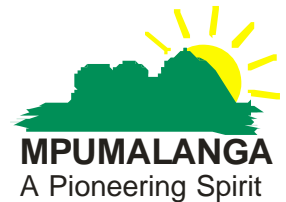




dardla

Department:
Agriculture, Rural Development
and Land Administration
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE



A DARDLA SPONSORED INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM A HUGE SUCCESS

The 4th International Symposium on Litchi, Longan and Other Sapindaceae Fruits, held from 3-6 December 2012 at the Winkler Hotel in White River, turned out to be a huge success. The provincial Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration (DARDLA) sponsored the symposium which was organized by the South African Litchi Growers' Association (SALGA) and the Agricultural Research Council - Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Crops (ARC-ITSC), under the auspices of the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS).

The international symposium saw delegates from as far as Brazil, India, Mexico, Egypt, Spain, New Zealand, Australia, and other Asian countries like Japan. Delegates were role players in the Litchi industry in their respective countries, sharing ideas with their South African counterparts on the most recent innovations within the industry, regardless of whether they were of an economic or scientific nature. Topics of presentations were directly or indirectly related to litchi production in Mpumalanga. The topics also included the social and environmental aspects that could influence litchi production, marketing and utilization of litchi in Mpumalanga and/or South Africa. With the conference, SALGA also aimed at elevating the outputs of the litchi industry in SA, including the upliftment of emerging farmers in this sub-sector. Ten emerging farmers from previously disadvantaged group across the province were part of the four-day symposium.

The conference started on a high note, with DARDLA MEC, Mrs. KC Mashego-Dlamini delivering the keynote address and officially opening it. "In this province, we have 41 943 hectares of Mango, Macadamia, Litchi and Avocado plantations. Included in this area is commercial orchards that have been handed over to land claimants and communities estimated at over 4-thousand hectares, and the agricultural land that belongs to small farmers that is located in areas previously defined as homelands, estimated at about 4 303 hectares", said the MEC during her opening address. She went on to say that an estimated 20.62% of the South African Subtropical industry (avocado, mango, litchi and macadamia nut) is currently owned and controlled by previously disadvantaged communities. "The production on these farms forms part of the South African Subtropical industry and of all of its different channels of involvement, including fruit delivered for export, local market sales and processing", added Mashego-Dlamini, to the applause of the delegates.

During the four days of the symposium, delegates visited key litchi orchards and packaging plants in and around Nelspruit. They were also visited the world renowned Kruger National Park. "The litchi producing industry in South Africa, Mpumalanga in particular, is still facing challenges and they really need to be tackled head-on. I am happy though to learn of the support that the industry is getting from the provincial Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration. That on its own is a step further towards the right direction", said Krini Mruganan, a delegate from India. The symposium followed the 3rd such International Symposium that was held in Fuzhou, China, in 2008. Visit lychee2012.co.za for more information on the Symposium.