External speaker profiles

science & innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR

Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Panelist:

Dr. Danica O’Kelly

Field Scientist, Corteva Biological South Africa

PhD, Environmental Sciences

Dr O’Kelly is actively involved in product development for Corteva Biologicals and is instrumental in coordinating and implementing trials of new products for registration purposes.

She develops growing processes for microorganisms of interest and formulating them into market-ready products.

O’kelly has a strong background in soil microbial health, ecology and sustainable agriculture, with 14 years of work experience, applying an integrated scientific approach towards sustainable solutions.

science & innovation
Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR
Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Speaker:

Gerhard Breedt

Senior Crop Protection Researcher, DALRRD

BSc Plant Pathology, University of Pretoria

Gehard began his career with the Limpopo Department of Agriculture. Initially focusing on crop production, he developed a close partnership with the University of Pretoria to enhance wheat and maize production methods using plant growth-promoting rhizobacteria (PGPR).

Currently, Gerhard serves as a Senior Crop Protection Researcher, specializing in soil health and quarantine pests. His PhD research, which he has submitted for examination, culminated in the thesis: "Efficacy of Paenibacillus alvei and Lysinibacillus sphaericus as Plant Growth-Promoting Rhizobacteria in Commercial Wheat Production Areas of Limpopo Province, South Africa."

science & innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR

Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Speaker:

Dr. Lerato Nephali

Scientist, Omnia Nutriology, South Africa

PhD in Biochemistry, University of Johannesburg

Dr. Nephali applies metabolomics, a disruptive science involving 4IR technologies, to decode the bioactive molecules in biostimulants and to elucidate their modes of action when applied to plants.

Her current research focus, and interests include: metabolomics, computational metabolomics, metabolite annotation, biochemical and molecular mechanisms underlying biostimulant-plant interactions.

science & innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR

Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Speaker:

Venessa Moodley

Commercial Lead, Corteva Biologicals, South Africa
Msc, Biotechnology and International Business

Vanessa is passionate about biologicals solutions in agriculture, with experience in Research & Development from the CSIR, spanning over 19 years.

She is a published and registered Professional Natural Scientist in the Microbiological Sciences with Masters Degrees in both Biotechnology and International Business.

In March 2023, Venessa was appointed as the Commercial Lead for Corteva Biologicals in South Africa, responsible for developing and executing strategy for biological solutions, underpinned by science and value creation for farmers.

science & innovation
Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR
Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Speaker / Panelist:
Dr. Godfrey Kgatle

Programme Manger, Grain SA

PhD Plant Pathology, University of Pretoria

Dr Kgatle focuses on understanding the epidemiology of plant diseases and integrated management strategies using biologicals and fungicides. His current role involves managing and coordinating research projects to provide farmers with critical information for enhancing their on-farm practices, ensuring profitability and sustainability.

He identifies farmer needs through various platforms and connecting with industry and research networks. He addresses challenges such as rising input costs for fertilizers and chemicals.

science & innovation
Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR
Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Speaker:

Prof. Sunita Facknath

Prof. Sustainable Agriculture in the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Mauritius

Prof Facknath is very active as a researcher and consultant. Her research interests are mainly in the field of Sustainable Agriculture, Organic Farming, Climate Change, Integrated Pest and Vector Management, Sustainable Aquaculture, Sustainable Forestry, Soil Biology, Agrochemicals, and AgroBiodiversity.

She has researched and developed a large number of environmentally-friendly, and sustainable technologies for crop health, using natural and/or non-chemical approaches that can be used in biofarming and organic production.

science & innovation
Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR
Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Speaker:

Wilma MacPherson

Technical Portfolio Manager, Andermatt Madumbi

MSc (Agric), University of Pretoria

Ms MacPherson is focused on developing and introducing science-based biological solutions for agriculture. Her professional work experience spans over 29 years in various facets of developing biological solutions. She assists growers with incorporating biological products, providing technical knowledge to the sales team, and ensuring compliance with regulations.

Her MSc in Microbiology, which was focused on agriculture, led to a career dedicated to researching, developing, and promoting biological solutions for agriculture.

science & innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR

Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Speaker / Panelist:

Dr. Barthlomew Chataika

Programme Officer, Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa

PhD (Agriculture) Plant Breeding and Genetics

Dr. Chataika has over 15 years of work experience in the agricultural sector, contributing to agricultural research for development (AR4D).

Currently, he is works for CCARDESA, providing technical support in the planning and implementation of 43 R4D sub-projects in Angola and Lesotho, under the Agricultural Productivity Programme for Southern Africa (APPSA).

He supports the implementation of the multi-phase Food Systems Resilience Programme in Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, and in Southern Africa.

science & innovation
Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR
Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Panelist:

Prof. Lise Korsten

Co-Director of DSI, Centre of Excellence in Food Security

PhD, Plant Pathology, University Pretoria

Prof. Korsten is responsible for the food safety and regulatory control programmes within the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security and actively interacts with other researchers in various institutes.

She holds the position of chair in the Global Task Force of Food Security for the International Society for Plant Pathology.

Prof Korsten has addressed the South African Parliament on Food Safety Control and has developed a national framework for government to develop a Food Control Authority.

science & innovation
Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR
Touching lives through innovation

Agribiologics Workshop

Panelist:

Prof. Ahmed Hassan

Research Scientist in Applied Microbiology, ARC

PhD, Microbiology and Plant Pathology, University of Pretoria

Prof. Hassan conducts research in the areas of Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology for use in the sustainable and climate smart agriculture.

His focus areas include: plant-microbe interactions of the legume-rhizobium symbiosis, plant growth promoting rhizobacterial interactions in the rhizosphere of economically important crops, as well as biological control of soilborne diseases and development of insecticidal Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) against common insect pests of crops.

science & innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CSIR

Touching lives through innovation