

Food Science Students Shine As Forensic Investigators

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PUSHING THE BUTTON: Students presenting the outcomes of their forensic investigations

The Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Science's BSc Food Science (Hons) students shone at a recent Northern branch student evening meeting of the South African Association for Food Science and Technology (SAAFoST) which was held on the University of Pretoria campus.

According to Dr Riette de Kock of the University of Pretoria's Department of Food Science, SAAFoST has an annual student evening involving students from the University of Pretoria, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) as well as the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

The Department of Food Science hosted the event this year since it is our Centenary year. Students from TUT and UJ were given the opportunity to present the outcomes of their product development projects while the University of Pretoria students presented forensic investigations into organic foods and gluten-free foods.

Two groups represented the Department of Food Science, with both groups winning cash prizes for their contributions.

Geraldine Duhain, Johanita Kruger and Liza Zagt dared to clarify the notions of whether buying organic tomatoes truly gives the consumer a better product or just peace of mind. "The group reported that good agricultural practices (GAP) are the best way to ensure that tomatoes are safe for consumption. They also stated that there is no conclusive agreement on whether organic tomatoes are nutritionally or taste superior over conventionally grown produce. Genetics and environment conditions seem to have a larger impact on these qualities than organic or conventional agricultural practices," says Dr de Kock.

Maggie Wang, CJ Schoeman and Monique Müller presented the scientific facts on "How to keep gluten out" in typical but highly effective "Oprah" Maggie Winfrey-style. "The group shared practical guidelines on how to prevent gluten contamination during crop production, harvesting and processing and also gave insights on testing for gliadins, the real problem protein fraction" concludes Dr de Kock.

Apart from the insightful presentations, students were presented with opportunities to create posters, interact with industry representatives as well as network with peers from other institutions.



HOLDING UP THE BANNER: "Forensic investigators" at their stall, close to the posters that they made

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