

## **Florida A&M University Farmer to Farmer Programme – an opportunity to acquire technical assistance from California and other American states**

### **Programme Background**

The United States Agency for international Development (USAID) funded Farmer to Farmer programme began in 1985 through the U.S. Agricultural Development and Trade Act. The programme was designed as an agricultural exchange and extension program, aimed at transferring the knowledge and expertise of U.S. agricultural volunteer experts to their counterparts in middle-income and emerging democracies. Having supported agricultural development in 50 countries over the past 24 years, the programme has become a prominent economic development driver. Though most participating experts are US citizens, many bring experience from South America, Asia, Eastern Europe, East and Southern Africa where progress has been seen in export volumes and quality in recent years. Experts from the programme are predominantly farmers, economists, business consultants and technical extensionists.

An independent evaluation of the program has been published on-line at [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PDACJ398.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACJ398.pdf).

### **Support to Emerging Table Grape Growers in South Africa**

Farmer to Farmer project implementers compete on a 4 to 5 year basis for the job of implementing newly designed Farmer to Farmer programmes. Florida A&M University (FAMU) was recently appointed to implement the new Farmer to Farmer program in South Africa. The SA Table Grape Industry (SATI), Fort Hare University and the cooperative, “Hands on Fish” (Stellenbosch), were selected as partners to the programme. A key objective of the programme in SATI’s context will be to help grow the competitiveness of emerging producers and their partners. SATI’s decision to participate in the programme bid, culminated from a long standing working relationship between producers and personnel from SATI, FAMU and Fresno State University. The proposed strategy under the 4 year project is to bring US consultants to our regions on a demand driven basis to focus on well prepared training, extension and consulting assignments. Support will relate to key marketing issues such as private standards accreditation (Fairtrade, Globalgap etc.), quality control, as well as business skills development. SATI will seek opportunities to extend support to local service providers of the industry where common objectives exist in developing our emerging growers’ businesses. US consultants (who in some cases have worked in other table grape countries) will offer their time free of charge. Cost sharing for local accommodation and local transport will be agreed to on a case by case basis.

Dr Dirk Brand, an expert in international affairs, was recently appointed as FAMU’s country director in South Africa. FAMU has opened an office in Belville to facilitate Farmer to Farmer operations in South Africa. FAMU and SATI will work together to match 32 extension, consulting and training assignments with appropriate applications on the ground.



Photo: Recent workshop held at new Florida A&M University offices in Bellville

Front Row - Elizabeth Robinson (FAMU- Programme Coordinator), Betty Hudson (FAMU- Programme Support), David Alexander (Fort Hare University-Programme Coordinator), Harriett Paul (FAMU- Director, International Agriculture) , Shahieda Daniels (Hands on Fish-Technical Management), Grabi Steyn (Hands on Fish-Technical Management),

Back Row - Dirk Brand (FAMU-Country Director), Phil Bowes (SATI-Transformation Manager), Henk Stander (Stellenbosch University)

**Article by Phil Bowes-SATI Transformation Manager**