

FABIANS LOOK FORWARD TO OUTSTANDING SCIENCE AND EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS AT 2020 OPENING AND WELCOME BREAKFAST

FABI will be the place to be in 2020 for plant health research and events marking the United Nation's International Year of Plant Health (IYPH 2020) said Prof. Bernard Slippers at the Institute's opening on 13 January. FABIans celebrated the beginning of the New Year with the Institute's official opening at the University of Pretoria's Sanlam Auditorium and a welcome breakfast in the FABI courtyard. This marked the first Monday morning meeting of the year and the first gathering of staff and students following the festive season break in December.



FABIans will lead and take part in a number of activities observing IYPH 2020, a year declared by the United Nations in recognition of an urgent global need for collaboration on protecting plant health. These include the annual meetings of the CTHB and the TPCP as well as the 31st National Symposium on Biological Invasions. You can follow these and other IYPH 2020 events [here](#).

Prof. Slippers welcomed guests, which included Vice-Principal for Research and Postgraduate Education Prof. Stephanie Burton, President of the Hans Merensky Foundation Dr Khotso Mokhele, Vice-Principal for Institutional Planning Prof. Anton Ströh and Deputy Dean in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Prof. Eddie Webb. Prof. Slippers also welcomed nine new management committee members; Dr Yusuf Abdullahi Ahmed, Prof. Tjaart Kruger, Prof. Kerstin Kruger, Dr Eugene Makgopa, Dr Thabiso Motaung, Prof. Catherine Sole, Prof. Jacque van der Waals, Prof. Christian Pirk and Prof. Chris Weldon.

Prof. Slippers hinted at exciting developments within FABI's research programmes such as the Avocado Research Programme being charged to Chair avocado research by the Hans Merensky Foundation, the launch of the Grain Research Programme and the establishment of satellite labs – the Applied Chemical Ecology and Applied Mycology labs – with Extraordinary Professors Jeremy Allison and Pedro Crous.

Students can look forward to FameLab heats at FABI on 4 and 5 February to battle for a place to represent South Africa on the international science communication stage. PhD student and FameLab South Africa 2018 finalist Darryl Herron encouraged students to participate in an upcoming workshop on science communication in preparation for the heats and being an “Idol” for South African science.

Dr Nicky Creux revealed new FABI banners that reflect FABI's transition into overall plant health with the inclusion of more agricultural crops of economic and social importance in Africa in its research mandate.