

USA AND CTHB FUSARIUM RESEARCHERS VISIT SCIENTISTS AND STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

Professors John Leslie, David Geiser, Emma Steenkamp and Dr Martin Coetzee visited the School of Agriculture at the University of Venda (Univen) in the Limpopo Province on 6 May. Profs Leslie and Geiser are eminent scientists, recognised worldwide for their research on the fungal genus *Fusarium* and acted as lead-instructors at the recent International *Fusarium* Laboratory Workshop at FABI. Prof Leslie is a University Distinguished Professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at Kansas State University. Prof Geiser is conducting his research at Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences in the Department of Plant Pathology and Environmental Microbiology where he is also the Director of the *Fusarium* Research Centre.



Students and faculty members of the School of Agriculture who attended the lectures by Profs Leslie and Geiser.

The Univen visit provided an opportunity for researchers in the School of Agriculture to interact with Profs Leslie and Geiser and to receive presentations by the distinguished Professors dealing with various aspects of *Fusarium*. Prof Geiser presented a talk entitled “Fungal Taxonomy: Naming your friends and enemies” in which he highlighted the reasons the taxonomy of fungi is important to distinguish friends from enemies, and how modern taxonomic tools have elucidated the systematics of previously misidentified fungi. Prof. Leslie discussed mycotoxins in his presentation entitled “Mycotoxins in a war-torn country”. This seminar focused on the effects of mycotoxins, especially those produced by *Fusarium* species on nuts and raisins, on the health of humans and animals in Afghanistan. The visit was concluded by a tour of a citrus farm near Tshipise with students from the School of Agriculture.



Prof. Eastonce Gwata with Profs Emma Steenkamp, John Leslie and David Geiser at a greenhouse at the School of Agriculture.