



AAVF Newsletter #2

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For our March Newsletter, the **AAVF** is proud to give this space to the University of Johannesburg. To thank them for their hospitality and for honoring the AAVF by hosting the inaugural ceremony. We could not have chosen a better Partner for long term collaboration in securing sustainable innovative food solutions for Africa. **Josephine Favre, President, AAVF.**

UJ Agri-Gurus to explore African Conference on Vertical Farming and Urban Agriculture

iZindaba Zokudla (Conversations about Food) - a multi-stakeholder engagement research project, led by Dr Naudé Malan of the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies from the University of Johannesburg (UJ), is thrilled to announce it will be hosting the inaugural conference for the **African Association for Vertical Farming (AAVF)** at Soweto Campus, on 9-10 April 2019. The event aims to offer sustainable and innovative solutions for emergent farmers and other entrepreneurs in Johannesburg.

The continually-growing world population, the global trend to urbanisation, climate change and pressure on natural resources are key drivers for policies on global food security. Vertical farming is an innovative methodology for vertical cultivation of agricultural products, which can also realise true zero-mile city food supply.

“We are delighted to host this conference as we can see many benefits in the future for new approaches to urban agriculture in a sustainable food system in Soweto,” says Dr Naudé Malan, Senior Lecturer in Development Studies, UJ.

Vertical farms can be built in new or existing buildings and provide significant benefits in environmental sustainability and human health, minimizing the need for water and nutrients, and eliminating pesticides and fungicides, which are now needed in reduced quantities.

“The increasing number of people in cities requires new strategies to supply the necessary food with limited provision of land and decreasing resources. This will become more challenging unless innovative solutions for growing and distributing food in urban environments are considered,” explained Dr Malan.

The conference aims to bring together new and established farmers, scientists, engineers, industrialists and policymakers to discuss current ideas, technologies, commercial applications and research opportunities in Vertical Farming and Urban Agriculture. It will evaluate the benefits, opportunities, risks and challenges of vertical farming / urban agriculture and provide a forum for establishing research collaboration and networking between academic researchers and commercial interests.

Focus topics of the conference include: Available technologies – LED lighting, sensors, AI; Plant condition issues like: CO2, Nutrients, Irrigation, Climate, Lighting; Food safety / HACCP; Robotics; Improved resource-use efficiency; Sustainable Buildings (design, green roof, energy); Smart Cities / Architecture / Urban Design From traditional farmer to vertical farmer.

Alongside the festivities (at no cost to participate) Izindaba Zokudla will be hosting the Farmers Lab at the Soweto Campus which is pioneering methods to integrate emerging enterprises with the research and programmes that the UJ offers.

The African Association for Vertical Farming (AAVF) is hosted by iZindaba Zokudla, in association with the Farmers Lab on Soweto, the UJs Centre for Entrepreneurship and the Process, Energy, Environment and Technology Station at UJs Doornfontein campus, Johannesburg.

Dr Naudé Malan is available for interviews on request. He can be contacted directly on 082 214 5792 and you can email nmalan@uj.ac.za

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