



New Opportunities & Challenges in the Dairy Industry

SASDT Symposium 2023

The South African Society of Dairy Technology (SASDT) hosted their annual symposium at Fourdoun Hotel in Nottingham Road in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands on 17 and 18 April 2023.

The focus was on the challenges and opportunities facing the industry in the next decade.

Christine Leighton, current SASDT president, was closely involved with putting together the programme, which addressed four main themes over the course of two days.

The first session looked at opportunities and challenges, followed by a session on food waste and loss. Day 2 kicked off with presentations on consumer trends and regulatory matters. The focus of the last session was fermentation technology.



Dr Nicola Jenkin of Pinpoint Sustainability led the session on food waste and loss.

This year's event could be seen as the third instalment in a series of related themes the SASDT has highlighted through its symposiums. Two years ago, the symposium focused on water management, and specifically wastewater. Last year the symposium looked at environmental aspects. This year culminated in considering the challenges and opportunities ahead for the industry. With so much change this past year, especially with the war in Ukraine, the SASDT realised that the symposium provides a good opportunity to talk about these issues.

Fermentation technology has developed significantly over the past few years, and a full session was allocated to this topic.

Since the Covid pandemic, the SASDT was forced to employ technology in other ways which enabled it to bring speakers from around the world on board, delivering online presentations. Six international speakers contributed, which added a new dimension to the symposium.



*Two industry stalwarts:
Alwyn Kraamwinkel (left) CEO of SAMPRO and
Jompie Burger of the Dairy Standard Agency*



*Some of the delegates in good spirits.
From left to right are Daniela Scaglia (Crown Food Group),
Audace Nindorera (Tate and Lyle), Fiona Oelofsen (Crown
Food Group) and Sivuyisiwa Dimbasa (Tate and Lyle).*

Dr. Tertius Cilliers, executive director of Synercore, specifically commented on the the diversity of presentations, facilitated by the use of technology.

‘With speakers from diverse backgrounds, we could view challenges in the industry from different angles. A common theme was that the industry has a significant responsibility with regard to sustainability, from the farm to delivering a final product to the consumer.’

In his closing remarks he also referred to ‘precision fermentation’, a technology that is increasingly used to replace even just small parts of milk protein. The industry has to adapt to this development and find ways to make the most of it.

‘The consumer must always come first, especially in the current difficult economic times. It is our responsibility to continue to give people the best value for their money, considering both cost and nutritional benefit.’

In addition, he says, those involved in dairy technology have a duty to provide consumers with relevant and accurate information to help them understand complex technology and so empower them to make informed choices.



Dr. Thulani Sibanda (left) moderated the session on fermentation technology. With him are Gaele Lettier Buchhorn, director of Global Dairy Application at Chr. Hansen (Denmark), Jeandré Johnston of the Consumer Education Project of Milk SA, Christine Leighton, SASDT president, and Dr. Tertius Cilliers, executive director of Synercore.

The symposium was attended by 120 delegates with industry representation as follows:

- 51% Input Suppliers
- 27% Processors / Producers
- 13% Regulatory
- 6% Academia
- 3% Retail

The full programme and presentations are available on the symposium website sasdt.foodfocus.co.za