

# Marble Hall trial and tuber moth workshop

By Damien da Cal, Potatoes SA

The Marble Hall trial planted on Jaco van den Heever's farm included processing varieties. The trial was planted on 15 June 2023 and consisted of three repetitions spaced 1.5 m apart and spanning 10 m.

The cultivars planted included P1 (PepsiCo), P3 (PepsiCo), Cayman (WesGrow), Norman (WesGrow), Moonlight (PSP on behalf of Danie Marais), Satin King (PSP on behalf of Danie Marais), Alverstone Russet (WesGrow), Taurus (WesGrow) and Markies (FPD).

The trial was lifted on 25 October 2023. The previous trial was conducted in 2019 by Enrike Verster of Potatoes SA and the results were published in the May/June 2020 edition of CHIPS. The June/July 2024 issue of CHIPS will contain the results of the 2023 trial.

## Addressing tuber moth issues

The Marble Hall workshop took place on 23 March 2023 at the Raasblaar conference venue. The workshop saw Potatoes SA teaming up with

McCain to provide an interesting look at how tuber moths operate. The meeting's highlights included presentations by Des van Heerden and Dr Diederich Visser on the impact of cultivation practices. Dr Visser listed the similarities between the tuber moth and *Tuta absoluta*. *Tuta absoluta* attacks tomatoes as well as potatoes. Tomato plants can be attacked from seedlings to mature plants and infestations are primarily found in buds, leaves, stems, flowers and fruit. The main concern with *Tuta* is that it can cause potato crop yield losses of 50 to 100%.



A workshop on tuber moths was held by Potatoes SA and McCain on 23 March last year at the Raasblaar conference venue.



On the left is a *Tuta absoluta* adult 6 mm in size and on the right a *Phthorimaea operculella* adult 8 mm in size. (Photograph: Dr Diederich Visser. [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net))

*Tuta* can cause major damage to the leaves of potato plants. Tuber moth has been present in Southern Africa for more than a century. Larvae mine into leaves as well as stems and can cause severe yield losses. The main differences between *Tuta* and tuber moth are their size, antennae, marks on the wings and marks on their thoraxes.

*Tuta* is approximately 6 mm long whereas tuber moths are typically 8 mm in size. *Tuta* antennae are more clearly banded. The marks on tuber moth wings are black and more pronounced. Tuber moth has three marks on its thorax whereas *Tuta* has none.

Potatoes SA would like to extend a special thanks to all trial participants as well as the speakers at the moth workshop. 🌱

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