

# Western Cape agriculture honours female entrepreneurs

On the eve of Women's Day 2019, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture held its annual Female Entrepreneur Awards Ceremony in Stellenbosch, honouring the many hard-working women in the sector and the role these female entrepreneurs play in food security and growing the economy.



Image via [AgriOrbit](#)

## Rewarding the contribution and efforts of women

The competition is a joint effort between the national Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and the provincial Department of Agriculture. It seeks to reward the efforts and contribution of women in job creation, economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Provincial winners are entered into the national competition to be held on 29 August 2019 in Cape Town where provincial category winners will be competing for the coveted national awards.

Minister of agriculture, Ivan Meyer, said: "The Female Entrepreneur Awards creates an enabling environment for women to progress from subsistence and smallholder producers to commercial entrepreneurs. Tonight we recognise their contributions to the sector, celebrate their tenacity and achievements and honour the role that women play, not only in the agricultural sector, but also in the broader society."

## The provincial winners

### Best female worker: Ntombesisa Mpendukana

Ntombesisa Mpendukana of Philadelphia Chicks displays a remarkable understanding and knowledge of fertile egg

production. Feed, water levels and biosecurity are key facets of her responsibility. This includes ensuring that all aspects of egg production are strictly adhered to and that customers are provided with quality eggs on a daily basis.

### **Top entrepreneur – subsistence producer: Zoleka Gomo**

Zoleka Gomo runs the Women for Peace food security and organic vegetable production project in Mfuleni. The project contributes to community development through skills training for women, unemployed youth and school going children between 6 to 18 years old. The soup kitchen and food garden programme has also led to a decrease in the high rate of crime in the area.

### **Top entrepreneur – smallholder: Annique Smith**

Annique Smith of A&BP Honey Bee (Pty) Ltd began her honey and pollination business with only five hives. She quickly grew her bee pollination business to 188 hives. She rents hives to farmers to pollinate their apples and pears and currently produces roughly one ton honey per year. The honey is sold to local markets.

### **Top entrepreneur – processing: Daphne Neethling of PaardenKloof Estate**

PaardenKloof creates exceptional wines, with its held-back vintages scheduled for release after a period of maturation. The red wines are released after a five-year maturation period and the white wines after 18 months in the bottle. Varietals include Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc. All the wines are registered with SAWIS as single vineyard wines.

### **Top entrepreneur – commercial: Marilyn Siegels**

Marilyn Siegels of Nitaflo Pty Ltd, Protea PLAS Farm fruit production. The project consists of 24,68ha of bearing orchards – 12,24ha of plums and 12,44ha of apples. In October 2018 the farm successfully established 14,6ha of apples. Nitaflo holds a gold Global GAP accreditation as well as a platinum SIZA certificate for excellent agricultural business practices.

### **Top entrepreneur – export markets: Berene Damons, Tesselaarsdal Wines Pty Ltd**

Former au pair and administrator of wine exports, labelling and warehousing of estate wines, Berene owns her own wine business and is an award-winning wine producer in the Hemel-en-Aarde area.

### **Ministerial award – youth entrepreneur: Marice Mercuur**

Marice Mercuur focuses on natural handmade rooibos health and skincare products. She supplies to a handful of curio shops and guesthouses in the small West Coast village of Clanwilliam.