

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Giant pumpkin champion...1

Pinkie Swart from Heidelberg set a new South African record at the Giant Pumpkin competition sponsored by Shoprite Checkers, when his pumpkin weighed in at 497.5 kg, winning him the title of Giant Pumpkin Champion for 2014. This is 80 kilograms more than the SA record set by Johan du Plessis from Worcester last year.

The competition was held as part of the very popular Durbanville Plaasfees at the Diemersdal wine estate on Saturday 15 March 2014. Those pumpkin growers who were able to successfully cultivate giant pumpkins over the past six months faced their rivals after transporting their enormous pumpkins with great care in bakkies and trucks from as far afield as Vereeniging in Gauteng to be weighed in and judged.

A total of 27 pumpkins were judged in the categories of heaviest, prettiest and most unusual-looking. The youngest competitor, Cronje Smit (10) from Stellenbosch, stole spectators' hearts when he enthusiastically presented his entry of a 151 kg pumpkin.

Second place was taken by Gert van Deventer of Montague with his pumpkin of 422.5 kg, which is also heavier than last year's champion, and third place was awarded to veteran pumpkin grower Johan du Plessis from Worcester for his entry weighing in at 397.5 kg.

Contests for pumpkin growers competing on size are very popular all over the world and the current world record, set in the USA in 2013, stands at a massive 921.7 kg.

The Shoprite Group's fresh fruit and vegetable procurement division, Freshmark, annually provides an opportunity for South African pumpkin growers to compete in the big leagues with the Shoprite Checkers Giant Pumpkin Competition that is recognized by the International Pumpkin Growers Association as an official contest, and all pumpkin sizes and records are officially recorded as such.

In August last year, pumpkin growers acquired giant pumpkin seeds from Freshmark with which to enter the 2014 Giant Pumpkin Competition. Pumpkin growers can enter the competition with pumpkins grown from any seeds, but the seeds provided by Freshmark are special in that they are not genetically modified in any way, and originate from giant pumpkins from the North American Dill's Atlantic Giant variety weighing between 150 and 300 kilograms.

The 2014 Giant Pumpkin Champion walked away with R12 000 in cash, while the second and third place winners received cheques to the value of R7 000 and R3 500 respectively.

For more information on the competition visit www.grootpampoer.co.za

Ends

16 March 2014

Shoprite and Checkers Giant Pumpkin Competition Winners 2014:

TITLE	WINNER	WEIGHT
Winner	Pinkie Swart (Heidelberg)	497.5kg (new SA record)
Runner-up	Gert van Deventer (Montague)	422.5kg
Third place	Johan du Plessis (Worcester)	397.5kg
Prettiest	Karel Robertson (Heidelberg)	346.5kg
Ugliest	Pietie Kleynhans (Heidelberg)	77 kg
Smallest	Edmund van Rooyen (Stellenbosch)	43.5kg
2013	Johan du Plessis	417.5 kg (previous SA record)