

The GPG Times

Edition 2
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Introduction

Marieke Gortemaker

We're so glad to have you reading the second edition of the GPG Times! We've been working hard to get you all the latest exciting news updates. Worried that you've missed some news? No need! With the GPG Times, you will make sure that you've all the latest news right in one place. Once you've finished reading, make sure to leave us your feedback on one of our social media channels. This way, we know where we can improve for your own reading delight. So, sit back, make yourself a nice cup of tea/coffee, and enjoy reading the GPG Times!

Blueberries: A Southern African Perspective

Rupert Hargreaves

Top Fruit, an internationally renowned varietal development company based in South Africa, has been representing Global Plant Genetics' blueberry varieties from the University of Georgia, USA since 2017. Pieter Zietsman is the Berry Portfolio Manager for Top Fruit and has been fortunate enough to have visited the breeding programme a number of times over the years with Rupert Hargreaves. Together, they have identified selections to trial and ultimately commercialise successfully throughout Southern Africa.

Marieke Gortemaker from Global Plant Genetics spoke to Pieter recently to get a progress report on his feelings and experiences of this world class blueberry programme.

MG: Which quality traits are you particularly looking for in the selections that you make for Southern Africa? PZ: Fruit quality is of utmost importance to TopFruit. Berries should be firm and able to ship well. In terms of firmness, we look for a crunchy pop sensation when the berries are eaten rather than a fibery berry with a grainy texture. Taste is important and although most markets focus on a sweet tangy taste, we also look for alternative flavours that would make a specific variety stand out from the



rest. We do not particularly select for very large berries as the majority of markets and consumers are satisfied with a decent fruit size of 14-25mm. Appearances such as a good bloom and a clean fresh look are also important.

MG: How adaptable are you finding the selections to your various growing regions?

PZ: South Africa has different climate regions with the Western Cape region that has a Mediterranean climate to the North that is more sub-tropical with a summer rainfall. The primary focus is on low to very low chill varieties suitable for these regions. Then evergreen types are also selected for other Southern African countries such as Zambia and Kenya where no chill conditions prevail. It is always a challenge to choose selections that you evaluate in a climate zone such as the state of Georgia, USA and then try to decide how it will perform in a completely different environment. We have to look at certain genetic appearances and traits of what are available and make a choice of a number of selections to trial in the different regions in Southern Africa to decide which ones work the best for us. Over the past five years we have identified a core of varieties that are highly suitable and this information would be of value to other countries with similar constraints.

Blueberries: A Southern African Perspective (Continued)

Rupert Hargreaves

MG: Plant quality is highly important, what steps have you taken to ensure premium quality plants are delivered? PZ: TopFruit has worked closely with Vitroplant SA nursery and they are responsible for the multiplication of our varieties. All plants are made from tissue culture and then hardened off in 1L pots. We also use the expertise of a Dutch consultant to ensure that the correct operational procedures are followed. A healthy plant with a strong root system can give a grower 1.7kg per plant within the first year of planting in containers.

MG: Working with GPG, you have had the opportunity to hand pick a number of blueberry varieties to commercialise in Southern Africa. Could you give us a brief summary on what you think of the Duchess series and the Blue Angel series? PZ: What we prefer in South Africa is a medium to very low chill, early bearing variety. The ideal is to be as early as June and be done with the crop by end of October in the North and by November in the cooler regions. Sweet Duchess and Maverick are ideal for these requirements with Early Duchess which produces large early primocane fruit that is also good variety to compliment the others. Blue Duchess is a mid-chill variety for cooler regions that produces very good quality fruit with excellent eating quality. This variety is a natural strong upright grower and needs more manipulating to produce a large crop as it is a tip bearer. The other newcomer is Gladiator that shows very good results in the trial sites. This is a more dwarfing plant that is very precocious and bears large fruit of very good quality. As we do not select varieties for machine-harvesting, we are looking for a more open spreading bush and some selections that are vigorous upright growers are not preferred in our region.



MG: Obviously, grower viewpoints are important when bringing new varieties to market but what feedback have you had from the Packers and Retailers? PZ: In general we had favourable feedback from the marketers. The earliness as well as fruit quality of the Sweet Duchess made it a favourite. However, there were some complaints of the flower end of the fruit that has a russet ring especially in regions where cold, rainy conditions were present early on in the flowering stage. Sweet Duchess fruit had an average brix of 12-14, with Durofel firmness readings of 80-85 and average size of 14-22mm. Bloom was good and overall eating sensation put it on the preferred list of some supermarkets. Blue Duchess has very clean looking fruit with an excellent bloom, it eats well and has a sweet, tangy taste with brix at 12-15. Fruit size averaged at 14 to 24mm and average 80 on the Durofel measures. Early Duchess has very early primocane fruit which were very big 18-25mm which ate well and were firm. Later floricanes were somewhat inconsistent in size, flavour and firmness. Maverick had medium to large sized fruit of 14-20mm, firm berries of 75-85 Durofel pressures and brix of 11.5 - 13. All these varieties shipped well.

MG: If you had to choose 3 varieties that could well be global superstars from this programme, which 3 would you choose. PZ: The growers' favourite up to a year ago certainly was Sweet Duchess. This is a very low chill variety that produces very early fruit of excellent quality. It has an excellent production possibility and 20 tons per hectare can be reached within three years of planting. It is a very open, spreading bush with limited manipulation needed. Secondly, Maverick has shown in a very short period that it is also a winner. It is a strong vigorous grower that feathers naturally and produces an abundance of laterals with a rapid onset of flowers. This variety flowers very early, but harvest is about three weeks later than Sweet Duchess. Fruit quality is good and although fruit is medium to large size, it bears prolifically. It is also suitable for warm, no chill regions such as Zambia and Kenya. Thirdly, Gladiator as mentioned did very well in our trial sites. It's a more dwarfing grower and produces early to mid-season fruit. It is very precocious with an abundance of flower buds all the way down the shoots. It has a short, condensed harvest period and produces large fruit of excellent quality. The fruit is very firm, sweet and good looking. Gladiator also did very well in our trial site in Zambia. All three of these varieties are ideal for soil and container planting.

Beyond what we have commercialised to date, we have a number of advanced selections in trial and many more on the way. This pipeline will undoubtedly create further benefits and opportunities for our growers in the future concluded Pieter.



Marion Durose Joins The GPG Team

Jamie Petchell

We are excited to announce that Marion Durose has recently joined the expanding GPG team. Marion will be working with both our breeders and clients to help to deliver the improved genetics that we have under licence, as well as developing our internal systems.

Marion is very passionate about berries and brings with her a wealth of experience from her time in the sector. She has worked at a high level both within retailing as well as the supply side of the berry industry. Further, she has a proven track-record in the identification and development of new genetics. All of this knowledge will be invaluable in her new role at Global Plant Genetics.

Marion in her own words: "I am excited to have joined the motivated, energetic and focused team at GPG and look forward to working collaboratively with breeders and licensees around the globe. The nature of breeding takes time, it is detailed and complex, but it really matters for growers, retailers and of course the consumers who buy the products and whose expectations we must always aim to over deliver on so that they come back week after week to buy more."

Please join us in welcoming Marion to the team!

GPG Business Update

Jamie Petchell

The first half of our latest financial year came to a close at the end of December 2021. The previous six months were extremely busy and full of exciting developments for the company and the team as a whole. After what felt like a lifetime, we were finally able to get together in person to catch up on the latest goings on and discuss plans for the future.

Overseas travel also opened up again, at least for a short while, and we managed to visit some key stakeholders in Africa, Europe and The Middle East. We have our fingers tightly crossed that we will be able to get to many more destinations during 2022. We have so many varietal developments moving forward across the world and we're really excited to see and taste these new cultivars once more for ourselves.

The company performed well from a business standpoint too during the last quarter and we feel well placed to move forward into 2022 on a firm foot holding. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the team for their efforts in the recent past. The team, culture and values of GPG have been key in helping the business to drive forward during these challenging times.



Spain/Portugal Nursery Visit

Rupert Hargreaves

A window of opportunity arose between Covid travel restrictions to visit our UC Davis strawberry nursery licence holders in Spain and Portugal in November 2021. Four licence holders were visited; namely, Viveros California, Viveros Campiñas, and Viveros Carbonero in northern Spain and MAAE in Portugal.

The enthusiasm and expectation for the new generation of UC Davis strawberry varieties is very high with nurseries and their clients looking forward to seeing small areas of fruit production this season.

The fruit quality of the day neutral variety UCD Valiant was noted as looking exceptional while visiting with MAAE in Portugal. It's fair to say that other territories are perhaps more excited by UCD Royal Royce. Both of these two day neutrals are offering improvements in terms of yield and disease resistance over current market leading varieties, while fruit size and flavour score more highly too. In the cycle of the development, UCD Moxie is a little further behind, this has simply been down to the lack of availability of mother stock material in the early stages from California.

There is much anticipation to see the UCD Victor and UCD Warrior, both short day varieties coming into fruit production.

All the nurseries visited are excited by the growth plans for the varieties they have licences for and looking forward to seeing them further developed in the marketplace.

The trials data and continued information from California fills us with delight and of course beyond Spain and Portugal, we have licence holders covering all the key growing regions that we represent internationally.



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2022 will really put these new UC Davis varieties on the map on a global basis.

Participation in CIOPORA meeting

Iulia Negoita

I was truly honoured to have been asked to speak at one of the CIOPORA events back in December. I have always looked up to the speakers that have taken the stage with insightful presentations and contributed to my continuous development along the way with CIOPORA. Needless to say, this opportunity took me by surprise. I was asked to prepare a presentation on the benefits of using UPOV PRISMA based on my experience as an active user of this online tool.

As well as being able to share with all the participants, the key benefits of using UPOV PRISMA, I also had the pleasure to share the stage with Mr. Peter Button, Vice Secretary-General, UPOV, Dr. Hend Madhour, IT Officer, UPOV PRISMA and Charlotte Plasman, Junior PBR Attorney, AOMB (The Netherlands).

The CIOPORA IP Forum 4/2021 - Developments in UPOV and UPOV PRISMA has been hosted as an online event on the 8th December, 2021 and welcomed 65 participants from a total of 19 countries across the globe. Although a vast majority of the people who participated in the poll answered with YES if they “have already heard about UPOV PRISMA?” (YES:25 - NO:5), less than half of the people who answered had used this tool previously (“Have you ever used UPOV PRISMA?” YES: 13 - NO: 17). It was a good start to draw people’s attention to all the benefits that this tool implements, the continuous improvement and expanding territories where it is promoted or added crops to the existing lists in the current territories. All in all, it is a great tool and I believe in the huge potential it has to make everybody’s work easier when it comes to PBR applications worldwide.

Further Development of Skye and Lewis Raspberries



Enquire directly if you would like more information.

Asparagus Trial Update from Peru

Claire Donkin

These are exciting times for our warm climate asparagus portfolio as we see the first data from our Peruvian trial partners Viveros Génesis. This is all very much hot off the press, the data arrived today, so it's great to be able to share some of the headlines with you. The trial has been established in three locations across Peru and was planted out into trial blocks between November 2020 and February 2021 with a range of commercial control varieties to provide a strong, commercially valid baseline comparison. The data we just received represents the very first crop harvest which took place late last year. We're still eagerly pouring through the reports but there are several stand out points to share. The data for the spear quality produced by several of our varieties have caught the attention of the trialists, both Pacific Summit and Pacific Endeavour impressing with the percentage diameter split over the harvest. It's also really great to see the promise in the numbered selections in the trial, several of which are outperforming the industry standard controls across trial locations in this initial data set. The next report from this project will be based on the results gathered in June where the second harvest will really flesh out the data and solidify the trends. It will be great to see how the varieties perform as they continue to mature and I'm sure we'll be updating you further on this exemplar set of trials.

Jamie Petchell

October and November were very exciting months for the GPG raspberry team. We got to see the primocane varieties Skye and Lewis performing very well in both Europe and Africa. In addition, we are hearing really promising news about plant multiplication in North America and it is great to see both of them now developing in other Continents.

We would also like to commend the breeding and technical team at James Hutton for producing some additional high-quality trials data during 2022. This can be seen in more detail in the updated Skye and Lewis raspberry brochures that are available for download from our website – www.globalplantgenetics.com/varieties

However, key highlights include:

- Industry-leading overall yields from Skye, with over 3kg per plant from the florican and primocane crops combined
- Average fruit size of 6.1-7.8g in the primocane crops
- Extended primocane cropping season by using Lewis (earlier) and Skye (later) together in the same growing location

Commercial and test plantings are earmarked for significant growth in 2022 as we see both of these leading primocane raspberry varieties develop even further. Please stay close or...

What you've missed

Marieke Gortemaker

Did you know that once a month we have a news post on our website that gives you updates about anything related to strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, asparagus, grapes and nuts? Here are all the news posts from the previous 3 months in case you've missed something!

“Global Challenges in Asparagus”

Much like in many other parts of the fresh produce and other industries, the asparagus business has been undergoing significant change in the recent past. So, two years on from the start of the Covid pandemic, what is the current state of the global asparagus market? www.globalplantgenetics.com/news/global-challenges-asparagus

“Day neutrals to make your day”

The much-anticipated wait for new day neutral strawberry varieties is almost over as UCD Royal Royce, UCD Valiant and UCD Moxie are being planted on grower farms in 2022. www.globalplantgenetics.com/news/day-neutrals-to-make-your-day

“What are the latest trends in raspberries?”

Raspberry production, marketing and consumption have developed tremendously in the recent past. In many parts of the world, the raspberry sector is now completely unrecognisable for where it was at the turn of the century. www.globalplantgenetics.com/news/what-are-the-latest-trends-in-raspberries



And Finally

Jamie Petchell

It is estimated that more than 770,000 tonnes of raspberries are produced globally every year. If each one weighs 5g on average, that equates to 154,000,000,000 individual berries. Are you eating your share? ;-)



Global Plant Genetics Ltd

Where Quality Breeds Success