

ARC INFRUITEC-NIETVOORBIJ



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SIP, SAVOUR, AND STRATEGISE-ARC COUNCIL VISITS INFRITEC-NIETVOORBIIJ



ARC- Council Member Infruitec- Nietvoorbij Campus Tour

The ARC Council members held a Strategic Planning Session from the 22-24 November 2023 where all the Council Members & Executive Management came together to brainstorm, collaborate and chart the course for the future of the ARC. From innovative initiatives to ways to advance the industry, discussions were dynamic and forward-thinking. Council Members and Executives Management met the ARC Infruitec/Nietvoorbij Campus and had the opportunity to plan and network.



PIKETBERG FIELD DAY



One of the field day excursions was in the Piketberg region. Delegates visited the Steenebrug production units of Suiderland Farms, where they were introduced to some varieties of Sunworld and Bloom Fresh. During the visit to several vineyards, delegates were informed about cultivation practices to obtain the optimal grape quality.

SAAFOST 25TH BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS



In Picture:
from Left to Right: Dr Rodney Hart (Acting RTM: Post-Harvest and Agro-Processing Technologies (PHAT), Ms Valmary van Breda (PhD-candidate), Dr Francois van Jaarsveld, Ms Magdeline Magoro (ARC: Animal Production), Mr Jeremy Boonzaier (PhD-candidate), and Dr Heinrich du Plessis.

Researchers and students (PhD and MSc) within the Wine and Fermentation Technology Group, Post-Harvest and Agro-Processing Technologies (PHAT) research team gave two (2) poster and three (3) oral presentations at the SAAFoST 25th Biennial International Congress held Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) from the 28 August to 30 August 2023 with the theme “Future Foods – Smarter and more sustainable solutions”.

Therefore, an SA Wine-funded study aimed at the construction of a local authoritative analytical database for the authentication of South African wines in terms of geographical, botanical, dilution, variety, and vintage was initiated at the ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij spearheaded by Dr Francois van Jaarsveld. Additionally, Ms Nangamso Maneli, supervised by Dr Van Jaarsveld, reported on the use polyphenols extracted from white grape skins from winery effluent water to enhance wine stability during storage as part of her MSC-study.

VITICULTURE PHYSIOLOGY GROUP INSTITUTION VISIT

From 21 to 24 November 2023, two collaborators from Italy visited the viticulture physiology group. Prof Vittorino Novello from the University of Turin and Prof Laura de Palma from the University of Foggia in Italy collaborated with Prof Kobus Hunter (PhD promotor), Ms J Strydom (Researcher and PhD student on the project) and Mr Neels Volschenk on an existing industry- and NRF-supported project that addresses the effect of water regimes and overhead plastic covering on the quality of Crimson Seedless (PhD study). The purpose of the visit was to discuss research results and prepare presentations presented at the 10th International Table Grape Symposium.

During the visit, proff Novello and de Palma visited the trial site. All collaborators participated in the 10th International Table Grape Symposium held from 26 November to 1 December at the Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West. Prof Novello also delivered a presentation in his capacity as vice president of the OIV.

NEW STAFF APPOINTMENTS



**NEW ARC INFRUITEC-NIETVOORBIJ PRO:
MS NOMKHOSI NGCOBO**

Ms. Ngcobo joined the ARC on the 20th of October 2023. She holds a B-Tech in Public Relations Management which she obtained with Merits. Ms Ngcobo describes herself as an enthusiastic and results-oriented emerging professional with an aptitude for driving Communication, Marketing and advertising strategies to achieve goals. Her background includes recent professional experience supporting brand Marketing and Communication strategies to accelerate revenue growth and stimulate top business performance. Ms Ngcobo has been working in the world of Public Relations, Marketing and Communications for over 6 years. With a solid foundation in the basic principles of Marketing and Communication, her communication and time management capabilities position her to thrive in this challenging and energizing position.



**IN PICTURE:
Ms Strydom with Proff Novello and De Palma during the vineyard visit.**

HONEYBUSH AT THE SPOTLIGHT IN THE AFRICAN BIOTRADE FESTIVAL

The ARC's Honeybush team was invited to give delegates a honeybush tea tasting experience at the 1st African BioTrade Festival, held at Sandton International Convention Centre on the 14-16 September 2023. The venue was open to the public on Saturday, 16 September. The festival was an initiative by government (Department of Forestry & Fisheries & Environment, Department of Trade Industry), Organic & Natural Products and partners.

The purpose of the festival was to showcase the growth and market potential of indigenous ingredients and products derived from key biotrade species such as Baobab, Marula, Sceletium, Buchu and Honeybush. An important event at the Festival was the signing of the Access and Benefit Sharing Agreement of the Buchu sector between the Khoi and San Council and the industry. The ARC's goal was to promote honeybush research and commercialisation through community development.

Dr Cecilia Bester and Ms Bongwiwe Sokwaliwa of the ARC explained how the Honeybush sensory wheel and lexicon, a tool developed by the Post-Harvest and Agro-Processing Technologies Division of ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij and its research partners, can be used as a guide to discover the nuances of the aroma and taste of this unique South African herbal tea.

Over the three days of the festival, more than 3000 cups of honeybush from three *Cyclopia* species were sampled. For many it was their first taste of honeybush tea. The unique flavour of honeybush left many speechless that processing of plant could produce such floral, sweet and fruity-sweet flavours naturally.

On the same event Dr Cecilia Bester served on two panels. In the first session, she contributed on "Biodiversity and Business Sustainability" via agricultural production. The second session was on "Conservation and Sustainable Use - Integrating the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in ABS Approaches in South Africa". Dr Bester talked about the role of conservation and importance of genebanks.



12TH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON SAP FLOW



Mr Muthianzhele Ravuluma attended the 12th international workshop on sap flow in Rotorua, Aotearoa, New Zealand and the conference was held from the 31st of October to the 3rd of November 2023. Muthianzhele presented a poster titled "Sap flow dynamics of young and mature pomegranate orchards under semi-arid conditions." He won the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) Young Mind for best poster presented.



10TH INTERNATIONAL TABLE GRAPE SYMPOSIUM



ARC staff and students attended the 10th International Table Grape symposium in Somerset west. Carolynn Howell, Leander Engelbrecht (MSc student), Minette Havenga, Elleunorah Allsopp, Wynand van Jaarsveld (PhD student), Nonkululeko Masikane, Phyllis Burger, Adri Nieuwenhuys, Janine Strydom, Kara Janse van Rensburg (MSc student), Reckson Mulidzi (absent)



HO HO INFUITEC/NIETVOORBIJ YEAR-END FUNCTION



When we are approaching the Festive season we often feel keen to celebrate the year achievements and reflect on the ups and downs along the way. The end year function poses the perfect opportunity to get to know each other better at a social level. The Infruitec-Nitevoorbij staff took some time off from their hectic schedules to unwind at their Year- End function on the 08th of December 2023, the function was held at Infruitec Campus (Heritage Garden). This event is purely a social event, giving all the employees an opportunity to get to know each other in a more casual atmosphere. This event provides us with that special opportunity to enjoy other's company socially. The day was fun filled with activities.

The Agricultural Research Council believes in rewarding and recognizing the staff for providing excellent and efficient service throughout the years. As part of the event program, staff who serviced the longest in the institution were handover with long services certificates as the sign of appreciation.

A few photos from the 2023 Infruitec/Nietvoorbij Year-End function



2023 YEAR-END FUNCTION MOMENTS



**Writer & Photographer
Ms. N Ngcobo (PRO)**

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(ARC Senior Research Manager)**

HAPPY READING!!!