

WinField United SA and Stellenbosch University team up to improve crop yields

WinField United South Africa (Wusa) has renewed its collaboration with the Chair in Plant Health at the Department of Agronomy at Stellenbosch University (SU). Wusa has contributed R10.5m to the renewal to enable research targeted on the unique demands of the South African crop-growing business.



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Since 2020, the partnership has focused on identifying and prioritising specific farm-level needs and addressing them through targeted scientific research undertaken by postgraduate students and academic supervisors.

Prof Eugene Cloete, SU's former vice-rector: research, innovation and postgraduate studies, emphasises the importance of such private sector initiatives to ensure that the university conducts relevant research, creates an environment of excellence for students and helps to strengthen the industry.

Funding from the collaboration provided relevant postgraduate bursaries to some 42 future agronomists, ranging from BSc, MSc, and PhDs. Some 96 students were also financially supported to complete accredited industry short courses.

Improving crop health and protection

These short courses are hosted by Stellenbosch University through the Chair in Plant Health and aim to educate, upskill, and share information with growers, provide new agronomists to strengthen and support the crop protection industry and enhance professional growth and development of future industry leaders.

CEO of WinField United SA, Jan Vermaak, notes: "The research undertaken within the realms of the students and academic supervisors at Stellenbosch is vital to improving crop health and sustainability. This partnership supports WUSA's undertaking to lead in agriculture excellence through data-driven expertise."

According to Professor Nick Kotzé, who heads up Stellenbosch University's Department of Agronomy: "Our combined efforts with WinField United SA are aligned to find more efficient and environmentally friendly options in the crop health and crop protection arenas, which will ultimately influence profitable farming and food security in South Africa."

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