districts, Limpopo Province
Authors: Nevhutalu T. Ledwaba L.J, and Baloi V.A

Title: Economywide effects of Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreaks and livestock health investments in South Africa: A computable general equilibrium analysis
Authors: Zondo B, Manganyi B, Lubinga M, Khulu N, Mokoena L, Sibiya P, Nyhodo B, Molepo S, Thindisa V and Bohlmann H

Title: Determinants of agricultural e-commerce adoption among fresh produce smallholder farmers in Gauteng Province, South Africa: An integrated technology acceptance model and diffusion of innovation perspective
Authors: Sithole DN, Gidi LS and Hlongwane JJ

Title: Smallholder Farmer Perceptions and Technology Adoption Determinants for Avocado Biomass Bioenergy in Limpopo Province, South Africa: A Systematic Literature Review
Authors: Mabatha S, Hlongwane JJ, Nkoana MA and Nengovhela R

Theme: Markets, Value Chains, Labour and Inclusive Rural Transformation

Venue: Board Room

Facilitator: Dr M Mamabolo

Title: Empowerment of Rural Women and Its Influence on Household Food Security in Oyo and Osun States, Nigeria
Authors: Oyeleye AA, Olaniyi OA and Ogunleye KY

Title: Measuring Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) restrictiveness in export markets for South African citrus
Authors: Kupelo N, Punt C and Jooste A

Title: Consumer Trust and Perceptions of Informal Food Markets: Evidence from Rural Households in South Africa
Authors: Mashegwana VL and Lefophane MH

Title: Why sustainable protein transitions stall: The role of consumer attitudes in constraining plant-based meat adoption in South Africa
Author: Tsvakirai C

Theme: Markets, Value Chains, Labour and Inclusive Rural Transformation

Venue: Zambezi Hall

Facilitator: Dr ND Malahlela - Kgasago

Title: Local Food-System Resilience through African Leafy Green Vegetables in South Africa: A Systematic Review of Consumer Practices, Value Chains and Policy Pathways
Authors: Bhebhe OB, Fisher H and Hay R

Title: Potential financing of land purchases for emerging farmers in South Africa
Authors: Chew E and Conradie B

Title: The gender gap in the National Red Meat Development Programme: Measuring the performance of smallholder beef cattle farmers in uMzimkhulu, South Africa
Authors: Gwamanda N, Ngqangweni S, and Chaminuka P

Title: Mapping the Transformation of the Eastern Cape Red Meat Value Chain: Historical Evolution, Contemporary Structure and the Position of Communal Cattle Farmers in South Africa.
Author: Keka V

Theme: Governance, Policy and Political Economy of Food Systems

Venue: Vaal Hall

Facilitator: Dr P Jiba

Title: Economic Impacts of a Potential Southern African Customs Union-India Preferential Trade Agreement: A Computable General Equilibrium Analysis.
Authors: Sibiya P, Simola A, Zondo B, Khulu N, Molepo S, Lubinga M and Bohlmann H

Title: South Africa's citrus export diversion away from the US and EU towards BRICS-plus, Amidst Geopolitics: Panel Corrected Standard Error analysis approach.
Authors: Kubeka P, Kau J, Chokoe C, Msezeni A, Manenzhe TD, Mahlangu S and Selomane

Title: A Meta-Analysis of MAP Act Section-7 Investigations Conducted by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC)
Authors: Manganyi B, Thindisa V Sotsha K, Molepo S and Zondo B

Title: Analysis of the South African potato industry's competitive advantage using the relational-behaviour embedded Porter's Diamond
Authors: Zwane S, Ferrer S and Van Der Merwe M

11:20 – 11:35	**Tea Break**
11:35 – 12:55	**PARALLEL CONTRIBUTED PAPER SESSION BLOCK 4** (20 minutes each paper)

Theme: Climate, Natural Resources and Resilient Agrarian Systems

Venue: Zambezi Hall

Facilitator: Mr MM Mphahlele

Title: The impact of Climate Smart Agricultural technology adoption on household's welfare of smallholder farmers in the Eastern Cape Province
Authors: Jembere T, Mushunje A and Chaminuka P

Title: Cropland Abandonment and Its Impact on Rural Livelihoods in South Africa
Authors: Fakudze B and Machethe C

Title: Determinants of climate change vulnerability among rural coastal farming households: implications for agricultural extension in Ngqushwa Municipality, South Africa
Authors: Jonga, S and Taruvinga A

Title: Geopolitics of sustainable land management: Investment and Policy Constraints to Agricultural Land and Water Resource Rehabilitation in the Western Cape, South Africa
Author: Jones VB

Theme: Markets, Value Chains, Labour and Inclusive Rural Transformation

Venue: Limpopo Hall

Facilitator: Dr JZ Manyike

Title: Essential skills and competencies of future agricultural economists: Insights from the developing world
Author: Van Der Merwe M

Title: Assessing Poultry Production Systems and Value Chain Linkages for Enhanced Market Access in Vhembe Biosphere Reserve, South Africa
Authors: Munyai-Matshotshi PG and Sehlola B

Title: Transformation of Entrepreneurial Drive: The Impact of Agricultural Training among Small-Scale Farmers in Gauteng Province, South Africa
Authors: Mabala SG, Senyolo GM and Mokoena MR

Title: Informal Food Markets and Urban Food Security in Africa: A Nuanced Review of Rural-Urban Linkages, Livelihoods and Inclusive Food Systems
Authors: Belemu V and Oluwatayo IB

Theme: Governance, Policy and Political Economy of Food Systems

Venue: Vaal Hall

Facilitator: Dr TK Thaba

Title: Why land redistribution has not delivered commercial agriculture: Evidence from institutional access in South Africa
Authors: Dube B, Sibanda M, Khumalo N and Belete A

Title: Global sustainability governance and the ESG patient capital gap: Financial subordination and smallholder exclusion in Southern Africa's horticultural export sector
Authors: Chinanga P and Chamba LT

Title: Smallholder farmers' decisions to cultivate hemp in South Africa: An agent-based modelling approach
Authors: Mailula LP, Zantsi S, and Mushunje A

Theme: Governance, Policy and Political Economy of Food Systems

Venue: Board Room

Facilitator: Prof J Chitja

Title: Evidence- Based Opportunities and Challenges in Food Systems Across SADC countries: A triangulation synthesis
Authors: Mdwebi P, Mamabolo M, Matli WM and Shiba W

Title: The Impact of Food Loss on Household Food Insecurity among Smallholder Vegetable Farmers in Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, South Africa
Authors: Thokolo MM and Oluwatayo IB

Title: Policy and Institutional Drivers of Climate-Smart Agriculture Transition in Sub Saharan Africa: A Scoping Review of Governance, Regulation, and Institutional Support with Implications for South Africa
Authors: Kolapo A, Sibanda M and Khumalo N

Title: Geopolitics, Regional Integration and Food Security: Do Trade Costs Still Bind under the AfCFTA?
Authors: Dube B, Msezeni A, Molepo S, Kau J, and Lungwana M

12:55 – 13:55	**LUNCH**

13:55 – 15:15	**PARALLEL CONTRIBUTED PAPER SESSION BLOCK 5** (20 minutes each paper)

Theme: Governance, Policy and Political Economy of Food Systems

Venue: Zambezi Hall

Facilitator: Prof A Mushunje

Title: Why Do Some PLAS Farms Succeed While Others Fail? An Empirical Assessment of South Africa's Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy
Authors: Mkhabela TS and Zantsi S

Title: Production incentives for commercial organic fertilizer markets in Africa amidst geopolitical tensions
Author: Makoae N

Title: Monetary governance and the political economy of agricultural price stability in South Africa
Authors: Dube B, Molepo S, Kau S, Lungwana M and Mnguni K

Theme: Markets, Value Chains, Labour and Inclusive Rural Transformation

Venue: Limpopo Hall

Facilitator: Dr S Molepo

Title: Assessing the impact of formalisation on employment: The case of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in South Africa
Authors: Mazwane S and Ngcinela S

Title: Exploring gender dynamics in the impact of micro, small and medium food enterprises in low-income South African communities
Authors: Makgamatha O and Fitawek W

Title: To secure, or not to secure: Foot and Mouth Disease and Biosecurity in South Africa's Commercial Beef Value Chain
Authors: Annandale DL, Jooste A and Rich KM

Theme: Climate, Natural Resources and Resilient Agrarian Systems

Venue: Vaal Haal

Facilitator: Mr T Morokong

Title: Determinants of smallholder farmers' participation in agricultural water management pathways: Evidence from Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces, South Africa
Authors: Serote B, Senyolo GM, Mudau LS and Mwendera EJ

Title: An assessment of participation in climate smart agricultural practices among urban women farmers in Mbarara City Western Uganda
Authors: Mersha KA, Osiru D, Wycliffe T, and Kalibwani R

Title: Causal Effects of Climate-Smart Agriculture Adoption on Smallholder Welfare in Zambia: Evidence from Endogenous Switching Regression, Double Machine Learning, and Bayesian Estimation
Authors: Chinembiri EK, Mutenje M and Malahlela ND

Theme: Markets, Value Chains, Labour and Inclusive Rural Transformation

Venue: Board Room

Facilitator: Mr B Zondo

Title: Global-Domestic Volatility Dynamics in South African Maize and Wheat Markets: Evidence from T-Dcc-Garch Models
Authors: Langenhoven C and Jooste A

Title: The Relationship Among Oil Prices, Agricultural Output, And Food Prices In South Africa (2000–2023): ARDL-ECM Approach
Authors: Filane Z, Hlongwane JJ, and Thaba TK

Title: Demand side shifts and strategic responses in South African wine value chains
Author: Van Der Merwe M

Title: Contrasting Avocado Export Market Dynamics of South Africa, Spain and Mexico from 1990-2024 using ARDL-ECM Approach
Authors: Chivenge W, Mushunje A, and Zuwarimwe J

15:15 – 15:30	**Tea Break**
15:30 – 16:00	**Vote of Thanks and Closure: President of AEASA-Prof JJ Hlongwane**

End of day 3

The Limpopo LOC would like to thank you All for trusting them in hosting the 63rd AEASA Conference.

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MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION TO OUR SILVER SPONSORS

We sincerely thank our **Silver Sponsors** for their generous support of the **63rd AEASA Conference**. Your contribution is greatly valued and has helped create an enabling environment for engagement, learning, networking, and the exchange of ideas among participants. Your support reflects the importance of collaboration in strengthening agricultural education and advancing the future of the agricultural sector.

We thank you for your partnership, generosity, and commitment to the AEASA community.

2026 AEASA SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHIES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Director General Honourable Mr. Mooketsa Ramasodi

National Department of Agriculture, Director-General



Mr. Mooketsa Ramasodi is currently employed by the National Department of Agriculture (DoA) as the Director-General (DG). He has been in Senior Management Service (SMS) within the DoA for the past 19-years. The DG has acquired extensive experience in agriculture and related developmental aspects, regulatory framework and regional-international economic integration. He is an agriculturalist by profession and has a master's degree in business leadership. He regularly participates in various international fora where the Republic is a signatory such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) agriculture technical committees; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); the African Union (AU) agriculture committee; the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) agriculture stream, and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). He provided strategic direction and guidance during the crafting the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP).

Simon Brand Memorial Address Speaker

Prof Scott D. Rozelle

Professor of International Agricultural Policy, Stanford University, United States



Prof Scott D. Rozelle is Helen F. Farnsworth Professor of International Agricultural Policy and a Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. He is also Co-Director of the Stanford Center on China's Economy and Institutions and Director of the Rural Education Action Program. Prof Rozelle obtained a Bachelor of Science from the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, and both a Master of Science and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from the Department of Agricultural Economics at Cornell University. Before joining Stanford University, he served as a Professor at the University of California, Davis, and as an Assistant Professor at Stanford's Food Research Institute. With more than 30 years of research experience, Prof Rozelle is internationally recognised as one of the world's leading agricultural and development economists. His research focuses on China's agricultural and economic development, with particular emphasis on agricultural policy, rural development, food systems, agricultural markets, poverty reduction, and institutional transformation. He has co-authored more than 300 publications, including articles in leading international journals such as *Science*, *Nature*, the *American Economic Review*, and the *Journal of Economic Literature*. He is also the author of the acclaimed book *Invisible China: How the Urban–Rural Divide Threatens China's Rise*. Fluent in Chinese, Prof Rozelle has established long-standing collaborations with Chinese scholars, policymakers, and research institutions. He has received numerous international honours, including China's Friendship Award (2008), the highest national honour conferred by the Chinese Government on foreign experts, and the National Science and Technology Collaboration Award (2009) for his outstanding achievements in international scientific collaboration.

Plenary Sessions Speakers

Ms Trudi Hartzenberg

Executive Director, Trade Law Centre (tralac)



Ms. Trudi Hartzenberg is the Executive Director of the Trade Law Centre (tralac). She currently serves on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Chairs Advisory Committee and is a member of the Committee for Development Policy of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is Chair of the East and Southern Africa World Customs Organisation (WCO) Regional Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG). Her research areas include international trade, competition policy, industrial development and Africa's trade and integration agenda. She has a special interest in capacity building. She designs and delivers academic and tailored short courses on a broad range of trade-related topics. She supports women's economic empowerment, focusing on women traders in regional business associations, and she also heads Governs Trade – a development program for young women trade policymakers.

Mr. Wandile Sihlobo

Presidential Envoy on Agriculture and Land



Mr. Wandile Sihlobo is South Africa's Presidential Envoy on Agriculture and Land. He is also Chief Economist of the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz) and the author of three books: *The Uncomfortable Truth About South Africa's Agriculture* (2025), *A Country of Two Agricultures: The Disparities, the Challenges, the Solutions* (2023), and *Finding Common Ground: Land, Equity, and Agriculture* (2020). Sihlobo was appointed as a member of President Cyril Ramaphosa's Presidential Economic Advisory Council in 2019 (and re-appointed in 2024), having served on the Presidential Expert Advisory Panel on Land Reform and Agriculture from 2018. He is also a member of the Council of Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) and a Commissioner at the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa (ITAC). He is the Chairman of the Agribusiness Working Group of the BRICS Business Council (South Africa). Sihlobo holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Fort Hare and a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from Stellenbosch University. He is a Senior Lecturer Extraordinary at the Department of Agricultural Economics at Stellenbosch University.

Dr Lucius Phaleng

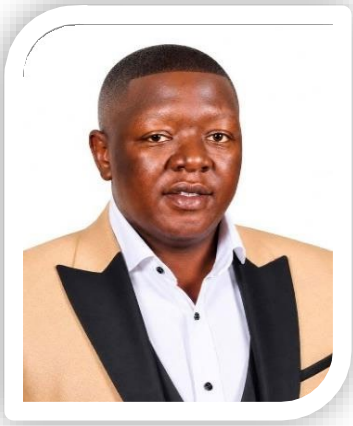
Trade Advisor, Animal Feed Manufacturers Association



Dr. Lucius T. Phaleng is an Agricultural Economist and Trade Advisory Specialist with over 10 years of experience in agricultural economics, trade policy, market analysis, agribusiness development and strategic stakeholder engagement. He holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics from the University of Limpopo and an MSc in Agricultural Economics (cum laude) from North-West University. Dr Phaleng currently serves as Trade Advisor at the Animal Feed Manufacturers Association (AFMA), where he provides strategic economic and trade advice to the animal feed industry. Previously, he served as an Agricultural Economist at the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), contributing to agricultural policy, trade research, market intelligence and economic analysis. He has presented at several platforms, including previous AEASA conferences, and brings extensive expertise in agricultural markets, trade, value-chain competitiveness, and agribusiness development.

Dr Ephias Mugari

Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for Global Change, University of Limpopo



Dr. Ephias Mugari is an NRF-rated climate change adaptation researcher at the Centre for Global Change, University of Limpopo (South Africa), where he leads the integration of social science perspectives into research projects to enhance societal impact. He holds a PhD in Climate Change Adaptation from the University of Botswana and an MSc in Agricultural and Applied Economics from the University of Zimbabwe. With over a decade of research experience across Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa, Dr Mugari has contributed to major regional and international initiatives, including the Adaptation at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions (ASSAR) Project, the South Africa/Flanders Climate Adaptation Research and Training Partnership (SAF-ADAPT), and the GEF-7 Sustainable Land Management Project. His expertise spans participatory research co-design, sustainable land management, climate-smart agriculture and agroecological transitions, climate information services, early flood warning systems, disaster preparedness, and disaster risk reduction. He is a Fellow of the Association of Commonwealth Universities' Commonwealth Futures Climate Research Cohort and the CATER School on Transdisciplinary Climate Change Adaptation Research, while also serving on the Limpopo Provincial Disaster Management Advisory Forum and the National Disaster Management Centre's Technical Task Team on the development of the National Disaster Research Agenda. Dr Mugari has presented at COP28, the inaugural Africa Climate Summit, and numerous international conferences. His work contributes to advancing climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and evidence-based adaptation policy across Africa.

Mr Suwilanji Sinyangwe

Programs Manager, FANRPAN



Mr. Suwilanji Sinyangwe is Programs Manager at the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), the continental policy research and dialogue network headquartered in Pretoria, South Africa. He coordinates multi-country programme implementation across East and Southern Africa, working at the intersection of agricultural policy, climate resilience, and natural resources governance. His work centres on translating evidence into policy, supporting regional partnerships, value-chain development, and institutional coordination among governments, regional economic communities, research institutions, and development partners. He engages closely with continental frameworks, including the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and Africa's Agenda 2063.

Ms Werna Oberholzer

Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer, Tiger Brands



Ms. Werna Oberholzer is the Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer at Tiger Brands, South Africa's largest food manufacturer. She leads the Group's Corporate Affairs and Sustainability function, with responsibility for Transformation, Socio-Economic Development, Stakeholder and Public Policy Engagement, Corporate Communications, Sustainability, and External Reporting. She also co-leads Tiger Brands' Sustainable Agricultural Sourcing Working Group, helping to strengthen the company's approach to building resilient, inclusive and sustainable agricultural value chains. Werna joined Tiger Brands in 2021 as Corporate Communications Director and was appointed to lead the Corporate Affairs and Sustainability function in 2024. Prior to joining Tiger Brands, she held senior leadership roles in Corporate Affairs and Human Resources at The South African Breweries and Anheuser-Busch InBev. With more than two decades of experience spanning corporate affairs, stakeholder engagement, reputation management, sustainability, organisational transformation and change leadership, Werna has played a key role in advancing Tiger Brands' purpose-led agenda. Her work has included strengthening stakeholder partnerships, integrating transformation and social impact programmes with business priorities, and co-developing Tiger Brands' sustainable agricultural sourcing framework. She is passionate about creating shared value through responsible business practices and

transformative partnerships that contribute to food security, economic inclusion and sustainable development.

Dr Emile du Plessis

Head: Behavioural Economics and Economic Insights, Standard Bank Group



Dr. Emile du Plessis is a Senior Economist at Standard Bank with over 15 years' experience in the financial services industry. He is a regular speaker at executive meetings, industry forums, and on radio and television programmes. He is a board member at the Bureau of Market Research. Emile won the 2019 and 2022 Refinitiv StarMine Awards for Most Accurate Forecasting of a Foreign Exchange Rate. He established and led an applied Behavioural Economics capability across 15 countries on the African continent. Emile holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Hamburg in Germany and won a Science Award from the Deutsche Bundesbank for his research. He is currently completing an MBA in Executive Management with a focus on artificial intelligence at the Graduate School of Business of the University of Cape Town.

Mr Paul Makube

Senior Agricultural Economist, First National Bank (FNB)



Mr. Paul Makube is a Senior Agricultural Economist at FNB South Africa, where he leads the Agriculture Market Research team. With extensive experience across academic and research institutions, he is a respected commentator on South Africa's agricultural sector, providing insights on commodity markets, industry trends, and the broader economy. Makube holds a Bachelor of Agriculture from the University of Bophuthatswana (now North-West University) and a B. Inst. Agrariae Honours in Agricultural Economics from the University of Pretoria. He also holds a BSc Honours in Agricultural Economics from the University of the Free State and a Master of Philosophy in Development Finance from Stellenbosch University. He has a keen interest in domestic and global economic and political developments and their impact on agriculture.

Ms Shertina Maremane

Limpopo Provincial Head, Land Bank



Ms. Shertina Maremane is a seasoned banking professional whose career began in 1996. Over the years, she has worked for three major banks in South Africa and currently serves as Provincial Head for Limpopo at Land Bank. Her leadership experience extends beyond banking. She has served as Chairperson of the Audit Committee of Capricorn TVET College and participated in the Crans Montana Forum in Europe as a New Leader, gaining exposure to international leadership and development conversations. She is passionate about leadership, women's empowerment, financial development, and community upliftment.

Notes:

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