

Syngenta opens Digital Doorway for local communities

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On 26 June 2008, Syngenta South Africa and participating partners (Department of Science and Technology, the Meraka Institute of the CSIR and hosts Manjoh Ranch) held a commissioning ceremony at the Almac Community Centre in Alrapark, Nigel.

Why a commissioning ceremony?

This day officially commemorated the handing over of the first Digital Doorway sponsored by Syngenta South Africa to the Alrapark community.

What is the Digital Doorway project?

The Digital Doorway project is a Proudly South African initiative for those citizens who do not readily have access to computer facilities. It is a device that encourages unassisted learning among both children and adults. It promotes the acquisition of image and screen literacy, and information navigation.

How did Syngenta South Africa get involved in this initiative?

Mr Antonie Delpont, managing director of Syngenta South Africa, said: "A successful partnership can only perform consistently at a high level when great people are powered by innovation. Syngenta is honoured and proud to be part of this great Department of Science and Technology initiative.

It has been brought to life through the efforts and dedication of the CSIR and the Meraka Institute. With this partnership we strive to open the digital doorway and make everybody a part of the exciting journey to make South Africa, and especially the agricultural sector, a leader in knowledge, technology and sustainable food production in Africa."

What value does this initiative offer to the agricultural industry?

Globally, Syngenta brings plant potential to life. Critical to this endeavour is the pivotal role of human capital development. The agricultural sector (including primary agriculture) is the second largest employer in South Africa and like many other commercial sectors it is experiencing a significant skills deficit. Therefore, it is important that the value chain addresses this skills deficit by raising the image of agriculture, to both the government and the South African citizen.

As a result Syngenta is engaging in initiatives such as the Digital Doorway. Such opportunities cannot succeed if driven by one organisation alone. It requires the leveraging power of partnerships between the public and private sectors to accomplish the goal of bridging the digital divide. In addition, the project would not be a success if it failed to include the producer. The producer acts as an ambassador for his local community and hosts the Digital Doorway at an elected site. ■



Back: Mr Manny da Costa (Manjoh Ranch); Dr Simphiwe Mini (Department of Science and Technology); Mrs Kate Tucker (Syngenta); Mrs Kagiso Chikane (Meraka Institute) and Alrapark Secondary School learners, Ayanda and Jessica.