

2008 TEAM BUILDING DAY

For the teams of the DST/NRF CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN TREE HEALTH BIOTECHNOLOGY (CTHB) AND THE TREE PROTECTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAMME (TPCP) AT FABI

Prepared by James Mehl and Ryan Nadel

On Friday 11 January 2008, the TPCP/CTHB team participated in a Team Building session at the ABSA Conference Centre in Pretoria North. Eighty-five members of the team, comprising research, administrative and technical personnel, research and postdoctoral fellows, and postgraduate students (MSc and PhD), took part in the Team Building Session.

Everybody gathered at the Conference Centre at 07:30 and enjoyed a hot cup of tea or coffee and snacks and then proceeded to the meeting room. Mike Wingfield; Director of FABI and the TPCP/CTHB research team, started off the proceedings by outlining the history of the TPCP and the establishment of the CTHB, which was of special interest to the new FABIans. During this meeting the following new initiatives were discussed and launched:

- the rearing of 2 000 000 000 nematodes for the forestry industry to combat the Sirex Woodwasp infestation. The TPCP/CTHB group has met this challenge and exceeded the expected targets by rearing 3 020 000 000 nematodes, largely as a result of dedicated team effort);
- the streamlining of the system of managing and organizing the FABI Culture Collection (CMW),
- the establishment of a scanning facility to enable students within the group to digitally scan in their references and compile reference lists, not only to ease the writing process but also to benefit new students entering the group;
- the launch of the new student work bursary package (R10 000) which replaced the existing work and top-up bursary package.
- feedback on revisions to the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

After lunch, the postgraduate students broke away into six discussion groups while the technical and administrative personnel, in turn, had a session with the management committee. The student leaders of the discussion groups collectively assembled a list of student-related issues which needed to be addressed. The group reconvened and the leaders of each discussion group reported back on the issues arising in their respective break away session. This gave the management team an opportunity to either respond to these issues immediately or to give further thought to these on their return to FABI.



Team members enjoying a warm cup of tea and coffee and looking forward to the day's proceedings



Some of the TPCP/CTHB team members gathering in the conference hall