



THE VIRTUAL CANOLA STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP

Authored By: Dr. Patricia Mathabe (Portfolio Manager, Technology Innovation Agency)
Mr. Gerhard Keun (CEO, Protein Research Foundation and Oil and Protein Seeds Development Trust)
Ms. Beulla Mathebula (Deputy Director, Department of Science and Innovation)

The production of canola in South Africa is lower than the demand and the local consumption requirements for canola is approximately 110 572 tons per year. This demand has seen the country import Canola in large quantities. Canola is a good source of protein in animal feed and large quantities of protein for animal feeds must be imported every year from mainly Argentina. The canola industry forms part of the broader oilseed industry within South Africa, which is important in the agricultural sector and value chain even up to the level of the consumer. Canola has various positive health characteristics for both animal and human consumption. It has also been mentioned in the governments Agricultural Policy Action Plan (APAP) for 2014-2019, as one of the important crops in the country. It is for this reason that we sought to collate information from key role players in the canola value chain.

There is a need to explore opportunities that could be exploited from this crop.

The Canola Stakeholder's Pre-Workshop was held on 22 July 2020. The event was motivated by prior extensive consultations that were conducted as far back as 2018. Various Canola stakeholders emanating from Industry, Academia and Research were consulted. Varying information was obtained from each sector. It became evident that a workshop ought to be organized where all stakeholders within the Canola value chain be brought under one 'roof'.

The Canola project falls under the Agricultural Bioeconomy Innovation Partnership Program (ABIPP). The aim of the Agricultural Bioeconomy is to contribute to improved productivity, food security, rural economic development and competitiveness of the agricultural sector through development and commercialization of new bio-innovation products, processes and services. The ABIPP is an instrument that was established to implement the Agricultural pillar of the National Bioeconomy Strategy. The ABIPP was approved by the Director General (DG) of the DSI on 8 December 2017. The Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) is the appointed implementing agency of ABIPP.

The workshop was organized by the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) in partnership with Oil and Protein Seeds Development Trust (OPODT). The workshop mainly sought to understand current activities taking place in the Canola space in South Africa, challenges encountered, successes achieved and possible interactions that could potentially be adopted and implemented'.

Of those who RSVPD, approximately 80% of the Key stakeholders were in attendance. They emanated from academia, industry, research centers and the farming communities. The institutions represented are: Corteva, Western Cape Department of Agriculture, University of the Western Cape, Stellenbosch University, Fort-Hare University, Agricol, SOILL, OPDT, Protein Research Foundation, SANSOR, Agricultural Research Council, Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy and Corteva.

Prof. Ferdie Meyer from the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP), facilitated the



event. The foundation of the event was laid by Mr. Sibusiso Manana, who is the Head of the Agriculture Unit at TIA. Mr. Manana gave a background of the Canola project and how TIA was selected as an implementation agency. He mentioned that the event sought to identify areas where all the stakeholders ought to collaborate in. Some of his points included the need for researchers to collaborate, growing the canola industry through the introduction of new entrants. He also spoke about the need for existing canola commercial farmers to assist in the establishment and advancement of emerging small-scale canola farmers through financial and non-financial involvement. Having set the foundation, various speakers were introduced by the facilitator. They all spoke about the current activities in their sectors, their successes, challenges and existing opportunities. Mr. Maliviwe Mphaipheli, a lecturer from the University of Fort-Hare's Livestock and Pasture Science in Animal nutrition, opened the stage with his presentation. Various projects are currently being managed, in collaboration with the University of the Western Cape. In one study, carried out adaptability trials to determine the performance of various cultivars under the Eastern Cape climate. The outcomes of these studies reported that Diamond and Agamax cultivar performed very well under the climatic conditions. They did however face challenges in that they lacked equipment to harvest and extract oil from canola. Various interactions with emerging farmers in the Eastern Cape (EC) currently exist, through the University of Fort Hare. There are existing talks with the farmers regarding the possibility for them to adopt canola as one of the crops of interest.

Another presenter from the Protein Research Foundation, Mr. Andries Theron impressed on the need that South Africa has to grow economically and create jobs. Canola should be taken advantage of to boost our economy. He stressed on the need to work together and to communicate effectively. Collaborations in the form of Government, Industry, Academia and Research is what is needed, to essentially make the canola industry thrive. Other presentations were made by Mr. Kellie Becker Managing Director from Southern Oil (SOILL) and Mr. Koos Blanckenberg, Chairperson of the Canola Specialist Group of GrainSA.

The talks were followed by vibrant discussions where suggestions and inputs were put forth by all attendees. From the workshop, coupled with previous extensive consultations, it became evident that there are some successes and challenges currently being experienced in various sectors. What is essentially needed is collaborations between various Canola sectors. There was consensus on the need to grow the sector therefore, attention needs to be focused on introducing new role players in the field. This is possible through the expertise of current commercial farmers. Research also needs to be conducted continuously despite the excellent research that is currently being conducted. It will make sense if all researchers could form a forum to share available data and potentially collaborate on existing and partner on up-coming research activities.

Dr. Maneshree Jugmohan-Naidu, the Director of Agricultural Biotechnology at DSI provide a summary of follow-up actions needed.

South Africa is currently facing major job losses and economic constraints. Agriculture has the potential to make a major contribution to turn the current state around. Canola has a massive potential to make a positive contribution. This Stakeholder workshop has created a potential platform and all parties need to make a deliberate effort to keep the momentum going.

The event was closed at 12.00pm.