

# Nico Wagner, Syngenta National Potato Farmer of the year 2017

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Nico Wagner was announced as the Syngenta National Potato Farmer of the Year at the banquet of Potatoes South Africa's Congress on 28 September 2017. He and his wife Manlie, farm with potatoes, sweet corn, cattle and wildlife on Wilnick near Tolwe in Limpopo. The farm was established on a mere 89 ha when Nico's father, the late Willem Wagner, bought his first land in 1980. From the outset, productivity and integrity were a given. This philosophy of Willem lives on in the second generation of this family farm under the leadership of Nico Wagner.



Winner of the Syngenta National Potato Farmer of the Year 2017, Nico Wagner and his wife Manlie from Wilnick in Lipopo

(Itr) Ernst Yzel, former Chairperson of Potatoes South Africa; Manlie and Nico Wagner - new Syngenta National Potato Farmer of the Year 2017 and Antonie Delport, Managing Director of Syngenta South Africa

Nico acknowledges his spouse, Manlie as his right hand and "best thing that ever happened to him" and says that except for the fact that they need lots of grace, they are doing ordinary things exceptionally well.

As an entrepreneur who sees opportunities in the face of adversity, Nico thinks outside the box. Constantly improving on his potato production processes, Nico is acutely tuned to risks and coming up with astounding measures to negate them. There is barely any branch of his farming business that hasn't yet been turned into spin-off businesses of their own. Nothing goes to waste or is wasted. Nico has his finger on the pulse of the fresh produce markets. He has solid relationships with his market agents. He also has solid relationships with the people who work at Wilnick.

Nico has a deep appreciation and concern for natural resources and he walks his talk every step of the way. He also places a very high value on product quality which has a guarantee of satisfaction on every bag. Farming success is due to intense risk management, trained and purposeful staff who do things exceptionally well. Nico ascribes the success of Wilnick to much faith and mercy.



Nico Wagner in his pack house on the farm Wilnick near Tolwe in Limpopo.



Nico Wagner knows that each of his workers take total ownership of their responsibilities and that is why the wheels of Wilnick runs smoothly



When a young potato field is as robust as this, then Nico Wagner rests assured that “my plants are happy within their hearts” and a good yield is forming below the surface.

Nico’s father, Willem Wagner, who passed away seven years ago, was also a Syngenta National Potato Farmer of the Year as well as a recipient of the *Solanum Tuberosum Meritum* award. In his speech, after being announced as the potato farmer of the year, Nico lifted the trophy triumphantly and exclaimed “this cup is going back to Limpopo!” Well done Nico and Manlie, may you serve as inspiration of determination, courage, innovation and the willingness to embrace that which makes this country so unique!