



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

KOKSTAD TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER DAY

“Across the world they have called this year, the year of the soil. Soil is the foundation of life, without it, life on earth would not exist because we need healthy soil to grow healthy food.

Victor Roberts, a soil fertility scientist from Soil Fertility Unit in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) said these words when the Department in partnership with Grain SA, held a Technology Transfer Day for farmers at the Kokstad Research Station with a purpose to provide them with information on soil fertility, crop production, cultivar evaluation and veld management for livestock.

This is the second year that the Farmers’ Day was hosted at this Research Station which has served the community of Kokstad and its surrounding areas with distinction for over 50 years.

Roberts said for the soil to be healthy, it is vital that the world underneath is protected from erosion that kills the soil. The loss of organic matter results in the loss of nutrients in healthy soil. The soil also needs to be tested regularly to determine what the required nutrients are.

Farmers were also given a comprehensive insight on cultivar evaluation which is a process whereby various cultivars are planted in a different environment and their performance is evaluated based on yield, disease, maturity and the stem and root lodging. The shared information included sour veld management for livestock production, available seeds and production guidelines.

Fikile Qwabe, a scientist from the Department’s Research Station in Dundee, said all the information they generate is statistically analyzed and the results are presented through Farmers’ Days, Agri-updates and any other form of technology transfer.

Kobus Botha, a veld management specialist, talked farmers through veld management approaches which included fire management, grazing, rainfall, grass species composition and topography.

The farmers were given an opportunity to browse the exhibitors’ stands, demos and posters and also take part in machinery demonstrations.



Dr Hannes De Villiers during the opening address welcoming the farmers. Beside him, is William Diko from Grassland Science who interpreted to the farmers



Farmers attending the Kokstad Technology Transfer Day