

SASDT SYMPOSIUM 2025: “MORE FOR LESS – ENHANCING VALUE AND EFFICIENCY IN DAIRY”

held at Piekenierskloof Mountain Resort, Citrusdal | 13–14 May 2025

The South African Society of Dairy Technology’s 2025 symposium brought together 120 delegates for two days of engaging dialogue, expert presentations, and forward-looking insights, all centred around the theme “More for Less – Enhancing Value and Efficiency in Dairy.”

Set against the scenic backdrop of the Piekenierskloof Mountain Resort in the Western Cape, this year’s event focussed on how the dairy industry can innovate to deliver high-quality, safe, and nutritious products while navigating economic, environmental, and technological challenges.



The South African Society of Dairy Technology (SASDT) management committee: Colin Ohlhoff of Fruitiq; Jeandre Johnston, Consumer Education Project of Milk SA; Christine Leighton, president of SASDT; Charlie Warneke, SASDT admin assistant; Jodie Treu, technical manager of the Dairy Standard Agency; Lauren Longo, branch manager of Danlink Ingredients in Durban; Rian Marren, head of development of Crown Food Group. Management not on the photo: Wayne Witthöft of Ecolab and Adri Venter of Danlink Ingredients.

DRIVING INNOVATION AMIDST CONSTRAINTS

The symposium explored the future of dairy innovation in a world of limited resources. Presentations highlighted key advancements in:

- Membrane technology and value engineering to optimise yields and reduce waste.
- Environmental monitoring and wastewater recovery, showcasing that up to 80% of dairy wastewater can be reclaimed as potable water – a vital consideration in South Africa’s water-scarce context.
- Food safety innovations, including the use of augmented diagnostics to ensure product integrity from farm to shelf.

Focus was also placed on ingredient technology – including the use of coagulants and lactoperoxidase – to improve product quality, yield, and nutritional value. Emerging trends in hybrid dairy-plant products and fermented dairy for gut health further demonstrated the sector’s commitment to both health and sustainability.

SUSTAINABILITY AT THE FOREFRONT

Packaging innovation was a key talking point, with solutions presented to improve recyclability by removing aluminium layers and incorporating sustainable polymers. Additionally, environmental lifecycle analysis was linked with nutritional adequacy and sustainable diets, underscoring the importance of environmentally responsible production.

CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

Each day began with a panel discussion, fostering rich engagement between experts from the dairy industry. Topics ranged from market dynamics to production optimisation and the role of collaboration across the dairy value chain.

Consumer preferences continue to shape the direction of innovation. From lactose-free and high-protein products to clean-label ingredients, the message was clear: Consumer demand drives product development. The growing importance of nutrition across all life stages – from early childhood to ageing populations – offers further opportunities for strategic innovation in product design and communication.

These sessions reinforced the importance of collective action in tackling sector-wide challenges.



Panel discussion: Jo-Anne Silaule of bioMérieux, moderator; and panel members Nigel Lok, producer; Dr Tertius Cilliers of Synercore; Helen McDougall of Woodlands Dairy; Dr Mark Chimes of Milk SA.

MARKET REALITIES AND CONSUMER-CENTRIC INNOVATION

While technological innovation is crucial, the economic landscape remains a defining factor. Insights shared during the symposium highlighted how low GDP growth and price pressures are affecting product pricing and supply dynamics. Yet, despite these constraints, the industry continues to meet demand and innovate with resilience.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

The symposium also offered delegates the chance to network and collaborate – a key component of its success. One highlight included a sensory experience of award-winning local cheeses, provided through a partnership with Agri-Expo. Cheeses were paired with wine from a local winery, and delegates were given the opportunity to engage and connect.

Sponsor exhibitions further added value, allowing delegates to meet input suppliers and sample dairy products provided by processors at the dairy bar.



A highlight of the symposium included a sensory experience of Qualité Award-winning local cheeses paired with wines from De Klein Wijn. From the left are Agri-Expo's Chris Fourie, Charlotte Sandenbergh, Graham Sutherland, and Breyton Milford, with assistant winemaker of De Kleine Wijn, Schalk van der Westhuizen.

LOOKING AHEAD

As the symposium concluded, it was evident that the South African dairy industry is actively responding to global challenges with local solutions. Through innovation, collaboration, and a shared commitment to sustainability and value, the sector continues to adapt and lead.

All presentations from the 2025 Symposium are available on our website:
<https://symposium.sasdt.org.za/speaker-information/>

We extend our sincere thanks to all delegates, presenters, and especially our sponsors, whose support makes this event possible. We look forward to welcoming you to future SASDT events as we continue to shape the future of dairy technology – together.

SASDT management committee
info@sasdt.org.za



A marimba band provided the evening's entertainment.

THE SASDT THANKS ALL THE SPONSORS FOR MAKING THIS EVENT POSSIBLE

PLATINUM



GOLD



BRONZE



BRONZE



GENERAL



GENERAL



GENERAL



GENERAL



SYMPOSIUM BAGS



WATER



DAIRY BAR



DAIRY BAR



DAIRY BAR



EVENT CALENDAR FOR 2025

- 5 August** SASDT annual general meeting – an important meeting to attend.
- 25–27 August** SAAFoST congress – SASDT presents Session 14 on 27 August 2025.
- 23–24 August** MPO DairyFest at Nottingham Road, KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. SASDT has a stand, please visit if you are in the area.
- 4 September** Student evening at the University of Pretoria (UP).
- 25 September** Western Cape quarterly meeting at Stellenbosch University (SU).

YEAR-END FUNCTIONS

- Western Cape** 27 November
- Gauteng** Week of 8 December (To be confirmed)

OTHER WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS

Dairy Standard Agency webinars:

MONTH	DATE
June	25
July	30
August	27
September	17 (TBC)
October	29
November	26

- 12 August** Stern Ingredients – Design dairy differently. Jompie Burger will participate in a panel discussion.

