



# TopFruit celebrates 40 Years of fruit innovation and growth



TopFruit commemorates its four-decade journey as a pioneering force in the South African and international fruit industry. This momentous milestone marks TopFruit's commitment to innovation, building lifelong relationships and reshaping the fruit industry landscape.

## **TopFruit's origins**

Since its establishment in 1983, TopFruit has introduced new varieties of pome fruit, stone fruit, table grapes, berries, kiwifruit, and nuts. In the process, the company has established itself as the custodian of various fruit varieties, bringing value to breeders, growers, and consumers alike. With a dedicated team and a diverse portfolio of fruit offerings, TopFruit continues to be a leading force in the market.

The remarkable journey of TopFruit began with the visionary minds of the late Dr Jim Button, Roy Jeffery, and Richard Hill. These three fruit industry pioneers recognised the need for improved fruit varieties and took the bold step of creating a private company to bring exceptional international fruit varieties to South Africa. From the outset, TopFruit has been dedicated to introducing and testing fruit varieties from around the world. Building upon its earlier successes, TopFruit expanded beyond apples, diversifying into pears, stone fruit, table grapes, and more recently also into berries, kiwifruit, and nuts.



Dr. Jim Button



Richard Hill



Roy Jeffery

By carefully assessing their adaptability and commercial potential, TopFruit ensures that only the finest varieties are released into the industry. This commitment to excellence has not only added value for breeders but also provided growers with a wide range of options to enhance their revenue and farming practices.

The company recognised the significant value of intellectual property in fruit marketing and introduced a sustainable model by charging royalties on tree production and trademarks, also ensuring a balance between expanding production volumes, and maintaining high-quality standards. Their decision was met with resistance, as it challenged the traditional model of coordinating fruit production through industry organisations. Despite initial resistance to this revolutionary new approach to the introduction of new varieties, this strategic shift allowed TopFruit to establish brands that elevated fruits from simply being commodities to offering consumers a fruit brand they could recognise and trust with consistent and enjoyable eating experiences.

### **TopFruit's business focus**

At the heart of TopFruit's operations is its plant material management services. In compliance with government regulations, TopFruit manages the importation of varieties for evaluation and supports the evaluation and establishment of locally developed/discovered varieties and mutations. The company also manages import permits and oversees the importation and quarantine of plant material, ensuring compliance with regulations and safeguarding the integrity of the industry.



### **TopFruit's achievements over four decades**

One of TopFruit's most well-known and successfully managed brands, is the Pink Lady® apple, which originates from the Cripps Pink variety. The quality standards that these apples must adhere to before it can be branded as a Pink Lady® apple, guarantees consumers a superior fruit.

This pioneering concept of attaching trademarks to varieties quickly became the industry norm, with TopFruit playing a vital role in popularising this approach in South Africa. Today Pink Lady® is TopFruit's flagship brand, and the company manages the Pink Lady® brand in South Africa.

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