

## Scientific and Funding Activities for Generating Food Composition Data for South Africa

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## Introduction

- As far as we know the earliest effort to compile food composition data for South Africa was by Dr Fox in the 1960s.
- In 1981 the first edition of the MRC Food Composition Tables was published.

8<sup>th</sup> International Food Data Conference

October 1-3, 2009

Bangkok, Thailand

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## SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD COMPOSITION TABLES Published since 1981











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## Software Products containing the South African Food Composition Database



**Users:**  
Researchers, universities,  
dietitians, food industry

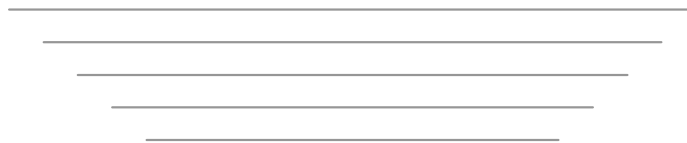
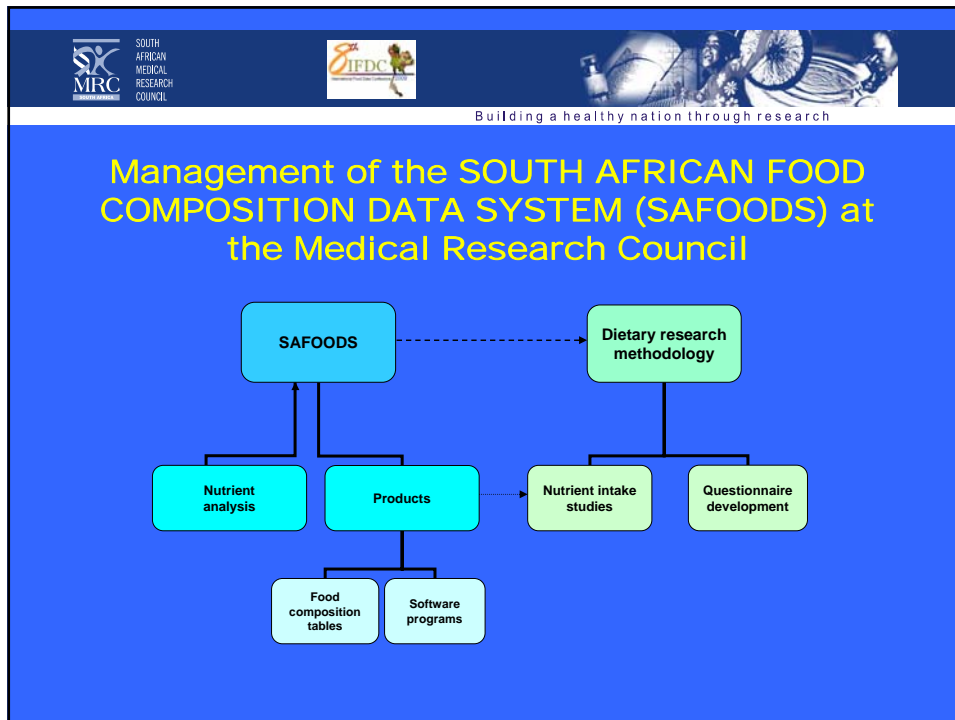


**Users:**  
Private practicing dietitians,  
medical doctors

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## Current Activities

- **Updating activities:**
  - Cereals and cereal products in progress
  - Updating of FoodFinder3 software program in progress
- **Data generation**
- **New business plan**
- **New national group formed**
  - SAFOODS Advisory group (SAFDAG)
- **New website (<http://safoods.mrc.ac.za>)**

## Data Generation

- Not the main aim of researchers at the Medical Research Council
- Collaborate with others, e.g. the Agricultural Research Council, e.g. meat analysis
- Food industry funded food analyses
  - Analysis of staple foods (Medical Research Council)
    - maize meal and maize meal porridge (fortified meal)
    - White bread flour, white and brown bread
  - Analysis of South African margarines/spreads, vegetable oils and fast foods
    - Quantification of total fat and fatty acids



## New Business Plan for SAFOODS

- Historically SAFOODS based at the South African Medical Research Council (MRC)
- Need to expand activities beyond MRC borders
- Additional funding from MRC management to develop new business plan
- Aim to motivate and obtain national funding for generating more data and building an extensive country-specific food composition database

## Formation of a National body to advance food composition

- Formation of the SAFOODS Advisory Group (SAFDAG)
  - Workshop to form national body - November 2008



## Aim of SAFDAG

- Main aim
  - To form a national body that will strive to advance food composition data activities of SAFOODS
- Specific objectives
  - To compile guidelines for the generation of food composition data for SAFOODS
  - Generate new data for inclusion in SAFOODS
  - Identify and compile existing data for SAFOODS
  - Meet user requirements



## SAFDAG working groups and chairpersons

- **SAFDAG management** [Dr P Wolmarans, Medical Research Council (MRC)]
- **Seven working groups established**
  - Finances (Dr N Bhagwandin, MRC)
  - Sampling procedures (Prof H Schönfeldt, University of Pretoria)
  - Data generation (Dr I van Heerden, Agricultural Research Council)
  - Laboratories (Dr P Van Jaarsveld, MRC)
  - Food Composition Compilation (Dr P Wolmarans/Ms N Danster, MRC)
  - Software product development (Dr C Seebregts, MRC)
  - Education/users (Prof E Wentzel-Viljoen, University of North-West)



## SAFDAG Workshops

- Chairpersons of working groups met in May 2009
- Compilation of working document for food composition compilation
  - Aim of the group
  - Specific objectives
  - Activities
  - Co-workers: SAFOODS
- Discussion of the documents and recommendations for completion of the document
- November 2009: Follow-up meeting with stakeholders to give feedback on the activities of the chairpersons
- Funding – lobby organisations, food industry

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## Market Survey

Wentzel-Viljoen and Wolmarans

- Market survey to identify challenges and requirements for SAFOODS
- Target audience:
  - Dietitians and nutritionists – **client service and research**
  - Universities – **teaching and research**
  - Food industry – **product development**
  - Magazines – **general public communications**
- Protocol developed
  - Approval by Ethics Committee of the South African Medical Research Council
- Pilot study (questionnaire finalisation)
- Email questionnaire study in progress

 SOUTH AFRICA  
<http://SAFOODS.mrc.ac.za> (online December 2009)
 

SAFOODS - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Medical Research Council

WELCOME TO SAFOODS

SAFOODS is steered by the Nutritional Intervention Research Unit of the Medical Research Council to provide South Africans with a country-specific food composition database.

SAFOODS contains information on the energy and nutrient content of foods generally consumed by South Africans. Information on food composition captured in SAFOODS comes from different sources, e.g. chemically analysed food, other international food composition databases, scientific articles, and recipe calculations. The reference sources of the nutrient information are captured in SAFOODS and available from the food composition database compilers.

Presently, SAFOODS contains nutrient information on 1 472 food items. A shortened version of the South African Food Composition Database is available online.

Different products containing information from SAFOODS are produced.

To promote and strengthen food composition activities in South Africa a national body, the South African Food Data System Advisory Group (SAFDAAG) was formed in 2008.

A food composition database can never be complete and needs constant revision. Improving and increasing the information captured in SAFOODS are the main objectives of compilers of the database.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

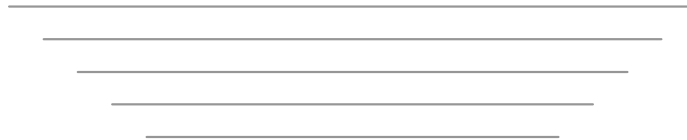
- Latest newsletter

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 South African Medical Research Council  
 Nutritional Intervention Research Unit

## Summary and Conclusion

- Food composition activities have grown immensely in South Africa since its early start in the 1980's.
- New and concerted efforts by several stakeholders have been put into place to co-ordinate data generation and compilation activities in South Africa.
- Funding is a critical aspect and the main strategy to secure more funding for the country-specific SAFOODS is the writing of a five year business plan. This will enable us to lobby for money within and outside of government structures.



THANK YOU

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