

Getting to know the Protein Research Foundation

By Gerhard Keun, PRF

Certain objectives of the Protein Research Foundation and its predecessors, including funding research to achieve specific objectives, date back to 1973. Before 1990, certain other objectives had to be achieved using specific funds, but those were terminated in 1989 to make way for a pure research function and related matters. Those were determined formally in 1990, with the establishment of a research trust now known as the PRF.

The PRF's objectives focus on the following two aspects:

- **Protein research:** Research to the advantage of protein sources earmarked for animal feeds, related to animal proteins, as well as proteins obtained from oilseeds and other protein rich plants.
- **Oilcake research:** Research related specifically to the oilseeds protein value chain.

Vision

The PRF strives to contribute specifically to the promotion of locally produced protein on a sustainable basis, in order to satisfy the growing demand for protein for

animal production purposes, as well as the optimal utilisation thereof, which will lead to an increase in the standard of living of all people in South Africa.

Mission

The PRF contributes to the realisation of the vision for the provision and utilisation of protein by means of the proactive stimulation and funding of applicable purposeful research, as well as the promotion and implementation of such research results by means of technology transfer in order to fulfil the increasing demand for protein as well as its optimal utilisation for animal nutrition in South Africa.

The PRF subscribes to:

- A balanced, objective approach, sensitive to South Africa's developmental needs.
- A critical awareness of the latest developments regarding protein supply and utilisation.
- The promotion of cost-effective research.
- The dynamic promotion of the implementation of research results.
- The effective, sustained utilisation of natural agricultural resources.
- The reduction of foreign exchange payable for imports.

- The creation of employment opportunities by replacing imported protein, as far as possible, with locally produced protein.

In pursuit of these objectives, a well-developed structure is crucial.

Board of trustees

The Trust is administered and managed by a board of trustees consisting of at least five and at most 14 trustees, from various disciplines. The current chairperson of the board is AP Theron and Dr Erhard Briedenhann is the vice-chairperson.

Management committee

The management committee may be regarded as an extension of the board. The committee submits recommendations relating to policy issues to the board, passes resolutions in terms of delegated authority approved by the board, as defined in the administrative and financial guidelines, while also assuming responsibilities for financial and marketing matters.

The management committee consists of the PRF chairperson and vice-chairperson, the chairpersons of the board committees and/or elected board members. The management committee must consist of

at least three members. The PRF board chairperson acts as *ex officio* chairperson of the management committee.

The current management committee members are AP Theron, chairperson, Dr Erhard Briedenhann, vice-chairperson and chairperson of the technology committee, and Prof Ferdi Meyer, elected member.

Technology committee

The technology committee is one of the board's standing committees and reports directly to the board. The committee's functions involve:

- Evaluation and selection of all research projects submitted for funding within the policy and framework of the PRF mandate.
- Promotion of technology transfer by means of demonstration trials, transfer of information in the media and information days.
- Visits to researchers and research projects for support and encouragement of research.

- Identification of gaps and new subjects in terms of research projects and fields, as well as related recommendations to the PRF board.
- Identification of new supply sources and utilisation of proteins for animal feeds, as well as related recommendations to the PRF board.
- Decisions about bursaries and achievement awards.

Canola working group

The functions of this group are to discuss industry matters in the interests and to the benefit of the canola industry, as well as the identification of research projects and technology transfer to the advantage of the industry. The canola working group is attended by role-players in the industry and decisions are consensus based.

Canola planning committee

The functions of the planning committee are to discuss industry matters and to submit recommendations to the PRF

committees, insofar as these relate to research, technology transfer, liaison and other actions required to promote canola production.

Soya bean working group

The functions of this working group are to discuss industry matters in the interests and to the advantage of the soya bean industry, as well as the identification of research projects and technology transfer to the benefit of the industry. The soya bean working group is currently combined with the sunflower, soya bean and soy food forums of the oilseeds industry. Role-players within the industry participate and decisions are consensus based.

Soya bean planning committee

A soya bean planning committee is in the pipeline. It will be formed to discuss industry matters and submit recommendations to the PRF committees about research, technology transfer, liaison and other actions required for the promotion of soya bean production. 🌱



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