The Outeniqua Research Farm Pasture Science team, within the Directorate Plant Sciences of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA), has once again excelled at the annual national congress presented by the Grassland Society of Southern Africa (GSSA) held in Bloemfontein in July. The congress was attended by national and international rangeland and planted pasture scientists.

The team, under the leadership of Dr Philip Botha, consisted of Janke van der Colf, Pieter Swanepoel, Dalena Lombard, Brian Zulu, Ilze Fourie and Malissa Murphy. They delivered four platform and five poster presentations at the congress. These presentations included data on soil health and management, plant species/cultivar evaluation, irrigation management and pasture management practices.

The excellence of pasture-based research at the Outeniqua Research Farm was acknowledged by the GSSA when five of the six scientific awards at the congress went to four researchers based at the Outeniqua Research Farm.

Dr Philip Botha received the Prestige Award for life time achievement as a scientist and his contribution to the field of pasture science.

Pieter Swanepoel received the Best Platform Presentation award for his paper titled “Is soil organic carbon the most important soil quality indicator for planted pasture?”

Ilze Fourie (student) received the Best Presentation by a Young Scientist award for the paper titled “Production potential of Lucerne over-sown into kikuyu”.

For the second consecutive year Janke van der Colf won both the Best Poster presented at the congress as well as the

Dr. Ilse Trautmann, ilset@elsenburg.com
Norman Rethman Planted Pasture Award for the best platform presentation in pasture science. Her presentation was titled “Effect of planting methods on the production potential of perennial grass/clover mixtures planted into kikuyu”.

According to Annelene Swanepoel, Scientific Manager of the WCDoA’s Directorate Plant Sciences, this research team is part of one of the flag ship research programmes of the Department and forms the back bone of pasture research for dairy production, not only in this province, but also in the country. “This team is worthy of these accolades when one considers their huge list of research outputs and their utmost dedication to service delivery in their field. We are very proud of the excellent performance of this group!”