



Press release

South African Deciduous Fruit Industry Launches Centre of Excellence for Monitoring

November 11, 2024 — The South African deciduous fruit industry proudly announces the launch of a Centre of Excellence dedicated to advancing pest monitoring and safeguarding the future of the industry. This new initiative, spearheaded by industry association Hortgro, addresses the increasing challenges posed by invasive pests and diseases.

Hortgro Executive Director Anton Rabe emphasized the urgent need for comprehensive pest surveillance as new pests increasingly threaten the industry's sustainability and profitability, from crop damage to quarantine risks. "We must understand where pests occur and where they don't, as this directly influences crop protection strategies and practices," Rabe stated. Catching an invasive pest as soon as it arrives in the county may allow us to eradicate it before it has gained a foothold. In addition, advance warning on the arrival of a pest or disease buys our industry critical time to develop management practices and manage phytosanitary concerns.

To meet this goal, the Centre of Excellence will build upon the monitoring capacity of FruitFly Africa (FFA), an operating company with industry-wide support, which has managed pest monitoring services since 2001. The FFA has been instrumental in tracking and controlling pests like the Mediterranean fruit fly across all major deciduous fruit production areas. Their initiatives include monitoring more than 6,000 traps and producing and releasing millions of sterile Mediterranean fruit flies annually to manage populations.

The Centre will enhance these efforts, expanding surveillance to other significant pests, including the Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB) and spotted wing Drosophila (SWD). This strategic expansion positions the deciduous fruit industry as a proactive leader in pest and disease surveillance. The capacity established at FFA can also be utilized by other industries, such as berries, wine and table grapes.

The Centre of Excellence initiative will ensure that the deciduous fruit industry remains resilient and internationally competitive despite the threat of invasive pests.

FruitFly Africa fast facts

- FFA monitors more than 6000 traps in all major deciduous fruit production areas:



- Mediterranean fruit fly 3300 traps
- Oriental fruit fly 1290 traps
- Spotted wing Drosophila 57 traps
- False Codling Moth 1550 traps
- Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer 174 traps
- In 2023/24 FFA produced about 65 million sterile Mediterranean fruit flies/week (summer programme), and about 30 million sterile flies/week (winter programme), and
- coordinated a total of 42 statutory aerial baiting applications (with GF-120NF™) which covered a total of more than 176'000 hectares of commercial orchards and vineyards.

[end]

For more information, contact Ghian du Toit ghian@fruitfly.co.za or Wiehann Steyn [wiegann@hortgro.co.za](mailto:wiehann@hortgro.co.za)