

## UP SHINES AT 48<sup>TH</sup> SASPP CONGRESS

*Prepared by Teresa Coutinho for NAS Faculty Newsletter*

Students and staff of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences flew the University's flag high at the recent 48<sup>th</sup> congress of the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology (SASPP) at Bela Bela in Limpopo in January 2013.

Several members of the departments of Microbiology and Plant Pathology, Plant Science and Genetics attended the congress and awards were won including presentations, scientific achievement and contributions to the society. Apart from excelling in science, these staff and student members of the faculty also took home some prizes in the "fun" competitions at the congress, showing a well-balanced approach to life!

Prof Lise Korsten of the Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology was elected as a fellow of the SASPP. She was awarded this fellowship in recognition for outstanding accomplishments in Plant Pathology as well as support for and service to the Society and to Plant Pathology in southern Africa.

Prof Bernard Slippers of the Department of Genetics of the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI) was awarded the JE Vanderplank Award. This award is made to an outstanding "young" plant pathologist based on evaluation of his or her research. Prof Slippers already has an H factor of 21, holds a P-rating from the National Research Foundation (NRF) and has published more than 100 publications, making him the well-deserved first recipient of this prestigious award.

Johan van der Linde, a PhD student in the Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology and FABI was the second recipient of the John and Petakin Mildenhall award to a PhD student. This award recognises academic excellence and potential. Johan, just starting the second year of his PhD research, has already published three papers in international scientific journals (from his MSc) and has presented talks and posters at both national and international congresses.

UP students were among the top achievers in the categories for presentations and posters by students at the congress. Darryl Herron (Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology, FABI) received the Pannar Prize for the best presentation overall by a student, with Johan van der Linde (PhD student in Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology, FABI) was a close second in this category. In the category for the best molecular presentation by a student, Anandi Reitman (Department of Genetics, FABI) received the Inqaba Biotech prize for the best presentation. Juanita Engelbrecht (Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology) was second.

It was, however, not only in the "serious science" activities where UP staff and students excelled. They also showed that they lead well-balanced lives and can have great fun while working hard. During the Quiz evening sponsored by Starke Ayres one of the UP teams (from Dr Jacquie van der Waal's group) came out as the overall winners, scoring 25 out of 30 for the event. Having even more fun, drinking beer in a very creative manner, two of UP's members won their respective categories. Karlien Muller was the winner of both the "novice" and "female" category, while Prof Jolanda Roux won the "veterans" category of the "Mildenhall Stakes" competition where the aim is to drink beer without using your hands.



**Johan van der Linde, Mrs Petakin  
Mildenhall and Prof John Mildehall.**



**Vicky Knight and Dr Rikus Kloppers of  
Pannar presenting Darryl Herron with the  
Pannar Shield for the best presentation by  
a student at the SASPP congress.**



**Prof Jolanda Roux (Chair of the  
Organising Committee) handing over the  
Inqaba prize to Anandi Reitman.**



**Prof Bernard Slippers was awarded the JE  
Vanderplank award. On the left Prof  
Teresa Coutinho and on the right Prof  
Pedro Crous**