MAY 2020



### IN THIS ISSUE

-LASH

- SAPO bolsters its internal capacities
- Vermeerdering van virus gereinigde Merbein Seedless
  SAPO's pathology lab is geared to test for grapevine
- fanleaf virus • Vestiging van 143B moederplante
- The importance of IP in agriculture

SAPO BOLSTERS ITS INTERNAL CAPACITIES IN PURSUIT OF AN EVOLVING VALUE PROPOSITION

During the last few months SAPO Trust has been hard at work to bolster its value proposition and to increase its internal capacities to the benefit of its clients.

The scope of Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests within our Plant Pathology Laboratory has been broadened. SAPO has also managed to increase its human capital, now boasting no less than 3 Plant Pathologists and 1 Virologist, all qualified to master's degree level. The latest addition to our team is Ms. Lize van der Merwe, Senior Laboratory Analyst, who joined SAPO during the early part of 2020. Clients are encouraged to establish contact with our highly capable team of scientists, not only for current testing needs but also for future needs to support the objective of plant improvement and virus-free material.



MS. LIZE VAN DER MERWE, SENIOR LABORATORY ANALYST

The appointment of Dr. Waheed Mahomed, PhD graduate in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology and a Patent Lawyer, enables SAPO to expand its offering to its Intellectual Property (IP) clients, plant breeder companies and the broader agriculture fraternity. IP management is a specialised field and Waheed, with his previous experience at one of the leading IP companies, Spoor & Fisher, is ready to assist clients with customised services tailor-made to the needs of partners and associates in business with SAPO. This unit is further bolstered by the addition of Ms. Tinneke van Zyl, BSc (honours) degree graduate in Horticultural Science in her capacity as Key Account Manager for technical aspects related to IP contracts.

Whereas the above-mentioned skills and expertise bode well for a revitalised value proposition, SAPO will soon be embarking on a strategy review process to fortify its offering to its clients and to the greater agriculture sector. Under the stewardship of new Board Chairman, Stephen Rabe, SAPO endeavours to continue re-aligning its offering to the benefit of its shareholders, clients, partners, and associates.

As always, SAPO remains accessible to our clients. Contact us, we would be happy to hear from you!

Shawn Coetzee Chief Executive Officer

## VIRUS-GEREINIGDE MERBEIN SEEDLESS

SAPO is goed op dreef met die vermeerdering van ons virus-gereinigde Merbein Seedless kloon. Ons beoog om volgende jaar ongeveer 4 000 stokke in 'n grondves perseel te vestig. Die verifikasie van die nuwe kloon is afgehandel en dit het steeds die uitstekende kenmerke van die ou Merbein kloon. Vermeerdering sal eksponensieel plaasvind oor die volgende paar seisoene om in die vraag na virus-vrye plantmateriaal te kan voorsien.



Groen vermeerdering van virus-vrye Merbein Seedless

## SAPO'S PATHOLOGY LAB IS GEARED TO TEST FOR GRAPEVINE FANLEAF VIRUS

Grapevine fanleaf virus, commonly known as fanleaf virus, occurs in all viticulture areas of the world. SAPO is proud to announce that its laboratory located at his headquarters at Fleurbaix can test for this virus. Clients are encouraged to contact our pathology team for more technical insight and even a visit to your vineyard!

Fanleaf virus can infect all cultivars, including the root stocks derived from North American Vitis species or Vitis vinifera and/or hybrids. Fanleaf virus affects productivity and longevity of grapevines. Symptoms vary in type and severity according to the strain(s) present in the plant. The infection can cause a quick destruction of the plant or cause a decline over several years. The main symptoms are double nodes, short internodes, abnormal branching, and zigzag growth. It causes deformations of the leaves with enlarged petiolar sinuses. Primary veins are gathered and give the leaf a fan shape with various patterns of chlorotic mottles. The best time to monitor for symptoms of the virus is early in the growing season. The number and size of the bunches are smaller than on healthy plants. The berries very often fail to develop or remain small and seedless. Fruit losses of up to 80% have been reported in some varieties.

The virus is transmitted by the nematode vectors, Xiphinema index and Xiphinema italiae. The virus is not seed borne in grapes and is graft transmitted.



Various patterns of chlorotic mottling

#### CONTROL

The virus can be eliminated by heat treatment for infected grape plants. Furthermore, it is important to use certified propagation material when planting a new vineyard. The vector should be controlled to limit spreading of the disease. More information on the control of nematodes will be discussed in the next newsletter.

#### **TESTING FOR THE VIRUS**

The laboratory at SAPO can test grapevine material for the presence of the virus with the optimum times for testing being during the months of September or October.



Widened sinus

Contact persons Pathologist: Lize van der Merwe Virologist: Roleen Carstens Tel: 021 887 6823

## VESTIGING VAN 143B MOEDERPLANTE

SAPO het in die 2019 plantseisoen 'n totaal van 21 800 143B moederplante gevestig om aan die groeiende vraag na 143B onderstamme te kan voorsien. Die nuwe moederblokke sal hoofsaaklik onderstamme vir die droog druif bedryf voorsien. Die weefselkultuur onderstamme is by SAPO gekontrakteerde kwekers en moederblok koöperateurs gevestig.



143B weefsel kultuur onderstamme

# **HE IMPORTANCE OF IP IN AGRICULTURE**

You may wonder, what is the importance of intellectual property (IP) in agriculture? The answer is relatively simple. IP is key in the agricultural industry because it drives variety development and generates economic prosperity. By planting new varieties that appeal to consumers or that fulfil various industry requirements, a grower ensures they stay relevant and their produce satisfies market needs. The agricultural industry is vastly competitive and in a such an industry those producers who adopt IP tend to have the greatest advantage.

IP generated income is necessitated by the long and arduous process of variety development. Variety development begins with the breeder's careful selection of parents for controlled hybridisation and involves thousands of hybridisation events followed by a few seasons of fruit evaluations in order to identify a cultivar that could be desirable to consumers. It could take up to 30 years to develop a new apple cultivar with roughly 45 different attributes that are assessed at various stages of development. In addition to the amount of time involved, there are substantial financial risks involved in variety development.

Companies are prepared to take these financial risks only because the IP associated therewith results in increased new investment attraction, and the return on investment renders the activity financially feasible. The argument against the utilisation of IP is that it increases the price of the variety. Let us examine whether this concern is warranted. A study conducted on the Ogura Oilseed Rape in France investigated the use and benefits of IP in agriculture and came to a few interesting and important conclusions. Firstly, where no IP is involved it is unlikely that a new variety would be developed, because there would be no incentive to the company developing the variety coupled with very high risks and overheads. Furthermore, it was found that approximately 80% of the total economic benefit accrues to farmers and other role players, including downstream processors. Regarding the influence of exclusivity on the use of IPRs, it was found that exclusive use resulted in approximately 20% less benefits to the farmers and downstream parties. The study concluded that non-exclusive licensing provides the greatest benefits and most positive influence on all players in the supply chain, from the breeders through to the producers and other downstream parties.

At SAPO Trust, we believe that innovators have the right to remuneration, producers have the right to equitably priced plant material, and consumers have the right to world-class produce. In our following newsletters we will provide further information on plant breeder's rights, trademarks, and our role in IP management in the deciduous fruit industry.

For more information contact Dr. Waheed Mahomed, Business Unit Manager: IP & Variety Development at SAPO.



