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ARC NATIONAL DAIRY PERFORMERS AWARDS

The purpose of the Master Dairyman competition is to acknowledge South Africa's most outstanding achievers in breeding genetically superior animals, using performance recording and performance testing as tools. Recognition will be given to superior commercial and small scale herds and awards will be allocated to specific categories. The ARC annual National Dairy Performers Awards were presented on Friday, 13 October 2017, at the Agri Expo Livestock, Sandringham, near Stellenbosch, on behalf of the National Dairy Recording and Improvement Scheme of ARC-AP. This gala event, one of the highlights on our country's agricultural calendar, attracted some of South Africa's top achievers in the industry. The presence of key stakeholders in the industry and officials from DAFF also emphasizes the importance and status of this event. All the dairy herds participating in performance recording via INTERGIS, qualified for the Master Dairyman competition. The top herds in the regions were identified based on objective production and reproduction standards, as well as specific managerial criteria. Official milk recording for at least 3 years is essential for a herd to qualify for any award. The finalists in the milk recording regions were visited by a judging panel of 4 members, each focusing on a list of applicable criteria. Dr Jakkie du Toit based his evaluation on breeding goals and selection for traits measured in the scheme, Dr Carel Muller focused on feeding strategies, production and reproduction, Dr Barry van Houten and his colleagues from Zoetis, focused on health traits and milking procedures and Mr Theuns Bruwer focused on the visual appraisal of functional traits of the herds.

This year's awards include the following categories:

- ARC Regional Small Scale Dairyman of the year: Kwa-Zulu Natal – Celokuhle Farming Trust, Free State – WG Jacobs and Gauteng – AS Mohapi
- ARC Regional Finalists for Master Dairyman of the year: Glenfern Estates (Pty) Ltd, Mr and Mrs AC Webster, PJ Ward, DF Ferreira, Robertson Broers, Rhodes Food Group (Pty) Ltd, Waboomskloof Boerdery, Dr HJ de Wet, JK Basson Familie Trust, JF Theron, HJ Rall and DJ Opperman
- The ARC National Herd with the Best Somatic Cell Count - awarded to E Zeeman with 182 000 cells /ml
- The ARC National Best Performing milking team - awarded to Robertson Broers
- The ARC National herd with the Best Inter Calving Period - awarded to HJ Rall with 381 days
- ARC Special award for a commercial dairy producer of the Year 2017 Barnet Business Trust
- ARC National Small Scale Dairyman of the Year 2017 - awarded to WG Jacobs
- ARC National Master Dairyman of the Year 2017 - awarded to JK Basson Familie Trust





Mr AS Mohapi, Ms Ngcobo and Mr G Jacobs



**Mr P Nguse (on behalf of Glenfern Estate),
Ms F Webster and Mr PJ Ward**



Mr G Robertson and Mr B Volschenk



**Mr J Theron, Mr HJ Rall (Snr) and
Mr DJ Opperman**



**Mr G Robertson, Mr HJ Rall (Snr) and
Mr E Zeeman**



**Mr WG Jacobs, Mr J van den Berg (Herd Manager on behalf of Mr JK Basson)
and Mr T Matshidzula (Barnett Business Trust)**

A special award was presented to Barnett Business Trust, co-owned and managed by Mr Tshilidze Matshidzula. He received the National Small Scale Dairyman of the year award in 2016, but already showed his vision and eagerness to expand the enterprise and to become a commercial farmer in his own right. The farm is based in Alexandria (Eastern Cape) and fully developed with measured 3ha camps each with its own stock water system. The farm is currently milking around 700 cows (Holstein, Jersey and cross breeds) on newly built 50 points rotary. The farm joined the ARC milk recording scheme shortly after its inception. The idea was to improve overall herd performance through good genetics, milk quality and milk production. In his own words: "The milk recording scheme, with the assistance of ARC Port Elizabeth officials, helped us to achieve our medium term goals, although we still feel there is a room for improvement in all aspects of productivity we certainly happy with where we are".

The awards function, which was attended by 87 invited guests, was opened by, Dr Andrew Magadela ARC Group Executive: Animal Sciences. He stressed the importance of a healthy and growing dairy industry and elaborated on the impact of performance recording when it comes to ensuring food security in South Africa. Dr Jakkie du Toit gave an overview of the criteria set for the specific awards, whereafter Dr Carel Muller had the important role as Master of Ceremonies. During the function the respective overall winners were crowned from amongst the regional finalists countrywide. Prof Norman Maiwashe: General Manager, Animal Production, did a vote of thanks, in particular to all the sponsors and facilitators of the event. The proceedings were rounded off with a delightful dinner.