

CFU FARMING OSCAR AWARD 2021

The Zimbabwean Farming Oscar Award has a long and proud history, having been introduced in 1961 by the late Mr. C. G. Tracy during his term as Vice President of the Commercial Farmers' Union as an award in recognition of "those who have generally done well for agriculture." The annual Oscar has become known as the "Farming Oscar" to be given to some person or persons who have given outstanding service to agriculture and has been awarded to people who have contributed to the Industry in its widest sense. Over the years, winners have been chosen from the practical and scientific disciplines of agriculture, as well as from the administration and leadership roles with winners selected in recognition of having contributed significantly to the agricultural progress. This year's winner is no exception and fits the required profile as having given outstanding service in the advancement of Agriculture. Farmer, philosopher, poet, ultimate believer in Africa and her people, keen student of nature, maximizer of farmers. It is hard to believe that all this can be said of one man, but the winner of this year's Farming Oscar is more than this.

Our recipient of this year was born in 1963 in Kempton Park as the eldest of four children. He had a keen interest in farming from a young age and although he dreamed of attending an agricultural high school, he started his high school career at Hoërskool Jeugland until the family moved to Pretoria where he spent the final 2 years of his high school education at Die Hoërskool Menlopark where he matriculated in 1980. Throughout his high school career, he excelled in leadership, public speaking, debate and writing. He completed his compulsory 2-year military service at the SA Air Force in Pretoria and at the same time enrolled at the University of Pretoria as a part-time student. In 1983 he went on the study full time at the University of Stellenbosch where he completed his Bachelors of Political Science in 1984 and a Bachelors(Hons) in Philosophy (Cum Laude) in 1985 at the University of Pretoria. In 1986 he completed the degree MA Philosophy 1986 (Cum Laude) at the University of Pretoria and finally in 1988 his PhD Philosophy with a thesis titled: Black Consciousness as a revolutionary idea. He started his professional career as a Control Analyst at the State Security Council and then moved on to Intelligence Coordinator in the office of the State President (P.W. Botha & F.W. de Klerk) From 1992-1997 he was a Negotiation & Conflict Management Consultant for various mining and High Tech Companies, Gencor, NEC, Singer and Krygkor (now Denel) Since 1991, he has been a visiting lecturer twice per annum to the SA National Defence College on Conflict Studies and Strategy and since 1992, he acted as a Strategic Planning facilitator for various companies, lawyers- and auditor's firms, organisations and government departments. In 1997 he finally had the opportunity to realise his ultimate dream when his passion for farming lured him back to the agricultural sector and became a full-time farmer of subtropical fruit, timber and goats in Tzaneen, Limpopo. Initially he was only going to assist a farmer whose labour force went on strike but before long he followed his heart and became a farm owner. True to his nature, he became involved in organized agriculture. He was elected chairperson of the Oëcolaco Trichardtsdal Farmers Association in his first year of joining. A good friend, Kobus Winter, who was responsible for Land Reform matters for Agri Limpopo, lost his battle with cancer and our recipient was thrown into the deep end when he had to take over the portfolio of Kobus Winter. He made it his mission to assist farmers with land reform, first in Limpopo but eventually country wide. His strong negotiating skills have played a vital role. He was elected to the post of vice-president of Agri-Limpopo and the year after as president. He served as vice-president of Agri South Africa from 2008 to 2014 and was chairman of the policy committee on Transformation, Farmer Development & Land Affairs. He also never kept his talents and love for Africa within the borders of his country of birth. He served as President of SACAU from 2012-2017 and President of PAFO from 2014 - 2017. In 2014 he founded Agri All Africa and still acts as chairman. All this time he had a compassion for the farmers of Zimbabwe and the CFU. He would do anything in his power to bring about and contribute to the process of negotiating compensation for farmers who lost their land in the land reform process. The CFU nominated him for a position on the WFO board and he was subsequently elected to the post of president in June 2017, a position he still holds today. He used this platform to advocate for the interests of family farmers and farmers in Africa. In 2019 he was the founder of Southern African Agri Initiative (SAAI) and still acts as chairman. He wrote 397 articles on land affairs, transformation, agriculture, climate change and agricultural investment in Africa for various publications. And then there is our recipient the poet. Apart from contributing to collections he also published several of his own collections titled: Di-mensies, Sprokkel and Wanderlust. Two of his poems have been used by the Department of Basic Education in the National Senior Certificate final exams for the Afrikaans Literature paper. To round it all off, there is Theo the family man. Family and Christian values are the two top priorities for this remarkable man. He is married to Karin, they are the parents of 3 children: their son LT and 2 daughters Rachel & Kristi for who he always makes time. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my honour to present the Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe Farming Oscar Award for 2021. I kindly ask our guest to step forward and present this award to:

Dr Theo de Jager

Awarded with gratitude during the 78th Commercial Farmers' Union Annual Congress on Thursday 18th November 2021 at the Sabre Business World, Harare.

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A. J. Pascoe, President

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M. A. Clark, Acting Director



