

LIMPOPO AGRO-FOOD TECHNOLOGY STATION (LATS)

Limpopo Agro-Food Technology Station (LATS) was established to achieve the eight anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), within the context of the National Development Plans (NDP) Framework. LATS is funded by the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) in terms of the Technology Innovation Agency Act No. 26 of 2008 is housed at the University of Limpopo (UL), Turfloop Campus.

The Technology Station is well aligned to TIA's connector-service provider strategy. LATS serves as a TIA connector in the Limpopo Province that catalyses partnerships between SMEs, industries and Universities to develop an enabled supporting Agro processing innovation for global competitiveness.

LATS reduces barriers of access to expensive high end skills and equipment for agro processing innovators by supporting technology-based agro-food processing products, processes and services through research and development (R&D) and facilitating the development and improvement of agro-processing, technology innovation and commercialization of agro-food products by start-ups and existing small and micro entrepreneurs in Limpopo Province.



LIMPOPO AGRO-FOOD TECHNOLOGY STATION (LATS)

TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCIES AND OFFERINGS

- Food product testing and analysis
- New product development
- Product and process improvement
- Research and development
- Technology audit and training

Food product testing and analysis

LATS tests food products and diagnoses the presence of pathogenic and spoiling microorganism in food products that are ready for markets, using high-tech equipment like Vitek 2 and ICP. Chemical analysis involves minerals and proximal analysis. Tests on food products includes fats, crude fibre, protein, ash, moisture, carbohydrates by difference, energy, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, polyphenols, tannin and mineral elements.

New product development

SMEs can be assisted from idea generation through to product design and detailed food “engineering”. The Station ensures that the newly developed food products meet SABS standards and that health risks are eliminated.

Product and process improvement

This involves improving the quality of substandard products or processes already in use to the standards required by SABS and the Departments of Health and Agriculture. The SMEs are introduced to management systems in which food safety is ensured through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards all the way from raw material production, procurement and handling to manufacture, distribution and consumption of the finished product.

Research and development

The Station ensures that research questions related to SME agro processing are addressed through the use of the university's research academics. Research projects include chemical and microbial profiling of indigenous food product, new product development and food product shelf life.

Technology audit and training

Food technologists visit SMEs in order to audit food-product processing equipment and processes onsite. The SMEs are trained in good manufacturing practice (GMP) and hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP).

CONTACT DETAILS

Station Director: Prof. Maboko S. Mphosi | **E-mail:** maboko.mphosi@ul.ac.za
Admin and Finance: Ms. Daphney Malobe | **E-mail:** mantsim@ul.ac.za

Website: <http://www.ul.ac.za>
Tel: +27 15 268 3359