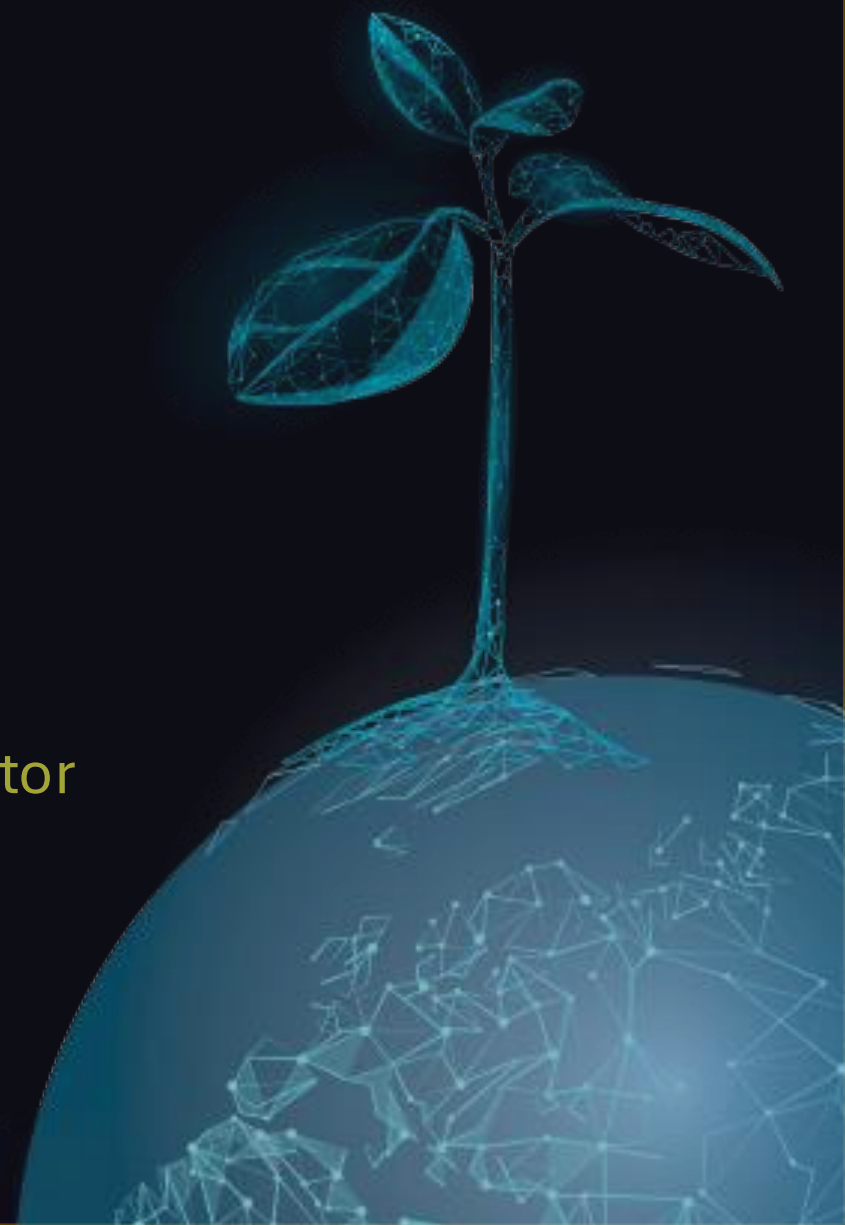


Welcome

Georgie Hewitt | Hortgro Stone Director

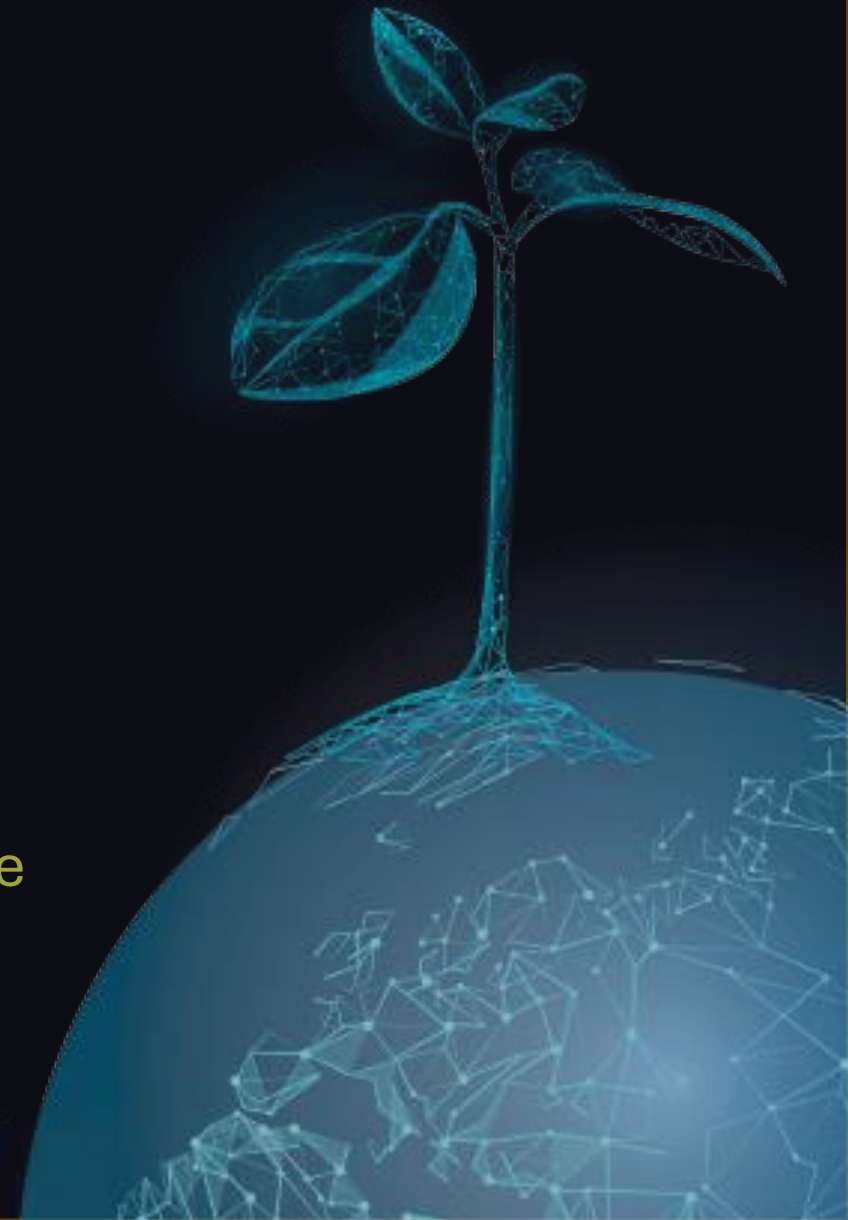


SESSION 1

Footprint: Towards a Sustainable Legacy

SPONSORED BY AgroGresh

**Chair: Nomuhle Tema | Western Cape
Department of Agriculture**



*Growing Forward:
Sustainable resource
management for a profitable
and resilient industry*

Nitasha Baijnath–Pillay | Hortgro



GROWING FORWARD: SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR A PROFITABLE AND RESILIENT INDUSTRY

Nitasha Baijnath-Pillay

Manager: **Resource Management & Sustainability (RMS)**

Spoiler Alert : The World is Getting Strict



EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork strategies

Now, an apple a day needs:

- ✓ a carbon footprint audit,
- ✓ a plastic-free passport, and
- ✓ a background check from 86 different countries.

*Farm to Fork is starting to feel more like **Farm to Forensic Audit?***

We know the compliance journey is **complex and costly**.
It is **necessary** to retain our market access.



"Tsunami" of Compliance"

Hortgro's Resource Management and Sustainability Programme was born from the need to navigate the **EU Green Deal, Farm to Fork** strategies, and the future requirements of 86 different export countries.



What is our Resource Management & Sustainability (RMS) Programme about?

What:

Enable access

to existing and new natural resources

Sustainable management

of existing and new natural resources

Mitigate

associated risks

Why:

That will enable pome and stone fruit producers to remain competitive, profitable, and sustainable.

What is our Resource Management & Sustainability (RMS) Programme about?

research

mitigation

adaptation

risk management

The journey to sustainable agriculture may be complex, but with a **clear vision and collaborative effort**, a sustainable and prosperous future is within reach



What is our Resource Management & Sustainability (RMS) Programme about?

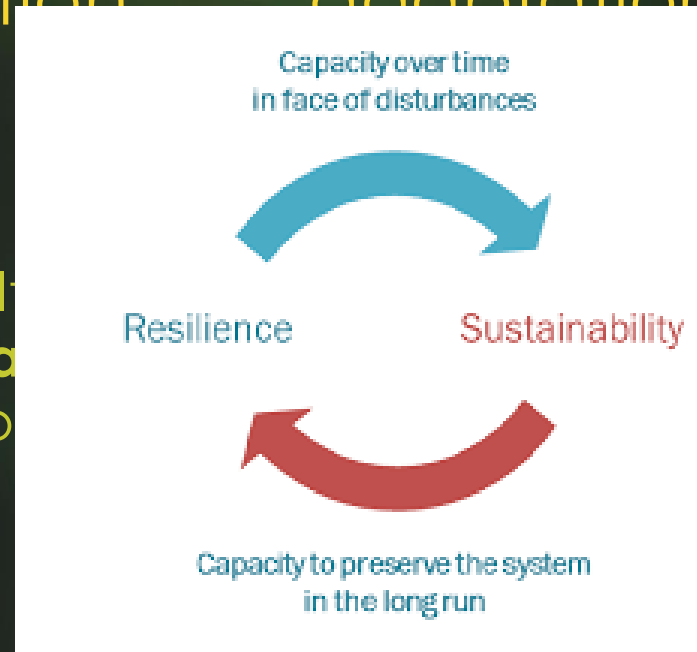
research

mitigation

adaptation

risk management

The journey to sustainable agriculture is complex, but with a **clear vision and effort**, a sustainable and prosperous future is within reach



The Legacy of the "Fruit IQ"

Protecting the Hands that Feed the World

We aren't just managing resources; we are protecting a heritage.

The goal is to ensure South African pome and stone fruit producers remain competitive, profitable, and—most importantly—sustainable for the next generation.



The Strategic Vision of RMS

Developing Strategic Water Resource Plans:



Collaborating with government bodies to create water resource plans tailored to each production region



Advancing Infrastructure Maintenance:

Lobbying for the maintenance of critical water and other infrastructure essential to the industry.



Efficiency and Productivity:

Promoting gains throughout the value chain to counter rising input costs and sustain industry growth.

Promoting Sustainable Agricultural Practices:



Encouraging the adoption of water and energy-saving technologies aligned with environmental sustainability (ESG) principles.



Climate Change Mitigation:

Implementing strategies to mitigate risks associated with climate change and extreme weather events.



Webinars

The Hortgro Footprint Webinar Series aims to spotlight sustainable practices, mitigations, and risks in the SA deciduous fruit industry.

Focus areas for RMS



Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Compliance

Ensuring that all practices meet the necessary standards to maintain market access, particularly considering the evolving EU ESG requirements (such as the EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork strategies).



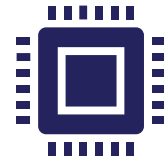
Climate Change Adaptation

Developing responses to the impact of climate change, disaster risk reduction and building resilience, including the implementation of the Hortgro Climate Change Response Strategy (CCRS) for the Deciduous Fruit Industry and setting industry emissions reduction targets.



Water and Energy Efficiency

Fostering practices like needs-based irrigation, renewable energy adoption, and innovative water management techniques



Innovative Technologies

Leveraging cutting-edge technologies to enhance agricultural practices, such as AI tools for yield determination, soil and leaf analysis, and CO₂ sequestration measurement.



Plastics and Packaging Waste

Addressing the environmental impact of packaging and exploring sustainable alternatives.



Climate Change Adaptation

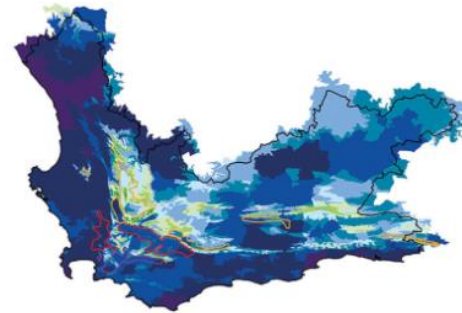
1. Policy and regulatory engagements (various global and national) impacting export/trade, climate change, and resource management & setting Sectoral Emission Targets (Fruit)
2. Carbon Calculations and Footprinting - CCC Programme
3. Implementing the Climate Change Response Strategy for the Deciduous Fruit Industry
4. Climate change research – Smart Agri solutions & **Carbon removals, sequestration**, Credits potential
5. Etc.



Future-proofing fruit production



A tool to decode climate data



Climate-change guidelines for growers



Confronting climate change

Our climate change response strategy

ADAPTATION

Building Resilience

Natural & Physical Capital



MITIGATION

Reducing emissions,
Soil Carbon Sequestration
Natural & Physical Capital

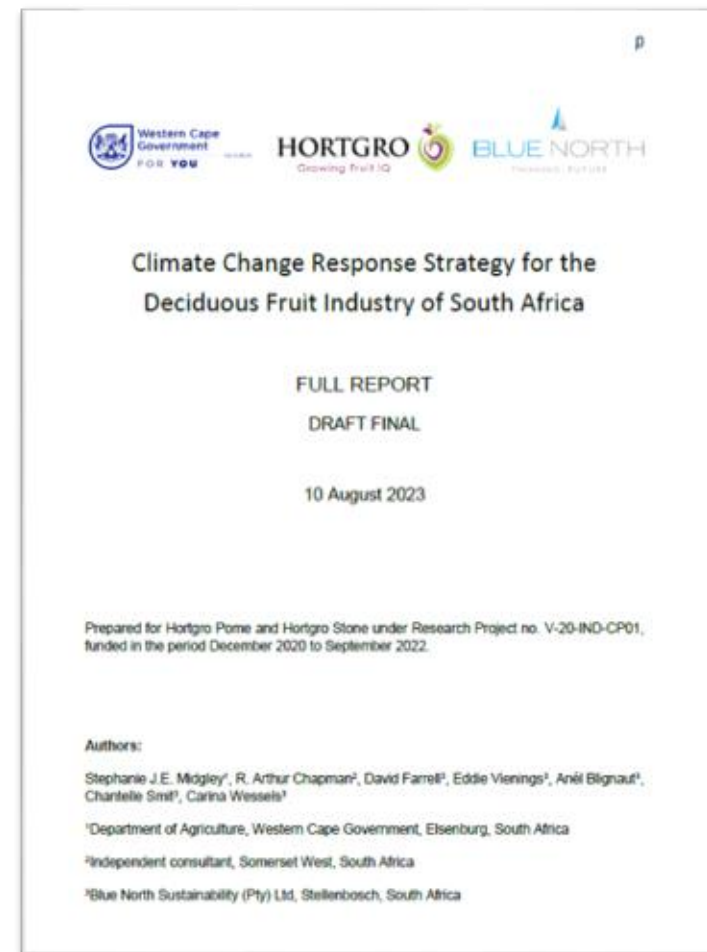
FORMAL ENABLERS

Policies, Regulations, Agreements,
Infrastructure, Finance
Physical & Financial Capital



INFORMAL ENABLERS

Information, Skills, Social Norms,
Financial Decision Making
Human & Social Capital



Water & Agriculture

Agriculture accounts for approximately 60% of water use in South Africa....BUT There **is less reliability and assurance of supply** (for agriculture) than most of the other sectors that use water.

A Water Research Commission 2018 report: “Irrigation supports 25 to 30% of our national agricultural production And About **90% of our fruit and wine is produced under irrigation. ...access & efficiency matters!**

Water Availability & Alien Vegetation.....

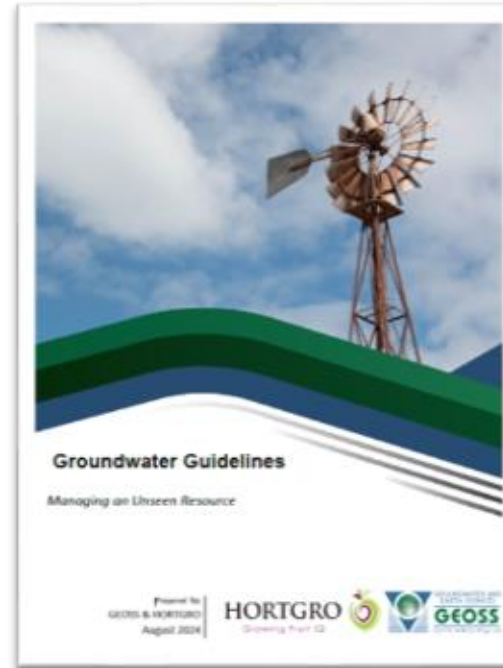
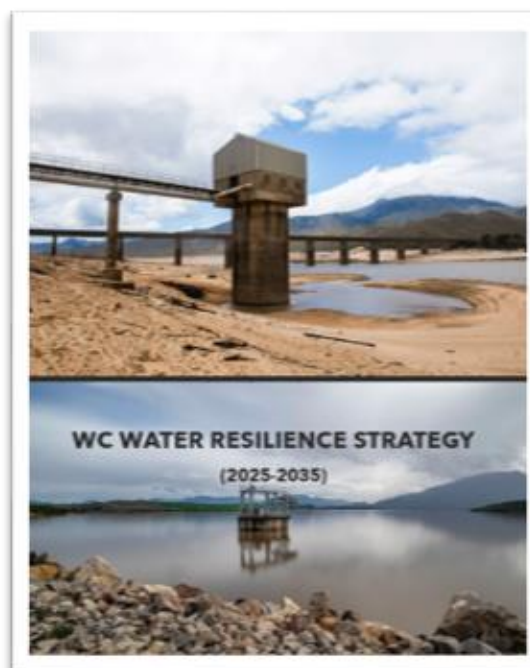
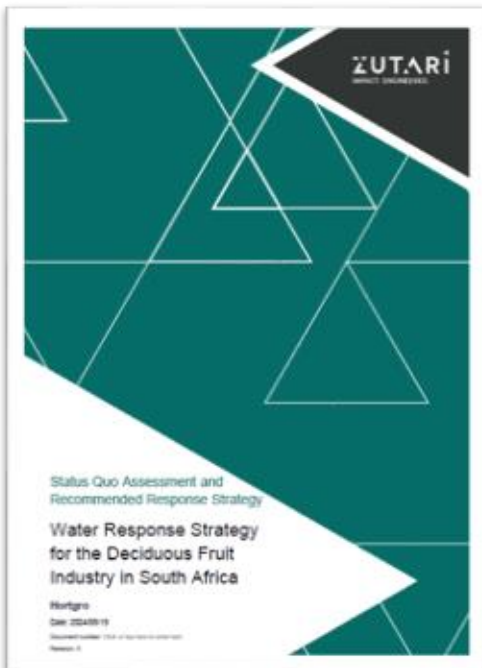


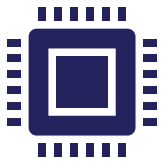


Water and Energy Efficiency

Fostering practices like needs-based irrigation, renewable energy adoption, and innovative water management techniques

Navigating the "Unseen" Resources (through strategy, innovation, research, implementing & practicing water and energy efficiency)





Innovation and Technology

- Aim to think ahead and comply with the new **G.G.A.P** ESS (will require **Product Environmental footprinting** as a minimum)
- The great news is that Hortgro is a step ahead of some requirements - funding the very **first LCA project** for apple and stone fruit in SA this year. This will provide a foundational, science-based profile of the industry's environmental footprint, **covering all stages from input production to post-harvest handling and end-of-life (e.g., packaging disposal, food waste)**.
- This is cutting-edge work for the industry.
- A **pilot soil carbon removal project** will be initiated to determine the potential for monitoring and accounting for carbon removals in sustainable agriculture supply chains.





Plastic and Packaging Waste

- **Packhouse Action Group & ESG & Plastics Working Group** (newly established and convened for the Pome and Stone sector for sustainability–related dialogue)
- Carbon Calculations and Footprinting – inclusive of waste
- Responding to **circular economy waste management needs** (global policies & retailer requirements, such as the Global Plastics, EU PPWR, etc.) and SA national waste requirements (& SIZA audits requirements).
- **Research on alternatives to plastics** –initiated a few years ago and continuing
- Actively engaged in the **SA Plastics Pact Plastics Reboot Initiative** and SA recyclers/suppliers of food-grade packaging for the food & beverage sectors
- Next step is to engage the **National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) - a DTI Agency** - who is now designated our competent authority under the **EU PPWR**.



Plastic and Packaging Waste

A quick guide to better packaging choices

BOX LINERS

Use clear bags rather than red or green
Use bags made of a single material such as LDPE
Avoid multilayers or composites
Choose bags made of recycled content

STRAPPING

Avoid black strapping
Choose blue, green, white or transparent instead
Choose strapping made of recycled content

FLOW WRAP

Not recycled in South Africa
Not recycled in some export markets
Consider phasing out

FRUIT TRAYS

Consider paper pulp or cardboard trays
Recycle black polystyrene trays locally
Black polystyrene trays to be phased out by EU retailers at the end of 2019

STICKERS

PLU labels and similar are not recycled
Consider phasing out

FRUIT BAGS

Minimise printing
Consider using a wrap-around label or sleeve
Use bags made of a single material such as LDPE
Avoid multilayers or composites
Choose bags made of recycled content



Science and Tech hub

Packhouse Action Group

Communication Strategy for RMS



X @Hortgro Instagram @Hortgro
Facebook @Hortgro YouTube @Hortgro LinkedIn @Hortgro

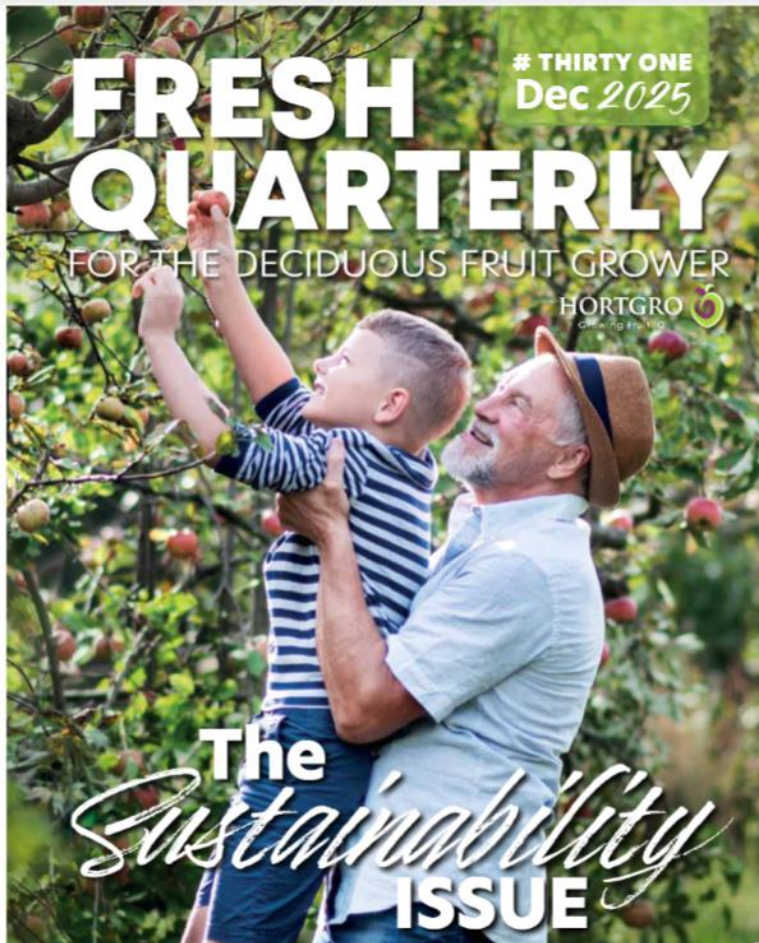
Communication Platforms

- Via Hortgro's social platforms & Hortgro's website (under the Footprint Page)
- Various Print media (Fresh Quarterly and SA Fruit Journal, newsletters, etc.)
- Research webinars, seminars & symposiums
- Footprint webinar series (launched: Oct 2024)
- Podcasts (internal and external)

6 webinars to date

- **Soil health** 65 attended, but remains the most viewed (465 views)
- **Green Financing 1 & 2** (93 & 145 attended respectively)
- **Plastics & Packaging** (183 attended)
- **Carbon Footprinting** (280 attended)
- **Sustainable Water Use**

Hortgro's Fresh Quarterly - Sustainability Issue (31) Dec 2025



1. Sustainability gets its own programme
2. Sustainability in the Crop Protection Programme
3. Sustainability in the Postharvest Programme
4. The widening circle
5. Beyond compliance
6. Carbon bookkeeping
7. Data-driven sustainability
8. The circular economy
9. Tread lightly
10. 4.5 billion years of climate change
11. Global partnership advances Western Cape climate resilience

Communication Strategy for RMS



Footprint Award 2026

The Hortgro Footprint Award 2026 celebrates **producers, exporters, packhouses and industry partners** who are leading the way in sustainability, innovation & responsible natural resource use

We invite you to ***tell your story***:

Share your sustainability journey — from the challenges you've faced to the measurable impact you've achieved. Show how your business is going beyond minimum standards to protect natural resources, improve efficiency, and build long-term resilience.

Closing date for submissions: 30 June 2026



Our Commitment

We want to ensure the South African DFI stays on the map.
Let's make sure our "footprint" is one we're proud of – one of **progress**.

Help leave a sustainable Legacy – One Footprint at a Time and A Resilient DFI.

We provide the platforms—**webinars, podcasts, and the Hortgro Footprint page**—to keep you informed and resilient

We provide the **networks to lobby & negotiate** for change, inclusion and participation every step of the ESG and market access compliance journey.

TOGETHER.....





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