



## ADSA aims to develop dietitians in their profession

The sole purpose for the existence of the Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA) is to represent and develop the dietetics profession in order to contribute towards achieving optimal nutrition for all South Africans. ADSA is a voice for all dietitians. It is also ADSA's slogan that "if it is about nutrition, ask a dietitian." It is for the good of dietitians if this voice is very loud. The pitch or volume of the voice is decided by membership numbers and the professionalism of the dietitians themselves.

What does ADSA do for me? Dietitians are recognised as health professionals because some dietitians in the 1970s and 1980s fought and raised their voices so that the profession would be recognised and given due respect. Some new professions like food service managers and nutritionists are at the early stage of this battle and are currently fighting for recognition of their professions. ADSA is a member of the International Confederation of Dietetic Associations (ICDA), which represents about 150 000 dietetics professionals around the world.

Dietitians practice evidence-based nutrition. This requires continuous development towards understanding scientific content and implementing best practice in everyday activities. ADSA promotes evidence-based scientific content by supporting continuing professional development activities all over the country. This is achieved by dietitians volunteering their time and services to the development of the profession.

ADSA also provides a bursary of up to R25 000 to one second-year student in need. Sindiswa Qungani is a former ADSA bursary recipient who is now a dietitian doing her community service year in Mpumalanga.

This year, the bursary is going to Sibulelo Pango from the Western Cape. Furthermore, ADSA offers a postgraduate study grant to carry out research concerning the dietetics profession, e.g. a study that looks at activities undertaken by dietitians practising the profession.

The topic of ethics in the administering of health to the community is of paramount importance. The ADSA president has taken this topic on a road show to all the branches. ADSA will continue to address other areas in the topic of ethics in the future.

ADSA recognises dietitians who have excelled in their professional area. At the Biennial Nutrition Congress, ADSA recognises a dietitian who has contributed extensively to the profession of dietetics with the ADSA Flora award. The ADSA/SASA award, also presented at the congress, aims to promote interest and awareness in the field of nutrition education as defined by the Professional Board for Dietetics in "The scope of the dietitian", and to highlight innovative work done by dietitians working in this field. ADSA endeavours to promote the sharing of experiences, knowledge and intelligence with other dietitians. This is dependent on the contribution made by the dietitians themselves. The ADSA Newsletter is delivered once a month to all dietitians. It is envisioned that opportunities for jobs, promotions and news delivered two weekly would be of value to all dietitians.

Dietitians, do you really want to lose this voice?



## NSSA newsbits

Currently, 59 nutritionists and 144 nutrition students are registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The list of registered nutritionists can be accessed on the HPCSA website, [www.hpcsa.co.za](http://www.hpcsa.co.za), by following the link "Professional Boards" from the side menu and selecting "Dietetics and Nutrition". Then, select "Access to Register" from the new side menu. Click on "Register" and select "Nutritionist" from the drop-down menu. Useful information about registration as a nutritionist is also available on the HPCSA website.

The Nutrition Society of Southern Africa (NSSA) Eastern Branch (based in KwaZulu-Natal) elected new branch committee members in April 2011. The chairperson is Prof Carin Napier, the secretary Christine Broadhurst, and the treasurer Lenore Spies. Other committee members are Heleen Grobbelaar, Christelle de Witt, Justine Casey, Prof Frederick Veldman and Dr Vikash Sewram. The branch is planning a mini-symposium in August 2011.

The NSSA Northern Branch, in collaboration with Grain South Africa, held a debate entitled "Vegetable oils: future trends and applications" on 28 March 2011. The panel included representatives from academia, the oil-processing industry and plant breeding. The topics presented, leading to the debate, included: a background on fats and oils (Prof Marius Smuts, North-West University); the availability of vegetable oils, fatty acid composition and fat intake (Dr Petro Wolmarans, Medical Research Council); the industry's future expectations of sunflower oil (Drs Pieter van Twist and Lourens du Plessis, private consultants); the influence of health on the formulation of fat-based spreads (Ms Christelle de Witt, Unilever); and an update by seed breeders on high oleic acid sunflower oil (Mr Johan Potgieter, seed breeder, Pannar Seed). In addition to the debate, Prof Salome Kruger (North-West University) gave a presentation on research ethics, while Prof Edelweiss Wentzel-Viljoen (chairperson of the HPCSA Board for Dietetics and Nutrition) presented an update on the registration of nutritionists in South Africa. The event was sponsored by AGRICOL, the Oil and Protein Seed Development Trust, Pannar, Senwes, Unilever and Vergezocht.