

Sowing the seeds of positive change

More than 100 leaders in the seed industry and its associated members recently came together at the Arabella Hotel & Spa for the SANSOR (South African National Seed Organisation) Annual Congress

During the event, SANSOR initiated a process to leave a footprint in the community where its congresses are held. "We are committed to leaving a positive impact on the social and natural environment where we have our Annual Congresses," explains

Gerrie Reitsma, General Manager of SANSOR.

To that end, two projects were identified. The first was Siyabulela pre-primary school in Kleinmond, which caters for 96 children between the ages of three and six.

Until recently, the school was preparing hot meals for the children using a two-plate electric stove. SAN-

SOR arranged for a gas stove to be installed to industry certified standards. In the spirit of the initiative, the gas fitter - Guy Roberts - from The Gas Guy gave his time free of charge.

The school has since received further donations that, combined with SANSOR's contribution, mean that they can now give the learners two full meals a day.

The second project they undertook was to plant trees on Arabella Country Estate, the value of which surpassed the cost of the return flights of the delegates. "We not only paid for the footprint created by this Congress, but have in some small way contributed to future activities by SANSOR and its membership," says Gerrie.

Following input by SANBI at Kirstenbosch, Alf Scullard, the Estate's Chief Landscaper, selected



fifty seven trees. These were planted in an area that in future will be known as The SANSOR Forest.

Estate Manager Terry Keller says that such actions tie in with the Estate's SHE policy and the management team's commitment to protecting and, where possible, improving the natural features, systems and wildlife on the Estate.

Cosy Cape climate

As part of its water control policy, the Estate's management closely monitors the area's rainfall levels. A recent dry spell is now being compensated for by some fairly

heavy showers. But, a close watch needs to be kept on the weather because water policy needs to be continually adjusted to cater for the short and long- term effects of prolonged periods of drought.

During a cold night or a heavy downpour of rain, it is easy to forget that the climate of the Western Cape is predominantly mediterranean. We experience

warm dry summers and moist and relatively temperate winters.

In summer the coastal temperature rises from a low of 15C to 27C, while inland the figures are 3-5C higher. And in winter, those of us near the beaches, see the mercury level drop to 7C at night rising to a comfortable 15 during the day. Away from the sea, there are midday peaks of 22C.