

# SAAGA and SAMAC host Pre-budget vote dinner in Cape Town

**Bonnie Buthelezi**  
SUBTROP

**S**AAGA and SAMAC hosted the Minister and Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Senzeni Zokwana and Bheki Cele respectively, for a pre-budget vote dinner in Cape Town. Amongst the invited guests were Ms Annette Steyn, the shadow minister for the Democratic Alliance. In the Minister's welcome speech he mentioned that the objective of the event was to come together to meet and greet one another and getting to know each other.

This is to enhance the theme of government: working together we can take the agricultural sector forward. He also said "Government's role is to create an enabling environment for the business sector to create employment and generate income. The mandate of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is to ensure food security and agrarian transformation in the agricultural sector through innovative, inclusive and sustainable policies and programmes."

The Minister also stated that during the 2016 State of the Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma mentioned that agriculture is a catalyst for growth and food security. This means the sector has the best multiplier effect for every rand invested in terms of employment, exports, revenue and economic output. In response to that, Minister Zokwana said the Department has developed policy instruments targeting specific industries, such as the ones that SAAGA and SAMAC represent.

This year's budget focused specifically on the intensification of the revitalisation of agriculture and agro-processing value chains. In the implementation phase of the infrastructure development, local labour, small and medium businesses and green technologies will be utilised. The Agricultural Policy Action Plan will be implemented with special focus on the production of high value crops such as fruits and nuts.

"We are hard at work to ensure that



**SAAGA past chairman Mark Baker.**



**SAMAC chairman Walter Giurich.**



**Minister Senzeni Zokwana giving his speech at the dinner.**



**SAMAC past chairman Carl Henning with staff of the Minister and deputy Minister and a Parliamentary liaison officer.**



**Guests socialising at the pre-budget vote dinner.**

South African agricultural products get favourable market access. For instance, the EU EPA has provided increased quota access for a number of existing and new products. The Department is now focusing on the new trade agreements currently being negotiated within the African continent," Mr Zokwana added.

Mark Baker, SAAGA's past chairman,

and Walter Giurich, SAMAC's chairman, addressed the ministers on the industries' current developments on market access, import tariffs and plans for transformation going forward.

The event ended on a good note with an invitation to the national budget vote the following day to debate the agricultural budget for 2016/17. ❖