

For Immediate Release

To: All Media

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Attention: News Editors / Agricultural Writers

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) introduces discounted double-aspect soil health testing package - *YourSoil™* - aligned to annual soil testing cycles.

Pretoria: *YourSoil™* is a new service package offered through the ARC-Plant Health and Protection and ARC-Natural Resources and Engineering-Soil, Climate and Water research campuses that offers a “double-aspect” analytical service to farmers and land users to determine the health of their soils. The testing package, discounted by 10% on normal tariffs until the end of March 2022, gives farmers the opportunity to test their soil health throughout the year, aligned to the various crop development stages.

The list of tests covers two broad aspects of their soil. The first is the *biotic* aspect, where soil microorganisms, nematodes, fungi and bacteria are used as biological indicators to determine soil health. The second is the *abiotic* aspect, which includes the physical and chemical analysis of the soil and plant material. The package can then be tailor-made as individual farmers have the opportunity to choose from a wide range of tests within these two aspects. All these tests focus on soil as a natural resource and its sustainable use and management in agriculture.

Soil health is defined as the ability of the soil to function as a life supporting system that promotes agricultural productivity as well as improved water and air quality. Improving the health of a farmer’s soil can reduce input costs and enhance its sustainability. In light of the increasing importance of soil health to farmers, the benefits of this unique new package developed by the ARC are endless. The customized set of tests can contribute towards a long-term soil monitoring system, which can result in more income on a sustainable basis.

The ARC’s Acting CEO, Dr Nthabiseng Motete, stresses that: “The ARC is South Africa’s custodian of agricultural research and develops innovative solutions for the sector to safeguard food security and supports the agriculture value chain using state-of-the-art technologies. Through the development of solutions such as the *YourSoil™* package, the ARC continues to make significant contributions towards transforming agriculture in South Africa.”

Contact details for *YourSoil™* are e-mail: yoursoil@arc.agric.za or telephone: 012 808 8266.

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Notes to the Editors

About the Agricultural Research Council

The Agricultural Research Council is a premier science institution that conducts research with partners, develops human capital and fosters innovation in support of the agricultural sector. The ARC provides diagnostic, laboratory, analytical, agricultural engineering services, post-harvest technology development, agrochemical evaluation, consultation and advisory services, food processing technology services as well as various surveys and training interventions. For more information, visit the ARC website at www.arc.agric.za