

SABO NEWSLETTER



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DEAR MEMBERS

And just like that we are into spring. Growers are starting to prepare for the summer plantings. It is hoped that the 2024/25 season will be a recovery season for the summer grains and oilseed industries as reports indicate a production decrease upwards of 20%. The mid-summer drought had less impact on

horticulture and other irrigated sectors. The ABSA Agritrends report for spring 2024, highlights that between June and August, the top performing fruit markets were banana, apples, oranges, naartjies and avocados and the top performing vegetable markets were potatoes, onions, tomatoes, peppers and carrots. Export markets to neighboring countries for vegetables such as potatoes, tomatoes and onion have decreased over the past few years, as a result of import bans, and these are affecting exports to these markets. The report notes, that although high-value export industries have faced challenges over recent years (climatic, logistical and input costs), there remain opportunities in markets such as the EU, China, Japan and India. The South

African fruit and nut sector rely heavily on Europe as a market, and increased attention has been given to diversification of markets to try to reduce this heavy reliance.

As SABO, we continue to work closely with the regulatory team at Croplife, to support the development and implementation of workable, pragmatic and science-based regulations and guidelines that can support product developers in bringing products to market to further enhance the toolbox of solutions available to growers.

Please reach out to us if you would like to be part of any of the SABO working groups for 2024/25.

Warm Regards, *Alison*

AGM UPDATE | FEE UPDATE

The SABO 2024 AGM took place on 19 June 2024 and we had a total of 46 participants join. The meeting was later in the year than we prefer, but the SABO 2023/24 board had been working on a revised fee structure to share at the AGM. SABO has not increased membership fees for many years, and in order to meet the objectives the board has set out to achieve and to better streamline the fees payable, a revision was needed. This was supported at the AGM, and invoices will be sent out for payment. It will be important for all members to please note that the invoices, although only set in the final quarter of the CY are payable for the FY which runs from 1 March 2024 – 28 February 2025. We do anticipate sending the next invoices early in Q3 2025. **If you have any questions on this, please do reach out to us.**

Type of Membership	Fee Per Annum (Payable on Invoice)
University / Recognized Learning Institution	R 2 500,00
Individual Membership - Student / Academic / Individual Consultant (< 2 employees)	R 2 000,00
Consulting / Other company (> 2 employees)	R 3 500,00
Manufacturer / Distributor with Turnover < R 5 million	R 6 100,00
Manufacturer / Distributor with Turnover R 5 million - R 35 million	R 12 200,00
Manufacturer / Distributor with Turnover > R 35 million	R 24 400,00

SABO'S NEW BOARD



The AGM also presented the opportunity for a **new recruit of representatives from member companies** to volunteer or be nominated for a respected position on the SABO board. It gives me great pleasure to announce the **2024/25 SABO Board**, in alphabetical order.



**Andre
Labuschagne**



**Chris
Coetzee**



**Debbie
Matteucci**



**Deidre
Odendaal**



**Hanna-Let
van Tonder**



**Kobus
Pienaar**



**Lené
van der Walt**



**Lise
Korsten**



**Michelle
Lesur**



**Sean
Thackeray**

The board voted in a new chair for 2024/25 and we welcome Debbie Matteucci to the role as Chairperson of the SABO Board. Debbie takes over from Sean, who has chaired the Board for the past year plus and remains a committed and dedicated board member.

Thank you, Sean, for your support, leadership and oversight as the SABO Chair. We appreciate all the time that you have put into SABO. We further take this opportunity to thank our outgoing board for the time, effort and energy over the past year. It has been great to have so many wonderful people working towards a common goal.

With our newsletters, we hope that we will be able to give you the opportunity to get to know your board and little better, and in each issue we hope to have a deep dive into what drives each of them.



MEET THE BOARD

DEBBIE MATTEUCCI (CHAIR)

Debbie is currently working as an **independent regulatory and product development specialist supporting local and international clients with local registrations.**



With over **10 years in the South African Agricultural Remedies industry**, Debbie also **participates in, or leads, a number of working groups** for CropLife and SABO to refine local regulatory requirements.

Debbie majored in Microbiology and Genetics from the University of Witwatersrand and pursued a Master's degree in Plant Pathology, investigating diagnostic tools for seed-borne pathogens of tomato. Following the completion of her degree, Debbie entered the Agricultural Industry in the United Kingdom for the National Institute of Agricultural Botany where she was trained as a Trial officer in the field and glasshouses. Her first encounter with biological control was in this role, where pest control in large-scale glasshouses was maintained through Integrated Pest Management, centered around biological control. Here she developed the understanding of the necessity of balance between synthetic and natural pest control to create a circular system for sustainable pest control within a controlled environment. Debbie returned to South Africa where her focus was limited to synthetic pest control for many years due to the infancy of the biological control market in South Africa. This experience gave her excellent insight into the challenges and needs of growers in various commercial crops and an in-depth understanding of how pesticides are used to support these.

With the market shift towards biological control products, Debbie's development portfolio grew to include biologicals. With her study based in Microbiology and her training in synthetic pesticides, this portfolio held much fascination for Debbie and represented an opportunity to bring what she witnessed in the UK to the field. With two young children, it is also important to her to develop products that will assist growers in reducing their impact on the environment and improving safety for consumption whilst still achieving economically viable yield. Debbie firmly believes in integrated pest management of which biological control is an integral part.

As chairperson of SABO board, Debbie aims to position SABO as an independent platform to connect growers, suppliers, distributors, retailers, regulators and research organisations by addressing and supporting their challenges, needs and training requirements. She hopes to grow awareness in the industry about the large benefits that can be achieved through integrating biological control products into existing pest control programs. In the midst of the boom of biocontrol globally, Debbie believes that SABO has a critical role to play in leading the industry through this shift to ensure the maintenance of food security whilst improving sustainability, environmental impact and consumer health.

A WORD OF THANKS FROM SEAN



I would like to congratulate Debbie on her appointment as the Chairperson of the SABO Board, and to wish you every success in this new role. I have gained so much from working with the diverse team within the SABO Board, and am saddened that I have had to take the difficult decision to stand down, but having seen Debbie in action over the short period of time since her election, I have no doubt that I have handed the SABO baton to someone who can really move SABO to the next level. We are in a very exciting time as an industry, and I look forward to being part of the SABO board for 2024/25 to help support our members wherever I can.

Warm Regards, *Sean*

FEEDBACK FROM WORKING GROUPS

Regulatory Working Group

The RWG consist of 5 sub – working groups all chaired by volunteers in the industry:

- Semio-Chemicals - Hanna-Let van Tonder
- Microbials & Microbial Guideline- Sean Thackeray
- Microbials – Sean Thackeray
- Extracts and Other – Hannelie Marais
- Residues and Metabolites – Debbie Matteucci
- Plant Extracts & Other Committee Chaired by Gary Klugman

These working groups are comprised of both SABO and CLSA members.

The focus of these working groups are to address industry issues to enable better communication and relationships with the regulatory authorities and other industry organisations.

Good progress has been made on specifically the Microbial and Residue guidelines.

Technical Working Group

Our members expressed a need for training courses within the industry. SABO members are in the process of developing modules for webinars and short courses. The finalisation of the training material is a priority for the new board and communication on this will be disseminated as soon as possible.

Marketing Working Group

Lené van der Walt took over the reigns as chair of the Marketing Working Group from Donvae Hooker.

It was decided that this working group will form sub-groups which can help us focus on the following specific marketing activities:

- Website
- Social Media
- Events
- Newsletter
- Content Creation
- Support and Other

The vision is to use the expertise within our members to enhance and grow SABO marketing activities.

Specific projects requiring budget will be prioritised and shared with the Board for approval.

The next quarterly meeting has been replaced with an in-person brain-storming session. Regional members will meet at a venue and then connect remotely to other regions. We invite all members to join us on **Wednesday, 13th November** to add your input and suggestions.



MEET THE NEW MARKETING WORKING GROUP CHAIRPERSON | LENÉ VAN DER WALT



Lené has been working in the **agricultural sector for 17 years as a Nematologist**. She has a **keen interest in all microscopic, living organisms**. She's the Technical Director at Nemlab, overseeing all diagnostic and R&D operations.

With experience in web design, newsletter editing and social media management for the Nematological Society of Southern Africa (NSSA), she hopes to add value to the SABO Marketing Working Group. Her skills compliment our new drive towards building our membership base with a well-defined value proposition and increasing knowledge sharing about bioproducts to all stakeholders in the industry.

AGRICULTURAL INSIGHTS FROM SWITZERLAND

By Lindi Botha

“ The IFAJ congress theme - High Elevations, High Expectations, spoke to the fact that Swiss farmers must meet high standards from consumers who want food that is sustainably farmed. ”

My attendance to the IFAJ congress was made possible by assistance from the South African Bioproduct Organisation (SABO) – a fitting partnership considering the increasingly important role biological crop production is playing in ensuring farmers maintain market access locally and abroad.

The week at the congress brought home just how serious Swiss consumers are about sustainability. Consumers have far more say over farming methods in the EU. The Swiss government will in September decide whether it will accept a call to ban all pesticides and intensive livestock farming. Switzerland, like many other EU countries, has a federal popular initiative in place, which means citizens need only collect 100 000 signatures that supports a particular change to the Swiss Federal Constitution for it to be presented to parliament for a vote. While such a vote was already put forward in 2022 and failed, anti-farming activists have made another attempt.

This underscored the importance of communicating accurate and scientific information about agri-tools to the consumer. Even the Swiss agree that complete organic production will not feed the world, so it is important that farmers have continued access to a range of crop protection products. Integrated pest management (IPM) offers the sweet spot: synthetic chemicals for early-season pest control to get a larger knock-down effect, and biologicals to maintain protection, ensuring MRLs are adhered to.

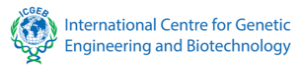
Regarding Swiss consumer preferences, research presented at the congress showed that 83% of consumers wanted food that was produced in a way that respected the natural environment. Around 82% wanted food that was produced on farms where biodiversity was respected. This provides much food for thought for farmers wanting to earn a share of Swiss consumer spending. By the country's own admission, they have the buying power to pay more for environmentally friendly food.

The Swiss consumer demands for a ban on pesticides has been echoed around the continent as the EU aims to reduce by 50% the use of chemical pesticides by 2030. In South Africa, the Registrar is tightening control over use of chemicals that are on the 'restricted' list. The good news is that the South African biological crop protection industry has not rested on its laurels. SABO has worked to improve the legislative environment to smooth and speed up the process for new product registration, which means farmers are seeing more crop protection solutions made available.

The challenge however remains in ensuring farmers have a thorough understanding of how to use these living organisms to achieve the best result. It is a vast departure from synthetic chemical protocols, but one that needs to be made to ensure the ongoing success of farming operations. The sooner we can familiarise ourselves with biologicals and start employing them in our IPM programmes, the better.

If you want to know more about what biologicals are currently approved for commercial use in South Africa, or how to best implement biological practices in your farming, contact SABO at <https://sabo.org.za/>





REGULATORY ASPECTS



RORY DE FLEURIOT



SCOMMEX



THERESA PRETORIUS





WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

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