

Think tank deliberates climate change, food and agriculture connection



Attendees at the workshop.

Abou Mohamed Ali

On 18 October, delegates from agri business, research institutions, government departments, and universities gathered to deliberate the challenges facing the agricultural sector in the face of persistent food insecurity and climate change.

Organised by the Water Research Commission together with its partners, the universities of Pretoria and KwaZulu-Natal, the Agricultural Research Council and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the workshop discussed possible solutions to the challenges related to food security and nutrition, as highlighted by World Food Day (16 October).

The workshop was also used as a platform to share information on the WRC's latest research on this topic, including research exploring the potential of increased production of food crops to meet nutritional requirements of rural poor people, and studies investigating the nutritional water productivity of various indigenous food crops.

Debates centred around centralising knowledge, ensuring effective Communication and cooperation among government

entities and practical application of the new knowledge to the benefit of communities.

"Agriculture is arguably one of the oldest human activities in the world," noted WRC Group Executive, Dr Mandla Msibi. "Food is a basic need, however, South Africa's three-tiered challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality means we have people in South Africa that are unable to put a nutritious plate of food on the table. At the same time, agricultural production is becoming more difficult in the face of decreasing soil fertility, increasing competition for land, and climate change."

Dr Msibi noted that the South African research community had to work together with policy-makers to come up with solutions to these challenges.