

Faculty hosts swine environment day

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Some of the presenters and attendees during the swine environment day

Every year on 1 March, National Pig Day is celebrated in the USA. In South Africa there is no such holiday but recently the Faculty of Veterinary Science, in conjunction with the SA Pork Producers' Organisation (SAPPO), hosted a swine environment day. The aim of the day on 27 March was to make farmers aware of regulations relating to the pig farming environment and to inform them of SAPPO's role in supporting emerging and existing pig farmers.

The commercial pig industry in South Africa is relatively small with a few modern piggeries with modern facilities, high feeding costs and excellent genetic material. South Africa also has thousands of subsistence and developing farmers producing pork meat for families and communal use. These developing farmers often deal with rudimentary housing facilities and feed.

"Days such as these therefore present a unique opportunity for meeting the Faculty and UP's mission of training in a community-based setting", says Prof Henry Annandale, Associate Professor in the Department of Production Animals at the Faculty. "It also ensures relevance within our academic programmes", he says.

SAPPO's mission is to serve the interests of South Africa's pig farmers who are members of the organisation, by promoting the consumption of pork products among consumers, encouraging research and disseminating information among pig farmers, and by establishing links with all associations in the supply chain in South Africa as well as globally.

Ms Kgadi Senyatsi, Head of Business Development of the SA Pork Producers' Organisation (SAPPO), who acted as one of the programme directors (together with Mr Daniel Letsoalo, Business Development Manager) explained from the outset that one of SAPPO's roles is to offer advisory services to pig farmers. This is done to ensure that farmers become profitable and sustainable. It is also the responsibility of farmers to ensure that they comply with all farming regulations.

The event was opened by Dr Japhta M Mokoale, Senior Lecturer in Pig Herd Health based at the Onderstepoort campus. Dr Mokoale highlighted the significance of cooperation between pig farmers, SAPPO, government departments, and other stakeholders to contribute to, and partake in student education and training. He reiterated the importance of Public Private Partnership engagements to ensure assistance to our pig farmers to realise their dream of becoming profitable pig farmers.

Ms Helen Prinsloo from Bucandi Environmental Solutions comprehensively discussed the process and importance of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in pig farming operations and highlighted listed activities that will prompt EIA licences. Bucandi Environmental Solutions offers services to farmers on the process of EIA and ensures that they are compliant with relevant environmental legislation.

Mr Bob Sekgobela from the compliance and enforcement section of the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) elaborated on the importance of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA) which gives them powers to monitor, investigate and ensure compliance to environmental legislation.

Other presenters included Mr Justin Bezuidenhout and Mr Zander Liebenberg from Rock Environmental Consultancy, who discussed water use licences and how to apply for these as regulated by the National Water Act. The company has a 100 percent success rate concerning organisations they have assisted in the past.

Ms Joline van Zyl from Nova Feeds shared a presentation on the importance of good quality water in pig farming. She used the example of the body that consists of 70% water to ensure that all systems function well. In the same way quality water must be available in piggeries, because good quality water intake and optimal water supply assist with the overall production efficiency of farms.

The event was sponsored by the University of Pretoria, PIC, NOVA feeds-voere, Danbreed and SAPPO while Mlanduthule photography was responsible for capturing the event on film.

- Author CvB