

Tiger Brands Media Statement

6 November 2018

Stellenbosch

Tiger Brands collaborates with Stellenbosch University to establish South Africa's first Centre for Food Safety

Tiger Brands in conjunction with Stellenbosch University, will today launch the Centre for Food Safety. The Centre is a one-of-a-kind applied food science research consortium founded by Stellenbosch University and the food industry – with Tiger Brands as its founding member. It will provide expert opinion and academic support to the industry, conduct research in food safety and participate effectively with government to ensure that food safety regulations are based on sound scientific evidence. Tiger Brands has set aside R10m for the establishment of the Centre.

According to Professor Pieter Gouws, Acting Director for the Centre for Food Safety, “We aim to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to develop and exchange knowledge, experience, and expertise in food safety, food defence and food processing. Additionally, the Centre will play a leading role in consumer education on food-related issues.”

The Centre will be independently managed by Stellenbosch University. Tiger Brands and members of the food industry will support the Centre through funding and the sharing of food safety insights.

Boasting some of the greatest minds in the fields of microbiology, food science and food safety, the Centre is set to bring in relevant expertise and insights to create a robust food system for South Africa. This includes Professor Wilhelm Holtzapel - President of the International Commission of Food Microbiology and Hygiene; Professor Mieke Uyttendaele - Food Safety and Food Quality from the University of Gent, and Professor Stephen Forsythe – Professor of Microbiology at Nottingham Trent University and Prof Pier Sandro Cocconcelli, Chair Professor of Food Microbiology at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) in Italy.

“We have a mandate to work across all faculties and disciplines within Stellenbosch and other entities, institutes, national and international higher education institutions, and public and private enterprises in South Africa and abroad,” added Gouws.

According to Lawrence Mac Dougall, CEO of Tiger Brands and founding partner of the Centre for Food Safety, “Food safety is an essential public health issue. When food systems fail, their consequences are extremely costly - for public health, consumers, food producers and the economy in general. With the global increase in the prevalence of foodborne diseases, science-based food controls are essential for the protection of food products and consumers.”

The launch is the culmination of months of negotiations and hard work and is a result of a commitment by Tiger Brands to improving safety, quality and hygiene associated with food production, distribution and storage in South Africa. The company has consistently highlighted the need for a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to strengthening the food system in South Africa and that it would like to be at the forefront of such initiatives. “The launch of the Centre, together with the funding committed, provides demonstrable, tangible evidence of this desire by Tiger Brands,” said Professor Gouws.

“Improving South Africa’s food management system through fostering better integration and collaboration across key role players, including food manufacturers, government and academia was crucial for us. Through collaboration, the Centre has a pivotal role to play in driving food safety forward across the industry – this is far bigger than Tiger Brands. It is a national imperative,” added Mac Dougall.

“With the worldwide increase in food-related diseases, developing countries bear the greatest burden. Africa has the highest incidence of food-related diseases and associated deaths amongst all age groups. Food-related diseases also have a significant impact on consumer health and the viability of the food industry and associated businesses. With this in mind, the need for a centre dedicated to food safety is more important than ever before,” said Professor Pieter Gouws.

Whilst Tiger Brands is supporting and funding this initiative, the Centre’s independence will be a cornerstone in its ability to share cutting-edge research and insights with the entire industry. “We encourage support from other stakeholders, including government role-players, retail partners and the industry, to strengthen the capacity of the Centre to meet its objectives,” concluded Mac Dougall.

[ENDS]

For enquiries, please contact

Nevashnee Naicker

Corporate Communications Director

Tiger Brands

nevashnee.naicker@tigerbrands.com

+ 27 (0) 11 840 4129