

## **Western Cape's top agricultural employee for 2017 announced**

The 2017 winner of the Western Cape Prestige Agri Awards, Hermanus Bienen, wants to improve the lives of residents working in the agriculture sector.

Bienen, an Assistant Manager at the Kys Nursery in Vredendal, was announced as the winner of the competition at a ceremony at the Nederburg Wine Estate in Paarl on Saturday, 4 November 2017.

Bienen said his win had motivated him to uplift others in his community. "This win motivates me to contribute to finding solutions to the difficult economic circumstances (facing employees in the sector), which can make us feel hopeless at times."

"I am particularly encouraged that Hermanus is seeking to use this achievement to improve the lives of his fellow employees in agriculture. This is a priority for the Western Cape Government. Past winners share our commitment to ensure this sector allows residents to reach their goals. With this initiative, we want to connect agri professionals to a support network so that they can fulfil their potential," commented Alan Winde, Minister of Economic Opportunities.

The competition is co-sponsored by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and Shoprite.

"Communities are at the core of Shoprite's business - they are our customers, our employees and of course our suppliers. Agri workers in particular make such an important contribution to the country's economy, and they're the reason we have fresh, quality products for sale in our supermarkets," commented Dr Johan van Deventer, General Manager at Freshmark (Shoprite's fruit and vegetable procurement and distribution arm).

Since 2002, 9369 agricultural employees have entered the competition.