

CURRICULUM VITAE

Dr Kobus Laubscher

NAME OF FIRM: OABS Development (Pty) Ltd
NAME OF STAFF: Jacobus Martin (Kobus) Laubscher (PhD)
PROFESSION: Agricultural Economist & Strategist
DATE OF BIRTH: 16 May 1951
NATIONALITY: South African



QUALIFICATIONS

1973 B. Com, majoring Agricultural Economics, Economics & Statistics - University of the Free State
1974 B. Com Hons (Agricultural Economics) Cum Laude
1976 MS Agricultural Economics – University of Illinois
1982 Ph.D Agricultural Economics - University of the Orange Free State
1990-1991 Advanced Executive program – UNISA
1998 Developing the Professional Entrepreneur – University of the Witwatersrand, Graduate School of Business
2002 New Director's Workshop - US Business School
2004 Successfully completed training modules in Corporate Governance – Council of Medical Schemes and the Board of Health funders

EXPERIENCE

Kobus Laubscher is an independent agricultural economist and strategist, advising agri-businesses, farmers and government, nationally and internationally with emphasis on making agriculture better. This imperative evolved from a revaluation of the role agriculture can play in economic development and consequently revolutionary economic growth. To improve living conditions beyond decreasing food insecurity rural development is key and prominence is given in the national development strategies of South Africa to agriculture. Dr Laubscher has demonstrated an understanding that rural development and processes of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas and to affect same. He has had leadership responsibilities towards moving the paradigm of rural development that has traditionally centered on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry towards incorporation of changes in global production networks and market requirements where and increased urbanization have changed the character of rural areas. He has investigated the multiplier impact of increasing eco-tourism, niche value chain operations, and recreation as dominant economic drivers demanding different resource extraction and role for agriculture. Although the need for rural communities to approach development from a wider perspective has created more focus on a broad range of development goals rather than merely creating incentives for agricultural or resource-based businesses, Laubscher is leading initiatives, strategically and operational, to put more emphasis on locally produced economic development strategies. His exposure and adherence to corporate governance has earned respect and board level involvement enables networking and negotiations with governments and private sector. Dr Laubscher is also known and respected as an excellent communicator willing and able to engage on a cross-cutting basis, from talking to farmers under a tree to negotiating improved terms of reference with the president of a country. He is a regular contributor on agricultural matters in the media, i.e. Republikein, Central Media, Bloemfontein, Farmers Weekly, RSG, Radio Kosmos, etc.

He served in various consulting capacities: as a Senior Program Advisor of the NEPAD Business Foundation and Manager Origination at Atlas Trading and Shipping. He was the CEO of Grain SA since January 2008 and took compulsory retirement at the beginning of March 2011 (it is company policy to retire at age 60). As a qualified agricultural economist with a PhD in this field he also acts as expert witness in more than 140 court cases. Deliver the 2017 FR Tomlinson Commemorative Lecture – acknowledged for contributions to the profession.

Kobus's employment history includes the following: Professor at the University of the Free State, visiting professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Illinois and managing director of various companies. He also fulfilled various leadership roles: as a member of the Council of the University of the Free State and chairperson of the Audit committee; chairperson of Productivity SA; chairperson of the Audit Committee of the Dept of the Premier of the Free State and served in the Economic Advisory Committee of the Premier of the Free State then and subsequently appointed to the new committee in 2012. He served as non-executive on various boards: Agrico Machinery (Pty) Ltd.; Farmvision and Konsortium Merinos. He was also a member of various audit committees, i.e. for three departments in the Free State provincial government, Robben Island Museum. Kobus was appointed a fellow of the World Academy of Productivity Science, the first recipient thereof in SA Agriculture.

He is currently the vice-chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Agricultural Research Council.
