

Media Release: Isaac Ntoto of Mossel Bay wins the 2018 Prestige Agri Award

4 November 2018

This year's winner of the Prestige Agri Award is Isaac Ntoto, from Garden of Eden Berries in Brandwag, Mossel Bay.

The announcement was made at a gala event held at the Nederburg Wine Estate on Saturday, 3 November 2018.

Ntoto oversees all the technical aspects of the farm, ranging from soil sampling to fertilisation and integrated pest management. In addition, he plays a role in new employee recruitment and induction.

After the announcement, Ntoto said: "I'm very grateful and happy about this award. I feel very privileged to live in this day and age and be part of a good story in SA. There's still hope in SA and for agriculture. People in agriculture work hard to make our country great. To my fellow agri-workers: The work that you do is important. Thank you for putting your energy into producing food for people's tables every day."

Owner of the farm, Gavin Lensley-Noakes said Ntoto won because he possessed "the three P's. Passion, purpose and personality. Isaac loves working with berries, so the passion is there. He has a purpose- he knows where he wants to go, and he has drive. And personality because when you're farming with berries, you're farming with people and Isaac has a marvellous way with people. He is always smiling and encouraging his team, but he's firm at the same time."

As overall winner, he has won prizes in excess of R100 000 and a place on the Prestige Agri Worker Forum which meets with the Minister each quarter to discuss agri worker as well as sector related issues.

The competition, which has been sponsored by Shoprite since 2012, seeks to recognise the hard work and dedication of the province's agricultural workforce.

New minister of Economic Opportunities, Beverley Schafer said: "Congratulations to Isaac Ntoto on his well-deserved win. I look forward to engaging with him and hearing his thoughts on issues which affect agri workers, in our quarterly engagements."

"I am also very pleased that we saw an increased number of entries from young people in the competition this year. Developing opportunities for the youth is one of my priorities as Minister of Economic Opportunities, and agriculture, as one of the cornerstones of our economy, is key in helping us drive this."

Outgoing Minister, Alan Winde said: "Over the years, this competition has shown us the calibre of the workforce we have in this sector. This year has been a particularly difficult one in agriculture, with the drought, avian influenza and the listeriosis outbreaks. But despite the

uncertainty, the men and women who work in this sector still played their part in ensuring that seeds were sown, animals were fed, and crops were harvested.”

We would also like to thank Shoprite, who have been our partner in this competition since 2012. They play such an important role in the agricultural value chain in South Africa and it just makes sense that they’re the ones partnering with us to honour the people who work in it.”

A total of 1318 agricultural employees entered the competition this year from 16 regions across the province. Regional winners were chosen in Piket Bo Berg, Durbanville, Stellenbosch, Central Karoo, Berg River, Franschhoek, Breede River, Swartland, Overberg, Langeberg, the Garden Route, Olifantsrivier, Hex Valley, the Elgin, Grabouw, Vyeboom and Villiersdorp region and Witzenberg