

Sponsorship Policies

The Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA) is the professional organisation of agricultural economists in South Africa. It was established in 1961 and presently has more than 500 members. AEASA has positioned itself strategically for the 21st century to enable it to be relevant for all agricultural economists, thereby assisting them to serve their communities. The shared vision is that AEASA's products and services should support all agricultural economists active in the industry irrespective of race, language, gender, career choice and educational level.

The strategies are to:

Manage the 500-strong member base efficiently;

Improve the internal organisational structures;

Coordinate the communication mix (Agrekon, newsletter and homepage) and to facilitate internal and external communication;

Maintain economic visibility (e.g. regular comment on developments in agricultural policy, agriculture and agribusiness issues);

Manage the business office; Market the Association;

Improve the Association's products and services;

Seek strategic alliances.

Although members of AEASA pay annual subscription fees, the Association still depends on outside sponsorship to achieve its stated objectives as efficiently as possible. AEASA has built excellent relationships with various sponsors over many years, and would like to strengthen and improve these relationships in the future. This document serves to formally establish a Sponsorship Policy.

The following guidelines are important:

The responsibility for raising sponsorship for AEASA activities rests with the AEASA Management Committee.

The Management Committee and incoming Chairperson of the Conference Organising Committee must agree on what sponsorship responsibilities will be delegated to the Organising Committee, what the sponsorship requirements are and what time frames need to be adhered to, at the first Management Committee meeting following the year's conference.

All communication between the Management Committee and sponsors, or the Organising Committee and sponsors, must be copied to all parties.

The Land Bank and commercial banks in South Africa are currently the major sponsors of the Association. They compete with each other, sometimes to AEASA's discomfort. No financial institution (or any other organisation/business) has the sole right to advertise at an AEASA conference, or to do anything that would deter other sponsors. All sponsors will be given exposure commensurate with the value of the sponsorship at the venue for the duration of the conference and workshops. Main sponsors will be acknowledged as such in the programme and at the sponsors' dinner.

- Fund raising organisations should preferably not be used. Attempts by AEASA to raise funds this way in 1999/2000 were expensive, and brought in no additional funds. The Association loses control of the script, which can lead to some odd statements in the outgoing mail. It is important to protect the image of the Association at all times.
- The appointed AEASA sponsorship committee must investigate new sponsorship opportunities. (For example, attempts in 2000/01 brought in R16 000 from the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund for assisting disadvantaged students to attend the annual conference.) Sponsorship requests should be handled judiciously and the relevant actions and opportunities should be communicated to the stakeholders speedily and effectively.
- As the workshops form an integral part of the conference, exclusive workshop sponsorship will not be permitted. Sponsors seeking to sponsor a workshop will be permitted to display their material alongside the other conference sponsors, and will be entitled to 'name' the workshop (e.g. the "FNB workshop on..."). It is essential that the Conference Organisers communicate closely with workshop organisers to ensure that workshop sponsor requirements are met. Ideally, workshop sponsors should be dealt with in the same way as all other conference sponsors.
- Once funding has been secured, the necessary exposure should be given to the sponsors via the media etc. The details regarding the exact amounts and agreed-on publicity material at both the conference and workshops must be available on request. In the past gold, silver and bronze sponsorship

categories were used, however, the success thereof is doubtful. (Point 2 dictates that there be only two categories namely Main Sponsor and general sponsorships.)

- Different sponsorship packages should be available, e.g. sponsorship partly for the annual conference, partly for ongoing activities such as awards, provincial activities, etc. Any organisation that gives even R1000 should receive the necessary exposure and appreciation from AEASA.
- In addition to sponsorships, membership fees, annual conference fees, prices of the journal, etc., have to be raised in order to bring in additional income to cover the major AEASA activities.
- Decide earlier on the conference speakers, booking them and broadcasting the fact. The conference theme and aim should be decided on well in advance of organising the speakers etc. Speakers should be adequately briefed on these issues.
- Every effort should be made to establish a long-term relationship with sponsors.

Much is achieved if the annual sponsorship dinner is both fun and serious, and AEASA should voice its appreciation for all sponsors. AEASA is an organisation to be proud of in terms of its research output and conferences, but also in terms of being an organisation firmly in touch with the new realities of South Africa. It consists of good-humoured, competent people from various sectors, including students, who are keen to contribute to South Africa's advances in agriculture and rural development. Somehow, that enthusiasm, intellectual openness and constructiveness must be put across to more sponsors as something rather special.

Compiled by Gerald Ortmann, Diana Callear and Graham Moor (June/July 2002)