

Experts in soil science and plant production at UP Combined Congress

By Martie Maree

Posted on 27 January 2011



From the left: Dr John Purchase (CEO of the Agricultural Business Chamber (ABC) of South Africa), Prof Cheryl de la Rey (Vice-Chancellor), Prof Jules Janick (James Troop Distinguished Professor in Horticulture, Purdue University, USA), Prof Brenda Wingfield (Deputy Dean in the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Agricultural Sciences), Prof Martin Fey (Professorial Fellow in mineral processing waste, University of Western Australia) and Prof Puffy Soundy (Chairperson: Local Organising Committee).

"Taking care of the FOODBALL through science" was the theme of the Combined Crops, Soils, Horticulture and Weeds Congress 2011. The Congress was held at the University of Pretoria (UP) from 17 to 20 January 2011.

The congress was officially opened by the UP Vice-Chancellor, Prof Cheryl de la Rey, followed by keynote addresses by four experts in the fields of soil science and plant production. Dr John Purchase delivered an address on "Science as the driver of the agro-food value chain" while Prof Martin Fey shared his insights on "The philosophy of soil science". The third keynote address on the opening day was by Prof Jules Janick who shared some light on "Fruit breeding: past, present, and future" with Prof Gerhard Verdoorn who concluded the keynote addresses with his viewpoints on "Addressing the challenges of misinformation and anti-pesticide lobbying in South Africa".

More than 300 delegates registered for the congress, of which more than 70 were students. Delegates came from all over the country, including from universities, research councils, industry, and from government departments.

After three days of interesting oral and poster presentations, the congress ended with a gala dinner where the four societies handed out various awards such as for best paper and best poster presentations.

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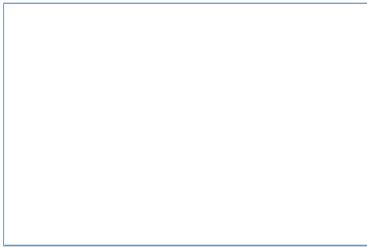
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