



MEDIA RELEASE

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17th SA Cheese Festival a successful combination of visitors, exhibitors and products

The 17th South African Cheese Festival over the long weekend was a huge success with almost 30 000 people attending the popular celebration of cheese and this diverse dairy product's culinary companions. Boutique and commercial cheeseries from across the country annually bring more than 20 tonnes of cheese to the festival. According to Johan Ehlers, CEO of Agri-Expo, organisers of the festival, Agri-Expo and the exhibitors were both surprised by the strong buying power at this year's festival, especially with economic challenges facing the consumer.

The three food theatres at the festival were a big hit with visitors. No less than 40 demonstrations were presented by culinary specialists, including the celebrity chefs Jenny Morris, Kamini Pather, Pete Goffe-Wood, Carmen Niehaus and Katelyn Allegra. The demonstrations included cheese pairings with complementary products such as SA's top ten Chenin Blanc wines, craft beer, tea, chocolate, dried fruit and nuts.

Award-winning festival still innovates after 17 years

The first #YourWheyWithCheese Cook-off for amateur chefs, in partnership with Heart FM, was won by Liesl Armstrong from Durbanville, home loans consultant at Betterbond. Armstrong says she entered the challenge because "being a cancer survivor taught me to grab every opportunity with open arms". As a home cook she always wanted to attend a chef course, a dream came true thanks to the SA Cheese Festival. Armstrong's prizes include a Jenny Morris CooksPlayground course, a Leon the Milkman cheese making workshop and Taurus kitchen equipment.

Several new boutiques cheeseries, including Vredesberg, an empowerment project from Kareedouw, exhibited for the first time thanks to the support of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA) and Absa. Agri-Expo also joined forces with the WCDoA for the Cape Made: Taste the Alternatives project to enable smaller producers and entrepreneurs to showcase their alternative niche products such as pomegranates, honey, mushrooms and more – all the perfect

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cheese companions.

Another new addition was a dedicated #waterwise exhibition area. In response to Wesgro's call to keep the Western Cape economy growing during the current drought, the organisers decided to continue with the 2018 SA Cheese Festival as a contribution to water saving campaigns. Water-wise recipes were specially developed for cooking demonstrations at the festival. The recipes are included in a free recipe book as part of the Cape Made project.

Ehlers, on behalf of Agri-Expo, thanks every visitor, exhibitor, partner and supplier who contributed to the success of the 17th SA Cheese Festival, and especially for their support of the water saving initiatives at the festival.

The 18th SA Cheese Festival takes place from Friday 26 April to Sunday 28 April 2019 at Sandringham Estate outside Stellenbosch. Visit www.cheesefestival.co.za for photos of the 2018 festival, and to download the Cape Made recipe book.

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