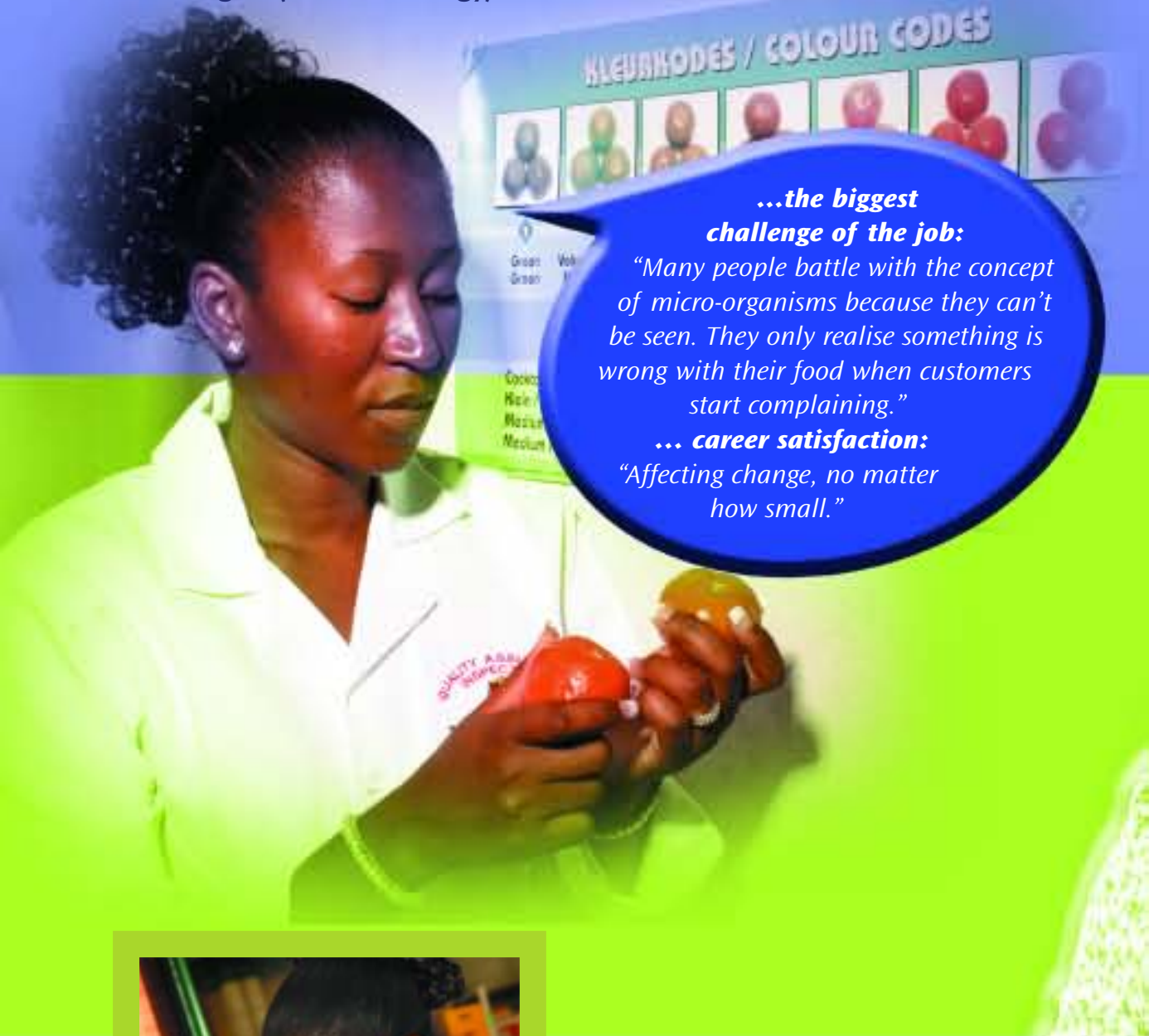


Worldwide, people are becoming more concerned about the safety of food. Can we combine our knowledge of micro-organisms (tiny living things) and how plants work to ensure a safer global food supply?

Who can help us ensure that our food is of the highest quality?

The Plant Pathologist!

Meet Margareth Mahlangu,
Quality Assurance and Food Safety
Manager at the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market
B Inst Agrar (Plant Protection),
M Inst Agrar (Plant Pathology)



...the biggest challenge of the job:

“Many people battle with the concept of micro-organisms because they can’t be seen. They only realise something is wrong with their food when customers start complaining.”

... career satisfaction:

“Affecting change, no matter how small.”



What does Margareth do?

A plant pathologist studies micro-organisms and environmental conditions that cause plant diseases and recommends how these diseases can be managed or controlled.

Margareth is an expert in plant diseases, and has a background in microbiology (study of microscopic living things). Some micro-organisms cause food to spoil and others cause

diseases. Contamination with chemicals or pesticides can also make food unsafe. Her job at the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market (JFPM) is to make sure that the fresh fruit and vegetables traded every day (average of 2700 tons) are safe to eat and of the highest quality.

What do I need to be a plant pathologist?

Characteristics:

Attention to detail, patient, dynamic, persistent

Important school subjects:

Biology, Mathematics, Physical Science

Qualifications:

BAgric/BScAgric/B Inst Agrar

Where can I get a job as a plant pathologist?

Agricultural research organisations, universities, Department of Agriculture, retailers, agricultural consulting companies, diagnostic laboratories, biological control companies, seed and plant production companies

Related careers:

Microbiologist, Crop Scientist, Molecular Biologist, Plant Physiologist



science and technology

Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

...the working environment:

At a junior level, it can involve a lot of lab work, and the 'yuck' factor can be quite high, as you will work with contaminated plants or be doing quality checks. At a more senior level there is more office work."

