

Wine and tea are key ingredients in South African plan to grow domestic research

December 19 2012

The South African government is investing in scientific research to foster production of agricultural products like pinotage (the country's signature red wine) and honeybush (source of a tea so fragrant that a potful can perfume an entire house) to create jobs and boost the economy. That effort and others aimed at developing a globally competitive research enterprise are the topics of cover stories in the current issue of *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, the world's largest scientific society.

Britt E. Erickson, C&EN senior editor, explains that South Africa currently lags in science, accounting for less than 0.5 percent of the world's research output. South Africa, however, has growth potential in a number of areas, including mining, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and astrophysics. The nation has struggled to maintain its research and development funding, which is currently less than 1 percent of the country's gross domestic product—compared to 2.7 percent in the U.S. South Africa's minister of science and technology is looking for smart ways to encourage scientific research, and agriculture is one sector showing promise.

The wine industry is working with the government to fund scientific research about consumers' tastes and preferences, Erickson reports. To help growers and winemakers improve their products, researchers are using advanced analytical methods to identify the roughly 1,000 compounds that give wines their flavor and smell. Government scientists

are also working to extract valuable antioxidant, anti-diabetes and antimicrobial compounds from the honeybush plant. Other researchers are trying to cultivate the plant to boost tea production, which already struggles to keep up with global demand.

More information: "Scaling Up Science In South Africa"
cenm.ag/southafrica

"Making Premium Wine And Tea" cenm.ag/premiumtea

Provided by American Chemical Society

Citation: Wine and tea are key ingredients in South African plan to grow domestic research (2012, December 19) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-12-wine-tea-key-ingredients-south.html>

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