

SASRI'S THULANI MASONDO BECOMES PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

Winile Shelembe

South African Sugarcane Research Institute's (SASRI's) Small-scale and Land Reform Extension Manager, Thulani Masondo, has been elevated to the presidency of the South African Society for Agricultural Extension (SASAE).

"SASAE members and its leadership saw something in me, hence they nominated me to stand for the presidency. It was not easy to accept but when members insisted that I had to stand for nominations I agreed. This position is demanding and needs someone dedicated and committed to agricultural development programmes and a person who has good communication skills and passion for agricultural extension. As the SASAE President, I represent all SASAE branches through the entire South Africa. I would like to thank SASA/SASRI for the good grounding in the agricultural extension and research work plus the opportunities given to SASA/SASRI team to participate in such big well renowned societies," said Masondo.

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Thulani Masondo, president of SASAE

*Below: Front row from left – Nqobile Nxumalo, William Gillespie, Thulani Masondo, Dr Riekerk van Heerden and Mboniseni Buthelezi.
Back row from left – Joe Nkala and Dr Lawrence Malinga.*



The main objective of the Society is to advance and apply the science and practice of agricultural extension within rural development as a scientific discipline by stimulating thought, study, research, discussion and the publication and exchange of knowledge both nationally and internationally.



SASAE is a scientific society, which in the interests of its members, is committed to the promotion of the science and vocation of agricultural extension. The main objective of the Society is to advance and apply the science and practice of agricultural extension within rural development as a scientific discipline by stimulating thought, study, research, discussion and the publication and exchange of knowledge both nationally and internationally.

As a norm, the society holds its conference in different provinces on a rotational basis. This year's conference was held at the University of Zululand, Richard Bay Campus on 28-31 August 2023. The theme of the conference was "Towards building inclusive, adaptive and resilient strategies for a sustainable food system: the role of agricultural extension". Authors from different provinces had the opportunity to submit scientific papers, posters, and success stories and out of the 15 papers that were accepted two were research/scientific papers. The paper on the SASRI's drone ripening project won the best paper award. Zandile Shozi (Department of Agriculture and Rural District), from Ugu District, won the best extension poster, beating other 60 posters which were vying for the accolade. An Appreciation Award was presented to William Gillespie for his many years' service to extension and the many papers and posters he had written and contributed to over the years.

Masondo committed to working with all members and have a consultative and transparent leadership style during his presidency. "We are here to serve the interests of the society... to ensure that extension service is professional, research being the main core of the extension work, farmers served with respect and dignity. Above all, SASAE binds itself with the extension norms and standards, which the society/organisation will follow," said Masondo.

He added, "Lastly, I have to thank the former SASAE president Mark Anthony for his leadership and mentorship skills without him and the SASAE members I wouldn't have been nominated. Thank you Mark, I always remember you when you say, 'Hey Chief, take it easy, don't panic!'"

Left: Thulani Masondo celebrating his election as President of the SASAE.

Winile Shelembe is Extension technician at SASRI