

EXTENSION FORMS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES OF SUBTROP. THE TECHNICAL ADVISORS ARE PART OF THE POST-HARVEST COMMITTEE (SAAGA), STINK BUG COMMITTEE (SAAGA / SAMAC) AND THE CROP-SPECIFIC RESEARCH COMMITTEES, UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE TECHNICAL MANAGER AND RESEARCH COORDINATOR (GERHARD NORTJÉ).



How extension and research work in SUBTROP

Gerhard Nortjé

SUBTROP

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

SUBTROP extension is focused on four crops, namely avocado, mango, macadamia and litchi, in four major production areas or regions.

Regional extension is funded by levies paid by Subtrop's four member associations. There is a technical advisor in each major production region. This extension focuses on commercial growers and to a lesser extent emerging growers:

- Soutpansberg / Levubu (Elsje Kleynhans);
- Letaba and Hoedspruit (Wilna Stones);
- Mpumalanga (Barry Christie);
- KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape (Tracey Campbell); and
- Vhembe (Tshifhiwa Radzilani).

SUBTROP's technical advisors in co-operation with the technical manager work in a planned and programmed manner in each region. Area committees are established in each region which consist of commercial

growers and representatives of processors and pack houses. These area committees support the technical advisor on issues with regards to topics for study groups, growers' needs and research needs and priorities. Main functions of the technical advisors are the determination of area-specific extension and research needs, the formulation of strategies in collaboration with SUBTROP management and execution of these strategies to address identified needs.

Emerging grower extension

Tshifhiwa Radzilani provides a technical advice service to emerging growers in the Vhembe region of Limpopo through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, which was initiated by SUBTROP. This service started in 2009 and functions with well-organised study groups in the region, as well as three extension training sessions per year, where SUBTROP technical advisors and researchers provide training on technical issues to the Limpopo Government extension officers. The technical advisor responsible for the emerging growers also coordinates collaboration between

SUBTROP, the government and private institutions in order to assist the emerging growers in Venda.

AREA COMMITTEES

Of major importance to SUBTROP is the establishment and proper functioning of area committees. The main function of these committees is to assist the technical advisor and technical manager (also research co-ordinator) in defining the objectives, needs and problems of each region, and to establish priorities and formulate the regions' and technical advisor's work program. The committees should meet on average four times per year with the technical advisor. The technical advisors will work with these committees for the various crops, packhouses and processors to identify area-wide problems which can be addressed on a project basis and which will enable growers to improve their yield and crop quality.

There will be a strong emphasis on study groups as a means to providing growers with relevant technical information. The advisors will also be available telephonically or via e-mail to answer queries. You will still see

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them out on farms, as they all have a passion for hands on horticulture and need to know what is happening on the ground, but farm visits will not be the main focus. The regional area committees are also a very important forum in providing a means for growers to contribute to the annual review and update of research priorities. Here they can contribute in discussing new topics and issues which may arise and recommend appropriate actions.

EXTENSION PROGRAMME OF WORK

Table 1 provides some insight into the range of activities which the technical advisors are involved in while carrying

out their program of work.

SUBTROP technical advisors cannot provide fertiliser recommendations, as they either are not trained for it, or do not have the time to provide this service to a large number of growers. They can, however, refer growers to specialists who can assist with fertiliser recommendations. However, the expertise does exist within SUBTROP to evaluate fertiliser recommendations and soil / leaf analyses results.

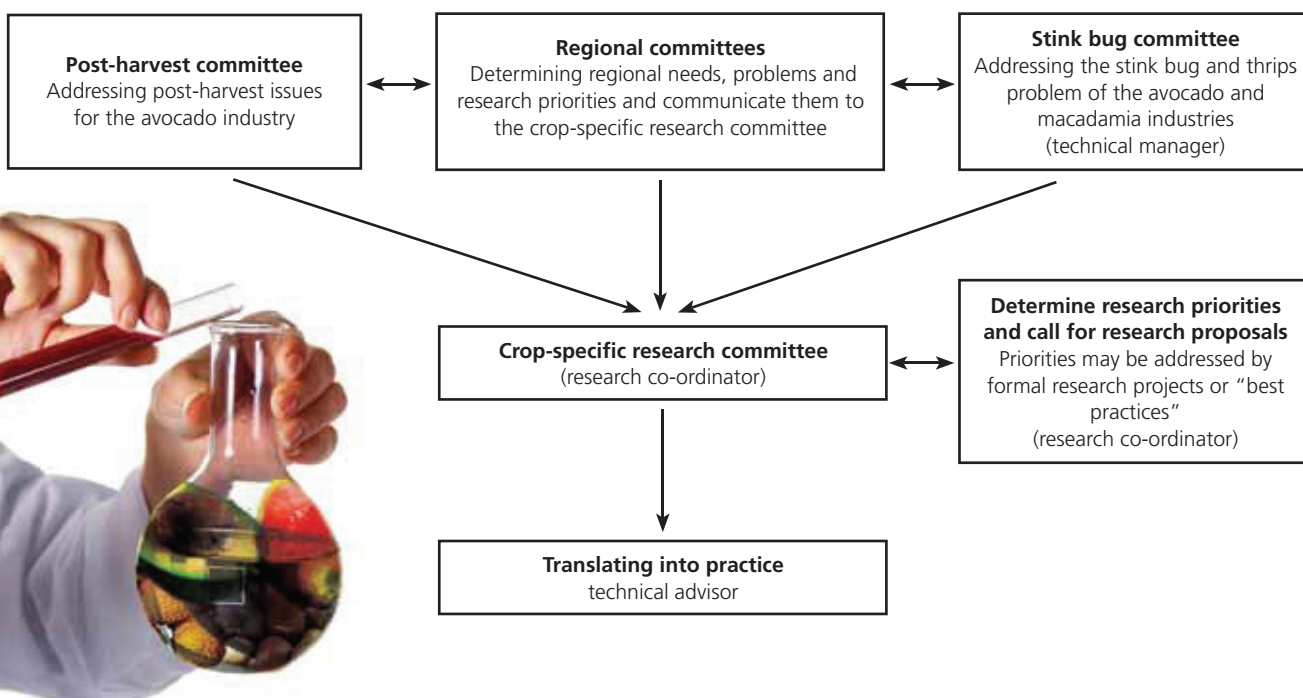
RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

Extension forms a crucial role in the research activities of SUBTROP. The technical advisors are part of the

following committees which direct the research process in SUBTROP: Post-harvest committee (SAAGA), Stink bug committee (SAAGA / SAMAC) and the Crop-specific research committees, under the guidance of the technical manager and research coordinator (Gerhard Nortjé).

In order to make optimal use of research resources and to ensure quick and appropriate transfer of research results, the representatives of the area committees together with the regional technical advisor are members of the above-mentioned committees. The technical advisor is the most important person in translating research results into practice. **ST**

The diagram below illustrates the process of determining research priorities.



EISH! MISTAKE

In the last issue of the *Subtrop Quarterly Journal* (Vol. 2), SAMAC section, there was an error in the article on unsound kernel (p 30). In the section on kernel immaturity, it was stated that if $\geq 50\%$ of a sample of dried dehusked nuts float in water, the orchard is ready to harvest. This is incorrect. The sentence should have read: "If $\geq 90\%$ float, the orchard can be harvested." **ST**

REGSTELLING

In die vorige uitgawe van die *Subtrop Quarterly Journal* (Vol. 2), SAMAC-afdeling, het 'n fout in die artikel oor ongesonde kern (p 48) voorgekom. In die afdeling oor kern-onvolwassenheid, is genoem dat as $\geq 50\%$ van 'n monster gedroogde, ontskilde neutte in water dryf, die betrokke boord gereed is om geoes te word. Die syfer 50% is verkeerd. Die sin moet lees: "As $\geq 90\%$ van die neutte dryf, kan die betrokke boord geoes word." **ST**

Table 1. Subtrop extension programme of work

Grower region			
LEVUBU/SOUTPANSBERG	LETABA/HOEDSPRUIT	MPUMALANGA	KZN/E-CAPE
General extension			
Respond to grower calls & requests, Promote best management practices Organise study groups	Respond to grower calls & requests Promote best management practices Organise study groups	Respond to grower calls & requests Promote best management practices Organise study groups	Respond to grower calls & requests Promote best management practices Organise study groups
Advisory services			
Through planned study groups and farm visits, Facilitate specialist advice	Through planned study groups and farm visits, Facilitate specialist advice	Through planned study groups and farm visits, Facilitate specialist advice	Through planned study groups and farm visits, Facilitate specialist advice
Technology transfer			
Transfer applicable new technology, research and best practices	Transfer applicable new technology, research and best practices	Transfer applicable new technology, research and best practices	Transfer applicable new technology, research and best practices
Co-operation			
Assist and advise pack houses, processors and industry where necessary	Assist and advise pack houses, processors and industry where necessary	Assist and advise pack houses, processors and industry where necessary	Assist and advise pack houses, processors and industry where necessary
Research			
Help guide SUBTROP research program Provide effective inputs on technical research Advise SUBTROP on regional research needs/priorities Assist with trials where required	Help guide SUBTROP research program Provide effective inputs on technical research Advise SUBTROP on regional research needs/priorities Assist with trials where required	Help guide SUBTROP research program Provide effective inputs on technical research Advise SUBTROP on regional research needs/priorities Assist with trials where required	Help guide SUBTROP research program Provide effective inputs on technical research Advise SUBTROP on regional research needs/priorities Assist with trials where required
Regional projects			
Accurate & timely disease and pest management (Cercospora, thrips, stink bug, etc.)	IPM for avocado Pruning in macadamia Litchi orchard practices Mango orchard practices	Mango malformation SAMAC website-technical	Update chemical & MRL lists Attend food safety meetings.
Give feedback			
To study groups (research outcomes), To crop-specific research committee	To study groups (research outcomes), To crop-specific research committee	To study groups (research outcomes), To crop-specific research committee	To study groups (research outcomes), To crop-specific research committee
Training/writing articles			
Write technical articles for combined quarterly newsletter, Organise scout training, Participate in training of Government extension officers	Write technical articles for combined quarterly newsletter Organise scout training, Participate in training of Government extension officers	Write technical articles for combined quarterly newsletter Organise scout training, Participate in training of Government extension officers	Write technical articles for combined quarterly newsletter Organise scout training, Participate in training of Government extension officers
Other			
Keep accurate grower records: phone numbers, e-mails and census data. <i>Bactrocera invadens</i> (BI) monitoring & trap servicing	Keep accurate grower records: phone numbers, e-mails and census data. <i>Bactrocera invadens</i> (BI) monitoring & trap servicing	Keep accurate grower records: phone numbers, e-mails, and census data. <i>Bactrocera invadens</i> (BI) monitoring & trap servicing	Keep accurate grower records: phone numbers, e-mails, and census data. <i>Bactrocera invadens</i> (BI) monitoring & trap servicing
Specialist responsibilities			
Stink bug website, Stink bug degree day data Cultivar trials data collection	Co-ordinating BI data collection, Cultivar trials data collection	SAMAC website update, SAAGA post-harvest committee Cultivar trials data collection	GlobalGAP, SAAGA website update Cultivar trials data collection 