

Abstract

The Tea Research Foundation of Kenya (TRFK) is set to release a new tea clone. The clone, TRFK 371/8 has been undergoing evaluation for the last 18 years in clonal field and adaptability trials alone since selection from progeny testing by the Tea Improving Programme. The clone's performance in all evaluations across sites, seasons, years and harvesting techniques has consistently been above-average for all desirable and largely economic traits like yield, black tea quality parameters and sensory evaluations, total polyphenols, tolerance to abiotic and biotic stresses. Comparison of hand and machine harvesting technologies revealed clone TRFK 371/8 to be most superior both in yields and tea quality under the two plucking regimes. As the clone has moderate levels of catechins and polyphenols, as well as a slow fermenter it can suitably be exploited for processing of green tea as an additional product for commercial use. Results from various clonal and adaptability trials show that the clone is adaptable to a wide range of tea growing environments including root knot nematode hot spots.