South Africans Scoop
ICID Awards

Two South Africans were among the prize winners at a recent meeting of the International Commission on Irrigation & Drainage (ICID). The 58th International Executive Council meeting took place together with the US National Committee's 4th International Conference of Irrigation & Drainage in Sacramento, in the US.

Dr Abraham Singels, a principal agronomist at the South African Sugarcane Research Institute, received the WatSave Innovative Water Management Award 2007, while Dr Gerhard Backeberg, Director: Water Utilisation in Agriculture at the Water Research Commission, received the Best Paper Award 2007.

Dr Gerhard Backeberg, Director: Water Utilisation in Agriculture at the Water Research Commission (right) receiving the Best Paper Award from ICID President Peter Lee. Dr Backeberg's paper, titled "Reform of User Charges, Market Pricing and Management of Water: Problem or Opportunity for Irrigated Agriculture" was published in Volume 55, No 1 of the ICID Journal Irrigation and Drainage. His paper examined the changes in the approach to water management. Dr Backeberg's analysis of selected case studies showed that willingness to pay is less than operation and maintenance cost, water licenses are considered insecure and diverse membership impedes cooperation in local organisations. Complications must be overcome to improve efficient use and allocation of water and effective participation in management.

Dr Abraham Singels, principal agronomist at the South African Sugarcane Research Institute receives the WatSave Innovative Water Management Award from ICID President Peter Lee. Dr Singels received the award for his work on the development and implementation of a system to utilise the potential of sophisticated information and communication technology (crop modelling, mobile phone technology, Internet, automatic weather stations), combined with participatory methods to achieve substantial improvement in water use efficiency and sugarcane yields for the benefit of small-scale growers.

The South African delegation to the ICID conference in Sacramento, in the US.