



SAFCA



5th Annual Forestry Training Indaba

The Forestry Sector held its 5th Annual Forestry Indaba in Piet Retief on the 4 November 2014. Co-hosted again by South African Forestry Contractors Association (SAFCA) and Forestry Industry Training Providers Association (FITPA) and directed by Pamela Naidoo (Capacity Development Manager of SAFCA), Well Springs Ministries proved to be a warm, friendly venue bringing together delegates from Grower companies, Equipment Suppliers, Training Providers and Contractors.

The theme of the indaba was: "A reflection on modernisation and its power to induce rapid change in the forestry industry training environment". This theme resonated in the many presentations that were made.

Mike Hunter from Siyeza Forestry opened the conference and welcomed the delegates on behalf of Dr Jaap Steenkamp who apologised for not being able to attend. Mike Hunter read out Dr Steenkamp's address which covered the importance of training:

- Safety and health
- Environmental sustainability and
- Productivity – thus economic reasons:

He further stated that the **manager** and **operator** must know: the purpose and characteristics of the machine, the mechanical functioning and components and the Electronic functioning and human –machine-interface. If training is important, then it is also important that capable, qualified, accredited trainers will execute the training.

We learned from Simon Ackerman's (Research and Programme Co-ordinator for Forest Engineering South Africa) presentation on the development of time study standards for South Africa and operational results from mechanised systems that time studies are key for productivity improvement and international competitiveness. Delegates can look forward to tools on the Data Collection Model and software for Machine costing and training by the ICFR as follows: -2-3 February 2015 (ICFR – PMB) How to Collect data, 1 video, 2 Costing model and on the 5-6 February 2015(Sabie Country Club-Mpu). For more information visit www.forestryproductivity.co.za for a user guide.

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) realises that Modernisation creates both challenges and opportunities for co-operation with all role players. They provide skills and scientific orientated training to the forestry industry. Delegates were encouraged to look forward to the Modernised Curriculum in 2016. Tiaan Poole, a Lecturer from NMMU George Campus (Saasveld) delivered a

presentation on the role tertiary educations play in integrating Modernisation measures implemented within the industry.

Brian Windt, a Facilitator from Legal, Education, Safety and Health Requirements (LESH) shared with us the Driver Operator training programme currently implemented within the industry. His presentation highlighted the importance of manufacturer knowledge and experience, the need for integration of training development between dealers and suppliers of machinery. Training was of paramount importance in view of the high costs of modernised machinery. The value and effectiveness of this training saw in some instances a 300% productivity improvement. A need for Contractor Appreciation was identified and seen as an opportunity for training.

We were then taken on a journey through the 1980's, 1990's to present day by Mrs Kerry Davies, in a reflection on the Changing Career Path of the Forester. Today, Mondi has a clear defined path for the Forester's career. They have identified qualifications, experience and cognitive ability as requirements for Foresters. Pre-Saasveld trainees are identified and trained in a structured way (with the use of a developmental logbook). These trainees are assigned Coaches and Mentors to teach and guide them on forestry processes. Full time students and Foresters in training also complete Logbooks as part of their training. The Career Path of the Forester progressed to Executive management levels.

The wise man in the forestry industry, after 50 years of forestry experience gave us an excellent presentation on modernisation from a coal face perspective. Mr Michael Hengwa also gave us a history lesson on modernisation – stating that when he was introduced to a Skidder and a Chainsaw as early as 1965, he was already being introduced to modernisation. From this coal face perspective, Baba Hlengwa taught us that modernisation has been evolutionary – it's not a new concept, it's always been there. He encouraged us to value knowledge and experience, not to panic but rather stand up to the changes. He saw research and development as ongoing and critical to modernisation. He further mentioned the challenges of Modernisation to change material development, training tools and space, training methods to be more first world and correct selection criteria for a new calibre of facilitator/trainee.

The day ended with a presentation and update on qualifications development in the forestry industry by SAFCA's Capacity Development Manager, Pamela Naidoo. The current Forestry Supervisor and Forestry Foreman qualifications are in the process of development with the other 6 awaiting approval from the Qualifications Council for Trade and Occupations (QCTO). The presentation ended with confirmation of the Basic Fire Fighting, Fire Crew Leaders and Fire Boss qualification seen as a priority in the industry and supported for development.

The Conference ended with Mr Dumisani Shweni from Mondi Limited being drawn as the lucky winner of the Chainsaw donated by Stihl.

The conference closed with Colleen Windt from FITPA giving the vote of thanks and expressing particular recognition and appreciation to the following sponsors without whom the conference would not have been a success:

