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## Grassland Society of Southern Africa Prestige Award Presented to Dr Mark Hardy

Kevin Kirkman, University of Natal

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During the Gala Dinner of the 47th Annual Congress of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa, Mark Hardy was presented with the GSSA Prestige Award.  
16th to 20th July 2012, Western Cape Province, South Africa

**M**ark Hardy obtained a Diploma in Forestry from the Saasveld Forestry College in 1976. He was posted to the Drakensberg region of KwaZulu-Natal where he developed a strong interest in grasslands and the management of grasslands. This led him to resign from the Forestry Department and enroll for a BSc Agriculture degree in Grassland Science at the University of Natal in 1978. Being a “mature” student, Mark made excellent progress and completed his degree in 1981. He then enrolled for a Masters degree which he completed in 1983.

Mark went on to work for the Department of Agriculture, based at Cedara, as a researcher in Grassland Science. His main focus was on veld research, but he also maintained a strong interest in pasture research. During this time he maintained strong links with the University of Natal in a research capacity. He enrolled for a PhD degree in 1990, which he completed in 1994. His PhD studies were focused on studying the relative impacts of sheep and cattle veld composition and condition, and the impact of these ratios on animal performance.

This work remains a highlight of his career. In 1998 Mark relocated to the Western Cape as a specialist scientist in the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, where he focused largely on developing crop rotation systems with pastures as an intermediate in the rotation. This work was, and still is, highly regarded. In addition to this, Mark made significant contributions to developing a research friendly environment in the Western Cape which remains the envy of other provinces.

During his career, Mark published widely in scientific journals and also published many semi-scientific and popular articles. His overall contributions to the Grassland Science community and to the Society will be remembered for many years.

Mark retired recently, to Montagu in the Western Cape, but remains active in his role as Extraordinary Professor at the University of Stellenbosch, and will continue to make contributions to the Grassland Science community in various ways and will continue to stand out in the field of Grassland Science.

