

# Spotlight on Agriculture

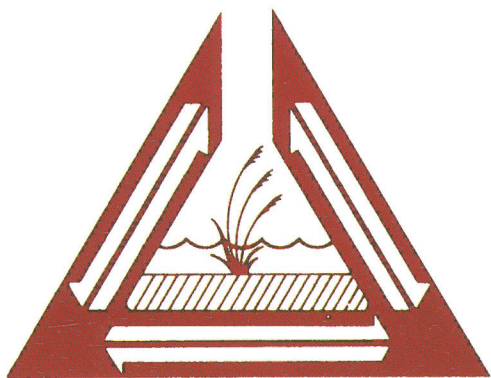
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Directorate of Agricultural Research and Training, Private Bag 13184, Windhoek

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## INTRODUCING THE AGRICULTURAL SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY OF NAMIBIA

### Mission and objectives

The Agricultural Scientific Society of Namibia (AGRISSON) is a non-profit society that strives to promote the application of agricultural scientific principles within Namibia by means of active interaction between individuals and institutions associated with the agricultural sector.



AGRISSON's main activity is to present a formerly annual and now biennial congress, to which top national and international speakers from various universities and institutions are invited. In addition, seminars, lectures, presentations and excursions are organised from time to time. Members receive regular newsletters and circulars with news and information pertaining to AGRISNON and to agricultural science in Namibia.

### Congresses

Principally, the congresses offer a platform to local agricultural scientists to share their research with the broader agricultural community in Namibia. The first such congress was held in 1988.

### Excursions

Among several interesting excursions that have been organised over the past few years were the following:

- A visit to an asparagus farm outside Swakopmund, on the banks of the Swakop River
- A tour of the new buildings at Neudamm Agricultural College, led by the Dean of the University of Namibia's Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- A presentation by the Von Krosigk family, owners of Desert Green Horticulture CC, on how vegetables – particularly lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers – are cultivated under an environmentally controlled hydroponic system
- A visit to Namibia Dairies (Pty) Ltd's operations at the Gocheganas Farm outside Windhoek, and
- A presentation and guided tour by Albert Calitz of the Dagbreek Crop Modelling Research Facility, where various crops are grown under optimal conditions to calibrate their genetic coefficients as used in crop growth and yield models.



Crop coefficients of cowpeas are measured at the Dagbreek Crop Modelling Research Facility

### Seminars

In November 2003, three presentations were made at a seminar held on genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Dr André de Kathen discussed "Modern biotechnology in medicine, agriculture and chemistry", Mr Anton Faul's presentation was entitled "GMOs and the bottom line: Cost-benefit analysis of introducing GMOs in Namibian agriculture", and Ms Immolatrix Geingos spoke on "Administrative and control mechanisms: National and international". The presentations were followed by a lively panel discussion.

During 2003 and 2004, Dr Louis du Pisani presented a series of lectures on most Fridays on the theme "Farming waterwise". The lectures dealt with agrometeorology, with special reference to Namibian conditions. In August 2005, Dr Nicolas Ganzin spoke on the contribution made by wide-field satellite data to assist rangeland resources management in the arid and semi-arid environments of Kenya and Namibia.

## Awards

AGRISSON awards trophies as an incentive to the most promising agricultural students starting their final year at the four tertiary agricultural institutions in Namibia. The selection criteria include academic achievements as well as attitude, enthusiasm and conscientiousness. The 2004 awards went to:

- Mr Uuyuni Thomas, a third-year B Sc Agriculture student at the University of Namibia
- Mr James Uerikua, a second-year National Diploma in Agriculture student at the Neudamm Agricultural College
- Mr Reinhold Kambuli, a second-year National Diploma in Agriculture student at the Polytechnic of Namibia, and
- Mr Atsino Johannes, a second-year National Diploma in Agriculture student at the Ogongo Agricultural College.



Mr Uuyuni Thomas, a third-year B Sc Agriculture student at the University of Namibia, receives his award for exemplary performance.

## Services to members

A list of agriculture-related dissertations available at Namibian libraries, published either on Namibian agricultural data or by Namibians, has been compiled, as has a list of all papers presented at previous AGRISSEON congresses. Both lists are available on AGRISSEON's website and from the Executive Committee.

Most of the presentations of the first (1988) and second (1989) congresses were published in *Agricola*, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry's official agricultural research journal, or its newsletter, *Agri-Info*. The proceedings of the third congress (1990) were published in a separate volume. For the fourth (1991) and fifth (1993) congresses no proceedings are available, but most of the presenters can be contacted via the Executive Committee. For the sixth (1995), seventh (1997), eighth (1999), ninth (2001) and tenth (2003) congresses, the published proceedings can be obtained from the Executive Committee.

## Membership

Ordinary membership is open to Namibian residents with a tertiary qualification in agriculture or related fields. If only limited numbers can be accommodated on an excursion, ordinary members will receive priority.

Associate membership is open to anyone interested in the agricultural sciences. Associate members do not have voting rights at Biennial General Meetings and cannot serve on the Executive Committee.

Membership fees are N\$50 a year. Being a member brings with it the following benefits, amongst others:

- Contact with peers in the Namibian agricultural sector
- Receiving an annually updated address list of members
- Receiving all AGRISSEON newsletters, circulars and publications
- Preferential treatment at conferences, symposia and on excursions, and
- The right to participate in discussions and to submit your suggestions at Annual General Meetings.



Sesame under investigation at Dagbreek

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee constitutes a Chairperson (currently Mr Wilfried Nauhaus), Vice Chairperson (Mr Axel Rothauge), Treasurer (Ms Celeste Espach), Editor (Mr Ibo Zimmermann), and Secretary (Ms Marina Coetzee).

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