

## INDUSTRY NEWS



## THE PROCESS BEHIND PROVAV'S FRUIT TASTINGS

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Provar's well-known fruit tastings showcase the latest cultivars and selections that belong to IP representatives and fruit breeders. The fruit tasting provides an opportunity for industry and consumers to taste, discuss and see the samples, simultaneously Provar gains valuable insight from the cultivar ratings.

The tastings are either held at their office or sometimes in the orchard.

"We have had great success with the tastings at the Provar offices, attracting a lot of foot traffic especially technical people who advise producers. Producers, and people from a specific area, prefer the field tastings," said Anika Kock, the Provar stone fruit evaluator and project manager of the Provar-Hortgro Ecophysiology Platform.

## THE PROCESS

Fruit tasting is the first step in the process of identifying the best cultivars for the industry.

The fruit gets sourced from the IP managers and fruit breeders that develop the new cultivars. Before each tasting, Provar contacts IP managers and breeders inviting them to bring their samples for display, the cultivar is registered on Provar's evaluation platform, *Culteva's Tastings module*, and then the fruit will be available on that specific day for public viewing and tasting. They also source samples from the *Pro-Hort* sites if the IP managers agree.

"Normally we use new cultivars but we do include control cultivars, so you have cultivars you know and can relate with, then you can check the newest ones against the controls," explained Iwan Labuschagne, Provar CEO and evaluator. "It is a visual but also sensory experience to see the latest in cultivar new developments." After each tasting, the delegates receive an automated report that includes their tasting scores and the mean score for each cultivar displayed on that day.

Provar tastings are important for the industry as it is the first step in the process of elimination of bad and not worthy cultivars. The tastings are a showcase but also a practical application as part of the Provar independent evaluation process. Together with the tasting, Provar also performs a fruit evaluation of the samples.

"The Provar independent fruit evaluations performed on the samples become a set of data that we use in association with the tasting results to identify the best cultivars that were on display for that specific tasting day," said Labuschagne. Provar will communicate with the IP managers and breeders whose cultivars performed well and suggest planting the trees of the best-

identified cultivars in the Pro-Hort sites to undergo further steps of evaluation. Hortgro funds further independent evaluation of these selected cultivars to the benefit of the IP owner, breeder and producer.

*Caption: Dr Tatenda Kawhena, Tristan Dorfling, Anika Kock*