

NEW STORIES OF SOUTH AFRICAN CITRUS

Published by



**CGA
Grower
Development
Company**



**Citrus
Growers'
Association**
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
Grower levies working for you!

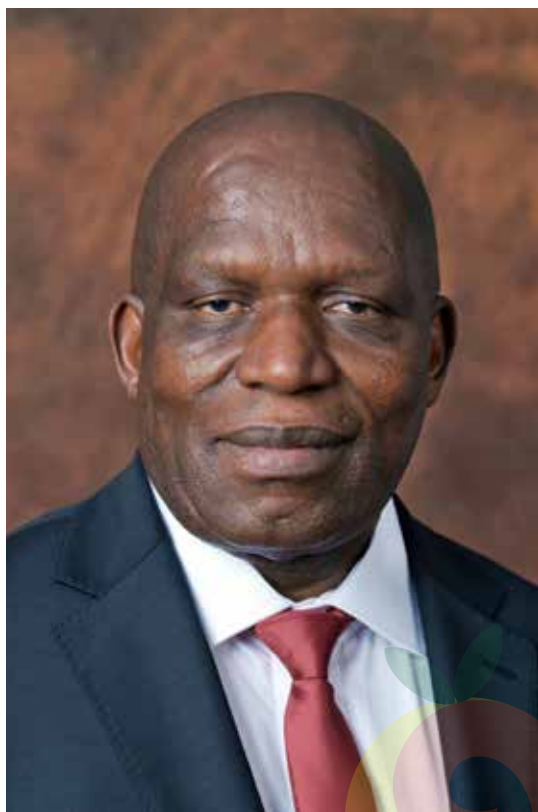


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Foreword



It gives me great pleasure to provide the opening statements in this publication. The citrus industry is an extremely important player in the agricultural sector, accounting for the highest employment and the highest export earnings in the agricultural sector.

In South Africa, it is estimated that about 14.1 million South Africans experience inadequate or severely inadequate access to food (STATS-SA, GHS 2014). This is very worrying and an issue that should preoccupy all of us. Solutions can only be achieved through Public/Private partnerships as it is the collective strength of such partnerships that will dent the scourge of poverty in our country. We must co-operate to find solutions to improve Agriculture to ensure Food for all.

Equally important is achieving higher levels of economic growth that will have a significant impact on poverty and hunger reduction, especially with the expanding population. Promoting local food economies is of utmost importance. Economic growth should be inclusive to promote equitable access to food, assets and resources, in particular for the less privileged and women. State interventions are meant to stimulate private sector investment in order to address socio-economic outcomes such as job growth and food security. The state wants to create an investment friendly environment whilst moving forward the agenda of transformation. This means we need to work together to have a shared vision; seamless governance between national, provincial and local government; and a social compact with social partners.

Our Agricultural Policy Action Plan aims to address inefficiencies in the system. Through co-ordination of government we will be able to target public investment in a more strategic manner.

The Agricultural Policy Action Plan provides a commodity based approach to:-

- South Africa's development agenda,
- identifying growth constraints among strategic commodities,
- critical for stimulating growth, food security, and
- A positive trade balance.

The interventions per commodity not only aim to render the sector more competitive, it further seeks, through localised food networks, to broaden market participation and grow the sector with the benefit of job creation and affordable food prices.

We are also working on implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP). The department, in consultation with sector stakeholders, has developed the Compact, which will be presented to Cabinet in the near future. The Compact encapsulates the commitments by different players in the sector with a view to increase agricultural growth rate by pooling resources and making better quality investment and budget allocation efficiency on the part of government. We also need to identify sector related social improvement opportunities to ensure maximum participation of the vulnerable groups (i.e. farm workers, poor communities, etc.) to include broader issues and improve the compact.

This publication highlights what the citrus industry has achieved in their endeavors to transform the industry. We share with the industry the excitement of being agents of change – the journey has just begun. We must work together to grow the Agricultural sector in our country for the benefit of all South Africans.

Honourable Minister Senzeni Zokwana
Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

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A circular portrait of Dr. Monodowafa Mashaba, a Black man with short hair, wearing a light blue striped shirt. The portrait is set against a background of a textured wall. To the right of the portrait is a large green circle containing his name. Above this circle are three smaller circles in green, dark green, and red. To the left of the portrait is a yellow circle. Below the portrait is a large, faint watermark of the CGA logo, which includes a stylized orange and green citrus fruit and the text 'Citrus Growers' Association OF SOUTHERN AFRICA'.

Dr. Monodowafa Mashaba

Chairperson of the CGA Grower Development Company

“The establishment of the CGA Grower Development Company has been a bold and exciting development on behalf of the citrus industry and for me on a personal level as well as I am passionate about this and have been involved with the process since its inception. This initiative started when I visited the Citrus Development Chamber and spoke to the chamber about establishing a marketing company for developing growers as there was clearly a big need for knowledge and skills to assist growers with market access.

“When I put the proposal regarding market access to the development chamber, the feedback from the chamber was that they would like to get to that point but prior to that the developing growers were struggling with more basic needs that needed to be addressed. At the same time as we were debating this, the citrus industry was conducting a situational analysis for all emerging growers. The results also showed that there was a strong need to build basic capacity.

Our proposal to the CGA was to establish a company to bridge this gap and assist developing growers to help themselves. The proposal for the establishment of the company was forwarded to the CGA Board on 11 March 2013 and the process has been ongoing since then. This proposal was approved by the CGA board and for us to establish the company and set up a board of directors has been a milestone.

Company Objectives

The company's objectives are:

- Production Management support
- Farming business management skills
- Administration, Finance and HR management
- Access to finance and assistance with grant application

“Our job will be to co-ordinate and facilitate assistance to the developing growers and we will be engaging the Government and service providers themselves in this process. To date black growers have not defined themselves as a unified front standing up to be counted. Our challenge is to create trust between growers and ourselves and between growers and Government. Without trust from our growers we as the board of the Development Company will be irrelevant before we even start. The growers need to trust us and be able to communicate with us. There are currently 118 black growers in the Citrus industry and we need to be able to bring our growers up to a higher level of development. When we achieve this, our job will be done.

“Government has shown that they need partnerships with the industry and we will provide for this need. Our challenge is to educate government to an understanding of what farmers need. It will be our job to liaise with National, Provincial and Local Government on behalf of the growers. An example of this is that when growers make applications to Government for financial assistance, the time it takes between the approval of funds and when the funds are actually paid out is undefined and delays in access to funds can have a negative impact on crops. Government officials are sometimes unaware of these challenges. We will also assist growers to access loans from the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and other low interest loans that are available to them. We will need to co-ordinate the funding when it becomes available.

“In the field of market access we will assist growers with co-ordination and facilitation. Understanding of the markets is also very important and to this end, the Citrus Development Company’s General Manager Lukhanyo Nkombisa accompanied a group of developing growers to Fruit Logistica, the huge international fruit congress and exhibition held annually in Berlin in February.

“Citrus Black Spot (CBS) is a huge challenge for our industry’s exports and the CGA has appointed Deon Joubert as a special envoy to the EU to co-ordinate this matter. The Citrus Development Company will also facilitate issues relevant to CBS on behalf of the growers.

Operational procedures

“Our point of departure is that the growers own the company and we work for them. Currently growers are enthusiastic about this but are unsure how we will operate. In order to address this, over the next four months we plan to hold road shows in the various production areas to explain to growers what the company’s objectives are. We have a list of objectives of what the exact field of activities for the new company will be and we will have a business plan to implement specific and identified projects. When engaging to assist a grower, we will enter into service level agreement contracts with them and stipulate deliverable service level agreements.

“For each farm we will investigate the applications for assistance and determine what the needs are. If we are able to help without further assistance, we will do so. If the needs are more extensive, we will engage with the relevant type of service provider to provide a possible solution to the problem. We will start by helping projects that can be assisted easily as there are currently quite a number of small issues which will be relatively simple to address.

“The viability of the company will be dependent on how successful our initiatives are. We will have to provide a guarantee to government that funds will be properly spent. We also plan to have signatories on the accounts that receive government funding to ensure correct governance.

There must be seen to be progress as a result of funding and other inputs. In three to five years we must be able to look back on successes and see definite progress.

Funding

“Funding for the company will be from the CGA development levy (which also provides funding for the Citrus Academy). The funds for the company are for company administration and for the execution of our responsibilities. The Citrus Development Company has employed a General Manager, Lukhanyo Nkombisa, who will take care of much of the executive function. Our board members are not paid for their directorship but their costs for attending meetings and other official duties will be covered.

“CGA funding will be to develop capacity. This will be budgeted and be part of the business plan. The governance structures must be properly constituted so that procedures are followed for funding. For development funding for our growers we will need to source the funding for development from Government, Financial institutions or NGO’s.

Looking ahead

“There is a great deal of pressure on us from the black growers and from CGA to succeed with our mission. The situational analysis undertaken by the industry has given us a good idea of the general needs of emerging growers and we see this as our starting point baseline. My involvement in this establishment of the Citrus Development Company has been voluntary as I was motivated to provide support to the emerging growers. Our board members are passionate about helping our black growers to succeed. We will have to put in a great deal of effort to achieve this and will appreciate assistance from people who share our passion for this objective.”

A circular portrait of Mankhili Ntamiseni Tompson, an older man with grey hair, wearing a red polo shirt and a white jacket. He is standing in front of green foliage. To the right of the portrait is a large green circle containing his name. There are several smaller colored circles (green, red, yellow) scattered around the main portrait and text area.

Mankhili Ntamiseni Tompson

Mankhili Ntamiseni Tompson is a farmer at Makonde Lungane Farm, the Manager of the Makonde Citrus and Mango Co-operative as well as the Chairperson of the Vhembe Citrus Study Group. He is also Chairperson of Vhembe Subtropical Fruits Commodity Association. Makonde Citrus and Mango Co-operative is north-east of Thohoyandou. The farm has 7 farm owners and consists of 70ha, 56ha citrus and 14ha mangoes. Mankhili has served on the Development Chamber for a number of years and has recently been nominated to the board of the new CGA Grower Development Company representing the Northern region. He is passionate about the company, the Citrus Development Chamber and the mission that these entities have towards assisting emerging citrus growers.

“This company has been formed under the umbrella of the Citrus Growers Development Chamber and this company is a very positive development,” explained Mankhili. “We have a dream for emerging farmers to progress to successful commercial farmers and the purpose of the company is to assist us to do this. It is the responsibility of the farmers on the Development Chamber and the directors of this new company to ensure that this is implemented successfully.

“The CGA Grower Development Company was formed from within the body of the Citrus Growers Development Chamber and the chamber must be the one to determine the way forward for the company. The objective to assist the growers’ needs is to remain the main focus of the company.

“When the company deals with issues, these need to be prioritised and time frames set for achieving these deliverables. From the start we should implement transparency of operations.

“The company’s main source of funding will come from CGA. This will be from the Development/Transformation portion of the statutory levy. In the execution of our duties we will also approach other institutions for funding. Emerging growers also need assistance in their relationships with their strategic partners.

“The proper professional business plans are a priority to enable growers to access funding from financial institutions. These need to be compiled according to the specific needs of each grower. The management of the company will need to carefully manage grower expectations from the outset to protect the company’s integrity.

“To have been nominated to this position is both an honour and a big responsibility. I appeal to CGA, the Citrus Academy and CRI to assist in promoting and building the company until it is well established. I wish each of the new board members good luck and hope our efforts will be successful. I hope that all chamber members and emerging growers in all regions will work hand in hand towards success.”

Zulike Lawrence Mgadle



Zulike Lawrence Mgadle is the owner of Ripplemead Farm on the Keiskamma River. He has owned Ripplemead since 1993 and of the total of 86 hectares he now has 58 hectares of citrus including a number of new varieties. Lawrence has been active within the development sector of organised agriculture for many years and has recently been elected as a board member for the new CGA Grower Development Company.

“Before the CGA Citrus Grower Development Company was established we had the Development Chamber which was the first vehicle for black farmers to meet, discuss issues and have a forum within which black growers could speak with one voice,” explains Lawrence. “I was elected to the Development Chamber by our local farmers to represent them on the chamber when it was established and have been a member ever since. The Development Chamber decided to form the CGA Grower Development Company as this will also assist us to help other emerging farmers with the challenges they face in exporting their fruit.

“The decision to establish the company was made in 2014 and it was implemented in 2015. The purpose of the Company is to provide business management and technical support as well as assist emerging growers with access to funding and to export markets. Our role will be to facilitate this process.

“The Company will receive their funding from the Transformation portion of the CGA Levy, which amounts to 20% of the total levy on exported citrus, and from Government. Our mandate is to secure funding from Government and from NGO’s. This should make it possible for us to extend our involvement from primary production of citrus to other sectors of the value chain. We hope to unlock this potential for our growers as well and the company will provide us with the key to unlock some of this potential.

“Communication from the ground level to the chamber and board stems from our monthly study group meetings for emerging growers in each region. This is where we hear what the challenges are that emerging growers are facing and we as chamber and board members then report on these issues to the board for discussion and possible resolution. An example of this has been facilitating government assistance with the rebuilding of the local Ripplemead pack house. Production in the area has now outstripped the capacity of the pack house so this is very urgent. Government has approved funding for this project and we are waiting for notification of when the funds will be made available. We hope that by 2017 we will be packing in the new pack house.

“There is a lot of excitement amongst the local growers about this new body and the support it promises them. This responsibility is something that I am very proud of as it will allow me to make a contribution to the well-being of the emerging citrus growers in the whole of South Africa.”



Juliette du Preez

Juliette is the Managing Director of Eat Smart Organics, a food manufacturing business that produces and supplies fresh healthy convenience meals. The company is based at Montague Gardens in Cape Town and Juliette has been developing the company over the past seven years. Prior to this her background had been in the financial services sector. Juliette is a Harvard University graduate and actively promotes the role of women and black entrepreneurs in business. Throughout her career she has continuously spearheaded transformation initiatives.

"I am from Cape Town and grew up in Heathfield and Grassy Park on the Cape Flats," explains Juliette. "After High School I started working and undertook all my studies part-time and in this way I gained work experience and knowledge.

"My studies were in accounting and economics so I made a career out of banking and over time I worked in various posts until I reached an executive post at a national level within the Absa Group. In 2006 I realised that I wanted a break from the corporate environment and so I took a "sabbatical" break from this for a year. Since then I have participated in entrepreneurial ventures as I believed that I could also make a difference in transformation in a more direct, hands-on way.

"Although my career took this change of direction, I continued to serve on the boards of companies due to my corporate background. Within the Citrus Industry I serve on the boards of Sundays River Citrus Company and River Bioscience, which is a commercial subsidiary of the Citrus Growers'

Association of Southern Africa. I was asked to serve on these boards as a non - executive independent director due to my corporate background and interest in transformation and more recently I was asked to serve on the board of the new CGA Grower Development Company.

"Transformation within the citrus industry is imperative and through the establishment of this company, the citrus industry has shown its commitment to the goal of assisting black growers to achieve viable commercial status in terms of production, ability to export and market access. Export consists of government to government dialogue and co-operation so part of the Citrus Growers' Development Company's brief is to engage government and industry to facilitate this process.

"The company is still new and there will be further development as the agenda becomes more specifically defined. The company's goal is to assist growers to become economically sustainable. Managing grower expectations will be a challenge. Growers will need to achieve specific targets as a result of this assistance and the assistance should cease once this is achieved. This will be achieved through service level agreements along with measurable performance indicators.

"Regarding the Citrus Development Company and its aims, I believe that the time has come to achieve real transformation. We need to identify and crystallise the real issues and get on with the process."



A circular portrait of Rudzani Rasikhinya, a Black woman with short dark hair, wearing a blue shirt and a grey blazer. She is smiling and holding a folder. The background of the portrait shows a city street with buildings.

Rudzani Rasikhinya

Ms Rudzani Rasikhinya, CA (SA) H Dip tax has more than 12 years' experience in executive finance positions in both the public and private sector. Rudzani Rasikhinya is currently the Chief Financial officer for SITA SOC (Ltd.). She is a board member of the Citrus Development Company (Pty) Ltd. She brings to the Board her financial and business acumen from both a strategic and financial perspective. She is committed to good governance and is a member of the Accounting Standard Board.

Rudzani is very passionate about development and empowerment and is excited about the future potential of the CGA Grower Development Company to assist emerging citrus growers. She believes strongly in the transformation of the industry and previously disadvantaged farmers being empowered with business and financial management skills and funding to grow the citrus market and their farms being run as a business. This includes the increase in the number of black business people in the entire value chain from growers to exporters.

Lukhanyo Nkombisa



Lukhanyo Nkombisa has been appointed as the General Manager of the CGA Grower Development Company (CGAGDC). In his previous position as Transformation Manager, he has been closely involved in the process of establishing the company and is thus well prepared to implement the company's clear strategic objectives.

Lukhanyo outlined the goals of the company as follows: "The objectives of the CGAGDC are to coordinate and promote transformation in the citrus industry by enabling developing growers to build sustainable and profitable business enterprises.

"On a practical level we plan to implement this through a range of programmes designed to create an enabling environment for development that is aligned with the citrus value chain. The company will also foster the creation of stakeholder engagements through government and private partnerships at local and international levels in order to encourage business development.

"There are a number of avenues that the CGAGDC will pursue to lobby for assistance to the developing citrus growers for enterprise development from various government departments. To date we have four MoU's (memorandum of understanding) signed for commitment to support for growers from the Departments of Agriculture of four provinces, namely Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. In the Western Cape

we have Citrus CPAC (Commodity Project Allocation Committee) in place that oversees the support for the BEE models and joint ventures. We have also signed the MoU with the Department of Trade and Industry through which our farmers could benefit from a number of trade related programs for market access.

"Government has several grants and programmes in place within various departments that have the potential to assist us in our objectives and we anticipate engaging with these. These include the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Rural Development and Land Reform, Small Business Enterprise Ministry, provincial and national development agencies and State Own Enterprises that support agriculture or Agribusiness.

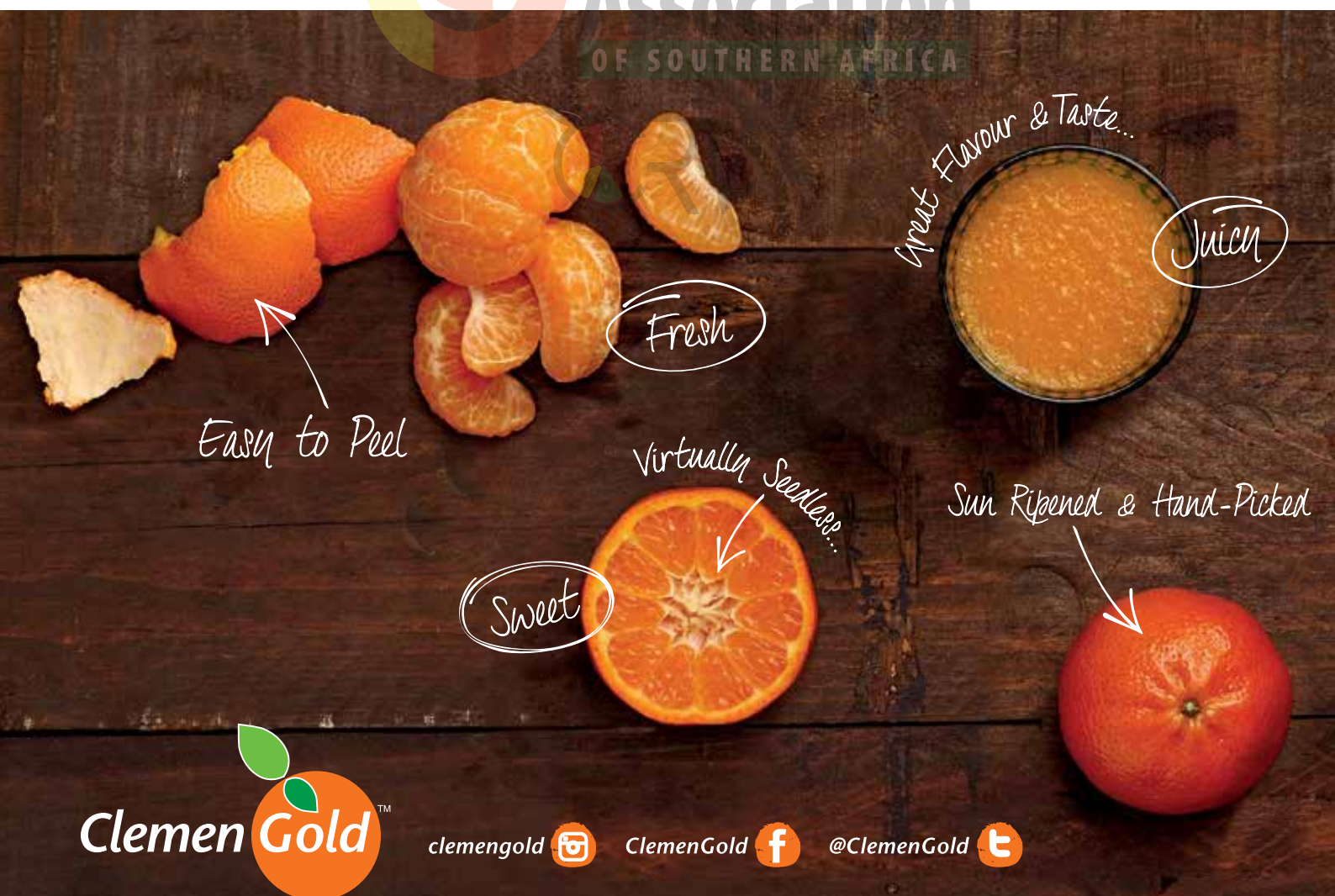
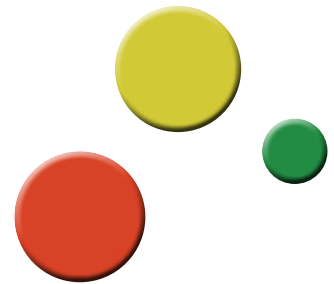
"If we have the opportunity to offer support, we are considering implementing five year planned programmes that will focus on all aspects of support required by our growers. This will take into account expansion, infrastructure requirements, skills development, increase in production and volumes for export, job creation, involvement of youth and women in citrus and broader agricultural production as well as the self-sustainability of the business enterprise.

"In order to ensure ongoing and effective communication, communication systems have already been established between the study groups and the Citrus Growers' Development Chamber and the CGAGDC. The Development Chamber also functions as an advisory body to the CGAGDC. We will ensure that all plans are communicated efficiently including

information about projects that have been identified for certain aspects of support. Once enough support projects have been identified, coordinators will be deployed to assist with implementation. The information that was obtained through the situational analysis initiative undertaken by the citrus industry has been very valuable in establishing the basic needs of our growers and this information will also assist us going forward.

“The CGA has earmarked 20% of the grower levy to fund the operations of the CGA Grower Development Company. This funding is to ensure that the transformation agenda is pro-actively under development within the broader South African Citrus industry and that there is a grower development programme in place that can be implemented without any delays.

“The company has the potential to receive support from the public and private sectors, development agencies and State-owned business enterprises that focus on the development and by promoting transformation the company will enable considerable positive growth and change for developing citrus growers.”



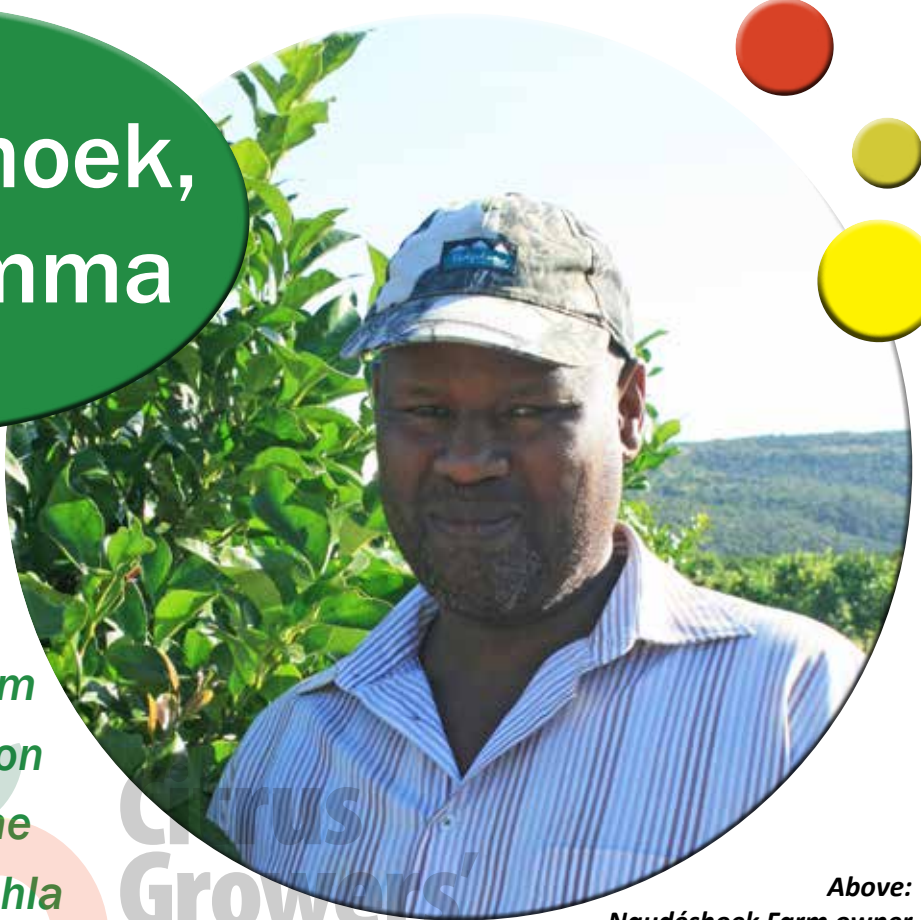
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Naudéshoek, Keiskamma

"I am successful because of faith and grace and the commitment of my farm workers and my passion for farming carries me through." Sydney Mpahla



Above:
Naudéshoek Farm owner
Sydney Mpahla

Naudéshoek Farm is situated in a narrow, winding valley along the eastern bank of the Keiskamma River near Ripplemead, south of the Eastern Cape town of Alice. This farm is surrounded by wild natural beauty with pristine bushveld teeming with indigenous wildlife. Sydney Mpahla is the owner of the farm and has been farming on the property for 24 years. The farm is 146ha and has 48ha of citrus orchards. Naudéshoek is approximately 10km from Ripplemead packhouse where the fruit from Naudéshoek and a few other local growers is packed.

Sydney grew up in the area and after completing his schooling he worked on Naudéshoek as a Farm Manager for the Department of Agriculture of the former Ciskei homeland. The land was owned by the Ciskei Department of Agriculture and was privatised from September 1992 onwards. The application process required applicants to compile and present a comprehensive business plan.

"I presented the Department of Agriculture with my business plan and after the interview the farm was awarded to me. This was indeed a great day and I was truly thrilled to receive this property that I knew so well by this stage," explained Sydney.

"The change of Government from the Ciskei to the South African Government meant the bank that had been funding us changed and became the Eastern Cape Rural Development Finance Institution and our

funding ended abruptly. This created a great deal of uncertainty and difficult times for us. After much trying, we managed to secure financing through the IDC and in 2008 we also received government assistance from the Department of Agriculture. The loan I received from the IDC made it possible for me to plant 20ha of Late Navels and Valencias and these trees are now seven years old."

"I received Recapitalisation Funding from the Department of Land Reform in October 2013. I used this to buy much needed farm equipment and also to clear the bush off the land for orchards as well as to ridge the soil for the orchards in preparation for planting over the next few years. I was also part of a group of local growers who received a grant of fertiliser and other production chemicals from the Department of Agriculture. This has helped to bring down production costs. I still have the opportunity to expand by a further 32ha. I plan to plant this in phases and some of the trees for this expansion have already been ordered for planting."

“Growing through INNOVATION and PASSION”



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One of the biggest challenges currently facing growth at Naudéshoek is that increases in production on Naudéshoek as well as on the neighbouring farms has meant that productions in the area have outstripped the packing capacity of the local Ripplemead Pack house. Plans are nearing completion for a upgrading of Ripplemead Pack House with the assistance of government funding.

“The construction of the new pack house will be good news as our packout percentage volumes will increase considerably. To avoid us having the same problem in a number of years from now, according to plan the packhouse will also be designed to have more than the capacity currently required in order to provide the capacity for future increases in production

“One of our other challenges is the rise in input costs. Transport has become particularly expensive as to transport one load of packed fruit the 300 kilometres from here to the harbour (Port Elizabeth) is now R8500. Lona exports our fruit and we appreciate their assistance with this.

“I started farming on my own in 1992 so I would like to know when I will have progressed beyond being classified as an emerging farmer. It has been 24 years and although it has taken a long time to become established we have now got most of our systems in place.

“My advice to new farmers is that while farming with citrus is a good crop with considerable potential, it is not a quick cash business. In this industry you need to be patient, have access to funding and work hard for several years to realise a profit. My advice to new growers is to stick with the initiative and keep working because although it takes years for citrus to produce a full crop, it does pay well in the end.

“I farm because I am passionate about it. My father was a village farmer and other people in our area also produced vegetables. When I was a youngster, my grandfather always told me to go to the fields and plough. My wife and children live close by and work on the farm every day. Besides the citrus orchards I also have livestock and grow vegetables. We have 23 permanent workers and the workers live on the farm and in harvest season we sometimes employ up to 130 seasonal workers. My daughter Nomfundo is a great help on the farm. I am successful because of faith and grace and the commitment of my farm workers and my passion for farming carries me through,” concluded Sydney.

Sundays River Farming Trust

Buyiswa Steri Ndyenga is the overall General Manager for four of the farms held within the Sundays River Farming Trust as well as the Trust's recently acquired Siyaphambile Farm. She is a beneficiary of the Sundays River Farming Trust and has worked her way up to this position from humble beginnings. In 2015 she won the National Female Entrepreneur Award in the Export Market division. Buyiswa is based at the SRCC (Sundays River Citrus Company) Primary Production offices near Addo. She has the quiet confidence which comes from years of experience, her office is filled with trophies and accolades that mark the successes in her career and she is also proud of the considerable developments currently underway at the Siyaphambile Farm.

"I am 45 and was born in Somerset East. When I was three years old our family moved to Addo and grew up on Willow Tree Farm here in the valley," says Buyiswa. "I went to primary school in Addo and then attended Masiphathisane High School in Motherwell, Port Elizabeth for Standard 7 and 8. I could not finish high school as my parents could not afford to keep me at school. I came back to the farm and looked after my younger brother. I started working on the farm when I was 24. My first job was scouting for pests and diseases in the orchards and I later also did administration. In 1994 I was appointed as a permanent worker and in 2000 I was appointed as a team supervisor. The Sundays River Farming Trust was established in 2007 and when it was formed it consisted of four farms in the Sundays River Valley, namely: Willow



Above: Sundays River Farming Trust General Manager Buyiswa Steri Ndyenga

Tree, Glengrove, Eendracht and Siyathema. These properties were bought from their previous owners by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in 2006. The land is owned by the government and leased to the Sundays River Farming Trust. Sundays River Citrus Company has a management agreement with Sundays River Farming Trust and, working together with a number of the trust's beneficiaries who are in management positions, is responsible for the day to day management of the farms.

"When the job of assistant farm manager at Willow Tree became available in 2007, I applied and was appointed," says Buyiswa. "When we started the Trust I attended a basic management course. The farm manager at the time was Johan Troskie. In 2011 he resigned and in 2012 I was appointed as the farm manager. Willow Tree is 120ha in total with approximately 100ha of citrus.

"In 2014 I was appointed General Manager of the four farms. We have 56 permanent workers and during peak times we have up to 450 seasonal workers. I am also a member of the Lower Sundays River Water Users' Association and I serve on the Association's Management Committee.

"In March 2015 we started the company within the Sundays River Farming Trust called SikhulaSonke Enterprises (Pty) Ltd. After the government bought the original four farms, in 2010 a moratorium was introduced on the sale of government owned farms to beneficiaries. This should be lifted at some point in the future and in preparation for this, we (the

beneficiaries of the Sundays River Farming Trust) put money aside in an investment every year so that we will have the funds available to buy our farms when this happens.

“In 2012 we heard that there was a Lucerne farm for sale near Addo. At that stage we had 7.4 million Rand in our loan account. We needed a further R4 million which we were able to borrow from SRCC. We were thus able to buy the farm and the sale went through in 2012. The farm is 117ha in size and we have renamed it Siyaphambile, which means; “We are going forward”.

“The farm has water rights for 100 hectares and this is sufficient for our needs. In 2014 we started planting Phase One of the development programme. We had planned to plant 28ha of lemons but instead we planted 23ha of citrus, built a storage dam, a house and a farm shed on the remaining 5ha. We were able to finance Phase One with the profits we had made from the other farms. The Department of Agriculture provided us with fertiliser for the young trees that we had planted in Phase One.

“For Phase Two we are planning to plant 37ha of lemons. The department of Agriculture provided a grant of 1.2 million Rand towards the installation of the irrigation system. There are 29 beneficiaries in our group and we all work very well together. The Manager of the farm is Sandile Gxoyiya. The other beneficiaries who were previously assistant managers on the four original farms are now managers of these farms. The four farms together now have 350ha of citrus under cultivation. We work with the SRCC production managers. They assist us with the technical side of production and packing and marketing of our own fruit. SRCC services 106 growers and we are part of this group. We (SikhulaSonke) also assist the other small farms in the area that are not part of the Sundays River Farming Trust. We offer a service to them providing crop protection spraying services as well as picking their fruit for them during the harvest.

“In March 2015 I entered the Department of Agriculture’s Female Entrepreneur Awards competition. The competition was held for the Western District in July I entered the Export Category and I won both the Export and Overall categories and came home with R35 000 worth of prize money. In August I represented the Western District in the Provincial Competition. There were six categories in the competition. I entered the Export category and again won the Export and Overall categories and here I won R325 000. This was followed by the national competition in KZN where I represented the Eastern Cape. Here I won the Export Category but not the overall category as last year’s winner is also from our district and the winner needed to be from elsewhere. The prize money that I won in this competition was R250 000. This has truly been beyond my wildest dreams as I never thought that something like this would happen

to me. The prize money was not for me but for the business and we have used the funds to buy farming implements.

“I want to thank the Department of Agriculture for their ongoing support and the opportunity to enter these competitions. I also want to thank the SRCC for their incredible support that they provide for our group.

“I must also thank all my colleagues and fellow beneficiaries for their support as well as all our permanent and temporary workers. I did not win these competitions because of me but because of all of us. We can only achieve what we do by working together. As a group we also need to thank CRI for their support, particularly our local CRI extension officer Melton Malaudzi.

“We also owe a big thanks to the Department of Land Reform for buying these farms on our behalf. Without this we would not have had any of the opportunities we have today.

“When you start farming with citrus you must have both capital and support. This is a very risky type of farming. We could be hit by hail at any time. We have been very fortunate to have the support of the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Land Reform and also a commercial entity such as SRCC and support like this could mean the difference between success and failure for a beginner farmer. Most of us in my generation did not have the opportunity to finish our secondary schooling but we have learned from the ground up.

“I would encourage young people to go into Agriculture. Agriculture is what will save us from hunger in the future.”

“ This has truly been beyond my wildest dreams as I never thought that something like this would happen to me.” Buyiswa Steri Ndyenga



Luthando, Sundays River

Left: Luthando Trust Farm General Manager Nokwanele Ivy Mzamo

Nokwanele Ivy Mzamo is the General Manager of Luthando Trust Farm, a 139ha citrus farm near Kirkwood in the Sundays River. Luthando is managed in partnership with the Sundays River Citrus Company (SRCC) and SRCC also packs and markets their fruit. Ivy Nokwanele started working at Luthando as a general worker in 1996. She is also a beneficiary of the trust that owns the farm. In 2014 she was the National Overall Winner of the Female Farmer of the Year competition. Petite, elegant and astute, Ivy has the management of Luthando Trust well in hand and the trophies and accolades of success in her office clearly attest to this.

"I grew up in the Northern Cape at Philiptown near De Aar," explains Nokwanele Ivy. "I went to school there and left when I was in grade 10. In 1988, when I was 18, I came to the Eastern Cape. My mom was a single mother and I moved to the Eastern Cape as I had uncles who were living and working here who could help me to find a job. I met my husband here and we got married but he has since passed away. My first job was at the SRCC (Sundays River Citrus Company) pack house and I worked there from 1991 to 1996. From then onwards I worked here on the farm and started as a general worker. I enjoyed working here and we received extensive skills development training over several years."

The Luthando Workers' Trust was established in 2003 when 35 of the farm's permanent workers with their spouses bought a 75% share in the established farm with a total size of 139ha and 109ha of citrus. They were able to purchase this share in the property through a R5.8 million grant from the LRAD (Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development) funding

scheme of the Department of Land Affairs. They contributed this government funding to the purchase price and in addition to this they also had to borrow the outstanding amount from the Land Bank.

"At the time of purchase the farm was called Brandwacht and we renamed it Luthando, which means beloved," she explained. "From 2004 to 2008 I worked here as an assistant manager and during this time I also received further skills development training, including a comprehensive management development programme course. This included both occupational skills and life skills training. The Department of Agriculture offered us training and they sourced good service providers.. We also received Learnerships from Skills for Africa and this was funded by Albert Hein, a Dutch supermarket that is one of the receivers of our citrus.

"When the Luthando project started there were 70 beneficiaries of the trust but this has now decreased to 47 beneficiaries. Of this number only 16 people are actively involved working on the farm and they receive salaries like workers that are not beneficiaries. Some of the beneficiaries have passed away and others sold their shares. The current owners who are not involved have kept their shares in order to receive dividends. We have to pay all the beneficiaries dividends

and, as is the usual practice, only pay dividends when there has been a profit.

"From 2008 I was a Production Manager on the farm and in 2013 I was appointed General Manager by the farm management board. The board consists of Jeffery Rossouw and myself from the farm representing the Trust, and the production managers representing SRCC, Frikkie Olivier who is Operational Manager and Eldon Whittle who is our Senior Production Manager. When the board appointed me as General Manager, this was a huge step for me but with the support I received from the rest of management board we have been coping very well with managing the farm.

"From 2009 I have been entering the Female Farmer of the Year competition and in both 2009 and 2012 I reached the provincial level of the competition. In 2014 I was successful in reaching the national level and I won the first prize in both the export and overall categories. The prize money was R750 000 in total! This was very exciting for me. These funds were for the farm and we were able to buy a bulldozer/front end loader. This has been extremely useful and saved us a lot in machinery hire costs.

"When we received the farm it had 109 hectares of orchards in production and since then we have planted a further 18 hectares. We have planted Afourers, M7 and B17 Navels which help us to stretch the season later for a longer harvest to supply the market demand for late citrus. During the harvest we have between 180 and 200 people working here.

"Looking back I could never have dreamed of where I am today. I grew up without any idea of agriculture or horticulture. When I first arrived here we were renting accommodation from the Brandwacht owner Hermanus Potgieter. He inspired me to find out about the production chain. I started working here as a marker. I speak Afrikaans, English, Xhosa and Sotho and from the start I could help Mr Potgieter with translation. I have 3 children; a daughter aged 26 and 2 sons aged 22 and 19. My daughter works as a payroll clerk at SRCC in primary production. My older son is working at SRCC pack house and off-season helping on the farm and the younger one is studying at NMMU (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University).

"Looking back I could never have dreamed of where I am today."

Nokwanele Ivy Mzamo

"My advice to youngsters considering a career in agriculture is to approach agriculture with a positive mind set. Food security for real life is in Agriculture and we urgently need young people to become involved in agriculture. We need youngsters to teach about the farming process and to whom we can pass on this business.

"As women we have shown through experience that we can do anything we put our minds to. Your attitude to tackling the challenge must be correct because although you will fall down at times, you must just get up and finish what you started.

"I want to thank our management and staff for their support because without each of them we would not be able to produce our fruit and have the business we have today. I would also like to thank Mr Potgieter for his patience and guidance through the transformation process. At the time when the farm was sold and he was mentoring us he told me that he does not sleep at night because he worries about the farm and our future. He said: "Nokwanele, one day you will understand". For me that day has already come and now I am the one who does not sleep at night. We invited him to our 10 years of ownership celebration in 2013 and it was wonderful to see him again.

"I also want to thank Philip du Plessis of SRCC Primary Production. He was a mentor and a father to us. Thanks also to Clive Duckworth who worked here for a few years and was also a great help.

"Government has provided us with ongoing support and training. We have also received grants of infrastructure and fertilizer and crop protection chemicals. I also want to thank the Citrus Development Chamber for their interest and assistance and also CRI and Melton Mulaudzi for the regular CRI workshops as we always learn a lot from these.

"I also want to thank my family for their understanding and giving me the space to do my job as I have needed to over the years. I am a single mother and it has not always been easy for them to share me with my demanding job.

"Lastly and most importantly I must thank God for his providence. I grew up without a father as he had passed away when we were very young. I was one of 5 children and as it was very tough on my mother to raise us, I thought that God did not love us. Today I know differently!"

Gonzana, Blinkwater

*Right: Gonzana Farm owner
Siseko Maqoma*

Siseko Maqoma is in his early 40's, farms with citrus north- west of Fort Beaufort and has a wicked and self-deprecating sense of humour. He is also the chief of the Jingqi Traditional Community and has a deep sense of caring and responsibility towards his people. His beautiful farm Gonzana is on the banks of the Kat River near Blinkwater.

"I grew up on a farm near Alice as my father had a cattle farm in the Thume Valley in the old Ciskei Homeland," explains Siseko. "I attended Woodridge College and matriculated in 1993. A short while before this my father had bought our citrus farm. As he was quite elderly already, I joined him on the farm to assist with the production and I have been farming since 1995. Since then both my parents have passed away.

"At the time the farm had 20ha of Navels and Clementines. Initially it took some adjusting for me to properly get to grips with citrus farming but fortunately at the time there were several production practices courses offered by Outspan. (Outspan was the single channel export marketing company for the Citrus Industry prior to the industry's deregulation in the late 1990's). We also received good technical support from Capespan's extension officers who regularly assisted us on the farms and this was a great help, particularly in those early years."

"The total size of my farm is 54ha, all of which is arable. During the past few years I have increased

my orchards from the original 20ha to 30ha and I am planning to plant the remaining 23ha within the next 3 to 4 years. We are keeping up with new varieties as in 2014 we planted some Nardorcotts. I want to plant more of the new, sought-after varieties as we need to increase the returns from what we receive for the traditional varieties. Currently our season is from May to August. Through expansion I would also like to extend the harvest season, to start earlier with soft citrus and end later, also with soft citrus and lemons.

"We have a permanent staff of eight, most of the permanent people been with us since the previous generation. We also employ casuals during the season to help us to bring in the harvest."

One of the problems in this area is that a number of farmers do not have title deeds. This is a huge problem which has been unresolved since the time that this area was part of the former Ciskei. It has been twenty years since then and a number of farmers in the area have still not received the title deeds to their farms. Despite many years of trying, Siseko is one of the farmers that does not have title deeds to his property.

"My advice to young people who are considering farming with citrus is that it is important to do your homework regarding what resources you will need before you start. Citrus farming is very challenging and

...continued on page 20



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Eden Agri Services

Above: Eden Agri Services pack house owner Shaun Brown (left) and Gonzana Farm Owner Siseko Maqoma

Gonzana continued from page 18

long-term and the cash flow also needs to be long-term. To finance this there has to be good funding or diversified cash crops to bring in the required funds. The infrastructural requirements are considerable and input costs are expensive and can increase rapidly over a short period. A good example of this is that last year a seedling cost R35.00 and this year it is R42.00. When you are planning to plant several hectares, an increase like this can make a big difference to your cash flow. Fortunately, if you have an interest in farming there is good support from the CRI support officer in the area.

“Eden Agri Services pack house packs our citrus and we market through SAFPRO. Eden Agri Services pack house is about 3 km from the farm and is owned and run by Shaun Brown. I started packing with him from the first year he established the pack house. We work very well together and I see it in our co-operation as a partnership,” concluded Siseko.

The Eden Agri Services pack house at Blinkwater north of Fort Beaufort is owned and run by Shaun Brown and the service it provides to a group of emerging growers (which includes Siseko Maqoma) has been the cornerstone for the successful development of their farms over the past few years. At Eden pack house Siseko Maqoma and Shaun Brown explained how this relationship developed and currently functions.

Brown is originally from Fort Beaufort and explained that during the period he worked for Capespan as an extension officer in the area he had developed a good working relationship with a number of the emerging farmers in the area. During that period productions were increasing in the Blinkwater area and there was a need for additional packing facilities. At the time, the emerging growers that use Eden Agri Services today were transporting their fruit as far as Sundays River Valley for packing.

“Individual growers were keen to get involved with their own co-operative setup,” he explained. “I saw this as a business opportunity that could serve the emerging growers so I sourced some second hand packing equipment and established Eden Pack House in 2010.”

Six years and many growing pains later, Eden Agri Services has been enlarged and packing volumes have grown from 110 000 cartons in 2010 to 250 000 cartons in 2015. Judging by expected growth from expanding

“We operate as a cluster and the interdependence between the BEE farms and Eden Agri Services pack house is the reason that both parties are successful.” Siseko Maqoma

orchards and improved production on these farms, it seems likely that packing volumes could increase to 400 000 cartons per annum in the next five years.

Shaun stressed that the pack house would not be viable without the support of the emerging growers and added that he sees their relationship as a partnership. He explained that it was his intention for the growers to become business partners in the pack house in time to come.

Shaun and Siseko agree that they have grown their businesses well together through mutual trust, respect and support. Siseko explained that he is one of a group of black growers, four men and one woman, who have been using Eden Agri Services to pack their citrus since 2010. “We operate as a cluster and the interdependence between the BEE farms and Eden Agri Services pack house is the reason that both parties are successful,” says Siseko. “The cluster would not be viable without the pack house and vice versa. We have found a home in the Eden pack house, the mechanics of our relationship works.”

“The farmers are dynamic in their thinking and are in touch with market,” explains Shaun. “They understand different market specifications. Our area is a good production region and as a result our fruit is in great demand and we are able to supply lucrative international markets. Our soft citrus is sent mostly to the UK and the hard citrus is shipped to the UK, the Middle East and the Far East.”

In order to assist the growers, Eden Agri Services has extended their administrative staff to provide administrative support to the growers and it is convenient for the growers to have a central, standardised administration service. The businesses are now more stable than before. There are plans for the growers to diversify and, together with technical support from Shaun, they are investigating the possibility of planting avocados (this crop has been successfully produced in the area for the past seven years) as well as pecan nuts and kiwi fruit. This is still in the planning stage.

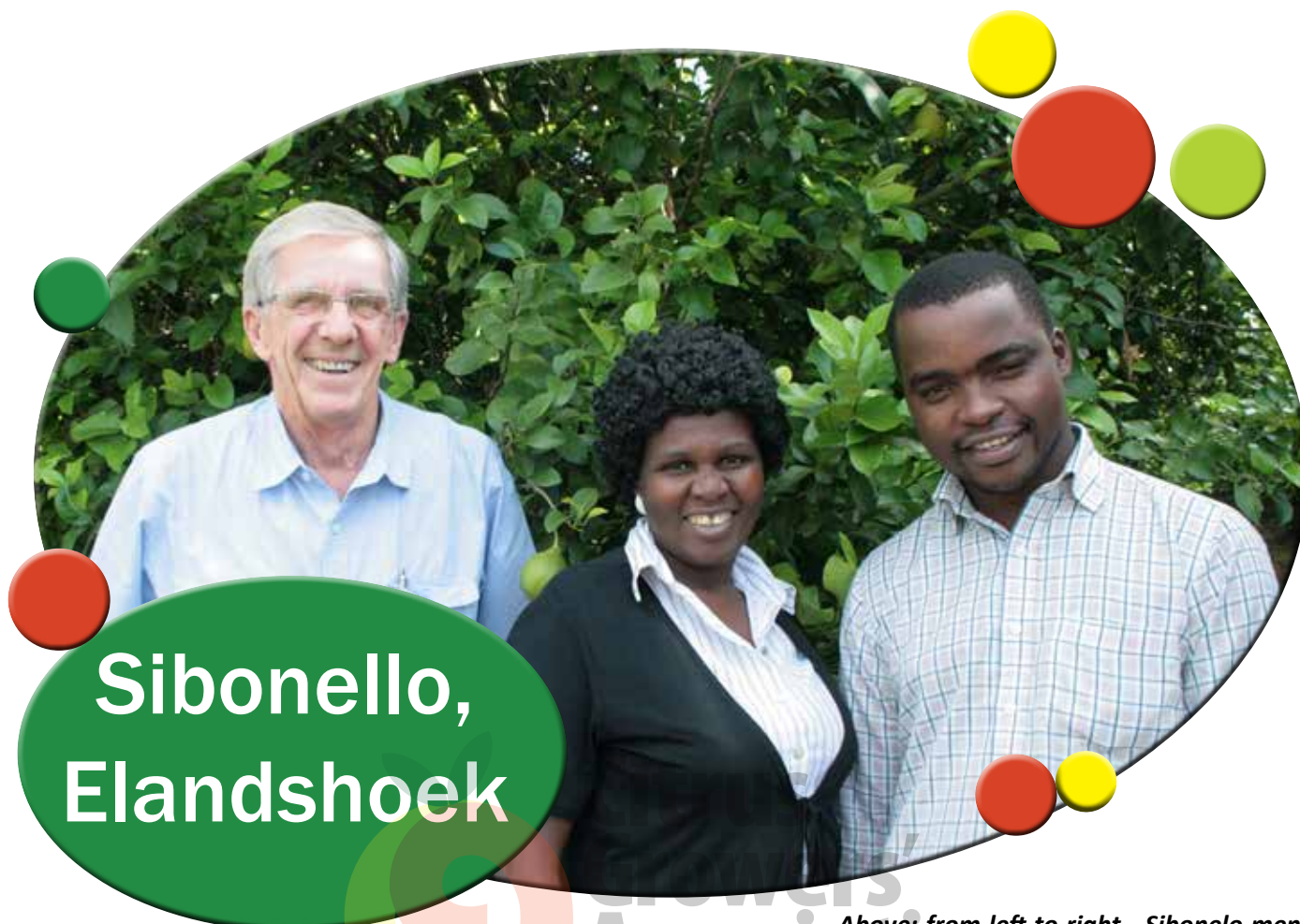
In the past Shaun has informally mentored Siseko and Citrus Development Company Director Lawrence Mgadle. “I believe in empowerment and I want to help to make this successful in our area,” says Shaun. “To do what these farmers have done without financing and without title deeds and still to be sustainable, profitable farmers is a quite remarkable success. This is where the trust and input of private export companies has been incredible. Funding these farmers is a risk that they have taken due to the lack of confidence in these farmers from the commercial banks as many of them did not have the title deeds to their land.

“After some trial and error we have found a good marketer for our fruit. SAFPRO have shown a great deal of faith in us in the long run. Currently we market around 90% of our product through SAFPRO and they also provide us with production finance,” explained Shaun. Siseko agreed and added; “We have aligned ourselves with SAFPRO and they have done great things for us”.

The group has received assistance from the Department of Rural Development grant funding for orchard development. The Department of Agriculture assisted them as part of a larger group in the region with production inputs, fertilizer and pesticides to the value of R4 000 000.

The good working relationship between Eden Agri Services and the group of emerging growers in the Blinkwater district is a great example of how co-operation and trust can work in the best interests of all the parties involved.

“ I believe in empowerment and I want to help to make this successful in our area.” Shaun Brown, owner Eden Agri Services pack house.



Sibonello, Elandshoek

At Elandshoek west of Nelspruit, the Sibonello Community Property Association owns the farm Lindenau, which consists of 300ha (with around 40ha of arable land) with 20.8ha of lemon orchards, 15.4ha of established Eureka and Limonera seedless lemons and 5.4ha of young Eureka seeded lemons. Of the community-based lemon projects established in the Lowveld region, Sibonello is the only one that has survived and today it is flourishing.

The Mbombela Local Municipality (MLM) started the project to promote rural development within the community at Elandshoek. In 2002 the Sibonello Community Property Association consisted of 106 beneficiaries and together they bought the Elandshoek property. Each of the beneficiaries qualified for the R15 000 SLAG government grant that was available at the time and they bought the property and a few implements by combining these grants to make up the total purchase price.

Once they had bought the property they did not have access to development capital. The Mbombela Local Municipality arranged for a grant from Department of Finance and Economic Affairs and this made it possible for the beneficiaries of Sibonello to develop the lemon project. The first 15ha of seedless lemon trees were planted in 2003 and 2004 and in 2013 they planted a further 5.4 ha of seeded Eureka lemons.

Sibonello has been through some challenging times. Bruce Andrews has been mentoring the project since 2006. "When I became involved, the project had some serious production challenges and a sizable debt. Soon after that in co-operation with Ms. Susan Moloto, the beneficiary

Above: from left to right - Sibonello mentor Bruce Andrews, Deputy Secretary of Sibonello CPA Joyce Phonela and Sibonello manager Gilbert Chikweshe.

Chairperson of the CPA committee at that time, a Business Plan was developed and rigidly adhered to. Ms Moloto was a great help but has since passed away. Over time we were able to take care of the production costs and also cover debt. During this time Sibonello also appointed managers but regrettably they were unable to perform their duties satisfactorily and resigned their positions. During the following couple of years the project was managed by Owen Mphika who also resigned from the project."

The current project manager is Gilbert Chikweshe who has undertaken the management of Sibonello and has developed a well-functioning farm, which is evident when observing the healthy trees and the general upkeep of the orchards and farm infrastructure. The working relationship between Gilbert, Joyce Phonela, the Sibonello Community Property Association deputy secretary and representative on the farm management team and Sibonello mentor Bruce Andrews is working well.



“We are happy to see the farm going forward.”
Deputy Secretary of Sibonelo CPA Joyce Phonela

“In 2012 we applied for funding to the Department of Rural Development,” explains Bruce Andrews. “The original amount requested was reduced and we received a grant of R3.08 million. This was utilised to invest in the new orchards, irrigation, farm infrastructure, office equipment, and the development of a new farm building housing the pump station, office, and infrastructure to enable the accreditation of the “Global Gap” Export Certification.

“We wanted to prepare land to establish a further 15ha of new orchards at the eastern end of the Sibonelo property but, between the time of submission and approval, a group of squatters occupied the part of the property that had been earmarked for the new development. These are people from outside and are not beneficiaries of Sibonelo. The planned development then had to be changed as it is unlikely that these squatters will be evicted.

“The Department of Land Affairs has bought an adjoining farm on the Western side of Sibonelo, and it is hoped that through negotiations with the Department, Sibonelo might be allocated a portion of this new land in compensation and exchange for that portion lost to squatter encroachment. Should this be possible it is the intention to establish a further 15 ha of new Lemon Orchards, the increased volume would then enable Sibonelo to become an independent Export producer of lemons and justify the use of an independent packing facility.

“Our project is going well. The original trees are 11 years old. We used funds from the grant to improve the irrigation on the original orchards. The uniform pressure in the improved irrigation system as well as adequate fertiliser and good crop preparation that have been possible with the funds from the grant resulted in an exceptional crop last year. In 2013/2014 we produced 14 tons per hectare and last year (2014/2015) we produced 26 tons per hectare of Seedless Lemons. We have achieved success due to funding and good management. Gilbert has put in his utmost and it shows in the condition of our trees. The grant has enabled Sibonelo to buy much needed farming equipment. We have bought a truck, a tractor, a mulcher and also refurbished one of our old tractors and spraying equipment. We were also able to hire use off a pruning machine.”

The Sibonelo Community Property Association is stable and Michael Lizwane has been the chairperson for several years. He is a teacher and is still teaching but shows a personal interest, visiting often. Joyce is the deputy secretary and Joseph Nkosi is the vice chairperson and Secretary of the CPA and both have held these positions for several years. From the funds that were received an allocation of R100 000 was set aside to be able to give each of the beneficiaries R1 000. Originally there were 106 registered beneficiaries but currently the CPA has only been able to trace 65 of these. Each of these has received R1 000 and the balance is being held in trust. If the other beneficiaries are not traced, the balance

of these funds will be spent on a project to benefit the whole community of beneficiaries. Only one of the people working on the farm is a beneficiary. The rest of the farm workers are non-beneficiaries.

Joyce Phonela represents the CPA board in the farming operation. She is the primary signatory on the bank accounts and Bruce Andrews is the secondary signatory. She stressed that following proper procedures as well as effective communication are what has made the functioning of the farm successful. Joyce was beaming about the success of the farm. “The CPA members all know our farm is making progress. We are very grateful to Gilbert for managing the farm so well and we are happy to see the farm going forward.”

Gilbert is committed to the success of Sibonelo. “I have learned about agriculture from the experience of working on farms,” says Gilbert. “I grew up in Zimbabwe and came to South Africa in 2008 when I was 21. I worked on a dairy farm at Hoedspruit. After 18 months I went to work at Champagne citrus farm and during the time I was working there I met Mr Andrews. He arranged for me to become involved with Sibonelo and things developed from there. I attended the export workshop training that was organised by the Citrus Academy and facilitated by Louis von Broembsen. This was very helpful as I learned a great deal about the marketing side of our industry.” This was sponsored by the Marketing Division of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

“We use Twycross pack house to pack our fruit and in conjunction with other lemon producers Karino Co-operative is marketing our fruit. They are doing a great job and we have an income coming in for eight months of the year. We have initiated a GlobalGap audit on the farm. It is said by Dept. of Agriculture Officials that of about 100 Community Property Association farming projects funded in Mpumalanga, only six have succeeded and remain successful farming operations and we are proud to be told that Sibonelo is one of these six,” concluded Bruce Andrews.

*Right: Easy Farm owner
Israel Nemaorani*

Easy Farm, Thohoyandou



Easy Farm is a citrus and banana farm on the Southern slopes of the Soutpansberge near Thohoyandou in Northern Limpopo in an area where there are few other commercial farms. This is the farm of agricultural pioneer Israel Nemaorani, who started farming here in 1990 and received his title deed in 1994. The total size of Easy Farm is 202ha and today Easy Farm has 115 ha of citrus (mostly Valencias) and 60ha to 70ha of bananas. There is also 40ha of fallow ground and under normal circumstances the farm would have enough water from the Mwedi River to develop this.

Currently the farm is run by Israel and his son Lavhengwa. They received us at Easy Farm and spoke to us about Easy Farm and the plans for the future.

"One of the biggest changes we are facing is that we are feeling the effects of the severe drought affecting our area," says Israel. In addition to my citrus orchards I also produce bananas. I also

have mangoes and these I sell to Westfalia for drying. Besides the fruit production I also have a herd of cattle and 200 pigs. The drought has been very hard on my cattle.

"In the past few years I have been able to increase my production and export more of my fruit. When I started my farm, I started with vegetables before I progressed to fruit production. When my farming business became successful I was noticed by CGA. They were looking for a black farmer to be on the board of CGA and as a result I became a board member and served on the board for nearly 10 years. I am still the only citrus farmer in our immediate area.

"In 2013 the Department of Agriculture sponsored the construction of a new pack house adjacent to my existing one. I am very grateful to them for this. My current packing machinery is unfortunately a little small for my needs. If this was bigger, I could pack my own fruit as well as pack fruit for some of the other growers in the area.

"One of the biggest problems we have here is theft and this is preventing me from expanding my production. I need to put up an electric fence as the thieves just cut holes in an ordinary fence. The increasing cost of transport for our fruit has a significant effect on its profitability. It is around 800km from here to the Port of Durban which is where we export our fruit from. To transport a truckload of our fruit over this distance now costs around

“ Farming is not for lazy people. Farming is a calling. You must be passionate about farming if you want to be successful.”
Israel Nemaorani

R20 000. The quality of the roads in our area is also a challenge. We have to fetch our pallets from Tzaneen (1 ½ hour’s drive from here). The cost of electricity is also making inroads into our profitability.

“The advantage of being as far north as we are is that our fruit ripens a few days earlier than in the production areas around Tzaneen. Our navel harvest starts at the end of March.

“My advice to young people would be to consider agriculture as a career. There is definitely a future in agriculture but one of the biggest challenges to farming is accessing the necessary start-up capital. You must be patient and have a supplementary income to support you while you establish your farm as farming, particularly fruit production, is a long term business. Farming is not for lazy people. Farming is a calling. You must be passionate about farming if you want to be successful.

“I want to thank the Department of Agriculture for their assistance. Thanks also to the CGA and CRI for their advice and assistance over the years. The exposure that I received locally and internationally through the CGA has been invaluable to the development of my business. This is in all spheres of my business, both production and marketing.

“I also want to extend good wishes and good luck to the current and future board members of CGA. Please continue with the good work you do on behalf of our industry and all our growers.

“Currently I am 69 and I have been farming for 25 years. I am preparing for retirement and am slowing down my involvement and gradually handing the responsibility to my son Lavhengwa. It is good to have a succession plan and have a son who can take over from me.

“My wife and I love living here and I love the farming lifestyle. After working in the city, coming back here to my childhood home was truly a homecoming. I look forward to retiring and seeing my son continuing with the farm,” concluded Israel.



A photograph of four men standing in front of a lush green citrus grove. From left to right: Samson Qomondi, Johan du Preez, Joseph Hlongo, and Jonas Mogale. They are all smiling and dressed in casual work attire. The photo is framed in a circular shape with several colorful circles (green, yellow, red) around it.

Mariveni, Letsitele

Above: The Mariveni Management Team, from left to right: Samson Qomondi, General Manager, Johan du Preez, Production Manager, Joseph Hlongo, Section Manager for citrus and Jonas Mogale, Security and Logistics Manager.

Mariveni is a communally owned farm on the outskirts of Letsitele near Tzaneen. Samson Qomondi is the General Manager at Mariveni as well as the PDI North Director on the CGA Board. He was joined in the interview by Joseph Hlongo, Section Manager for citrus, Jonas Mogale, Security and Logistics Manager and Johan du Preez, the Production Manager.

Mariveni Farm has 24 owners, and has 145ha of Citrus and 72ha of bananas. Of the 24 owners, 13 work on the farm while others have retired or passed away. The farm's history dates back to October 1974 and was initiated by the Bantu Investment Corporation. Since then it has had issues with accessing funding but due to assistance from Du Roi Precision Farming amongst others, by 2011 the co-operative was operating on its own as a single farming unit.

Samson Qomondi is the General Manager of Mariveni and he explained the developments there over the past five years. "In 2011 we were exporting through Lona and had planned to continue to do so. Unfortunately, in November 2012 we were hit by a severe hail storm and we lost between 65% and 70% of our crop. The loss was to the value of around R9.1 million. This had very serious impact on our income and also consequences for the future of our project. The quality of the remaining

fruit for that season (2013) was not good enough to export and we had to sell what was left of the harvest, both citrus and bananas, to a local juicing plant. The returns that we received from this were very low.

"Before our next harvest in 2014 we did a crop estimate and submitted this to Lona, requesting a production loan from them for the harvest. We received the loan from them and during that year we again exported through them. Our trees had taken a beating from the hail in 2012 and for the 2014 season we only produced 131 000 cartons while production in a normal year would have been around 270 000 cartons. We were battling to make ends meet with this considerably reduced income but luckily we had the banana harvest to supplement our income. As shareholders we had a meeting to discuss our survival strategy going forward. We were in a position that we had to find a strategic partner that would assist us as we would not survive alone.

"We approached the Boyes Group towards the end of 2014. They were willing to assist us and since then they have provided us with funding for production inputs and development capital. After establishing our Joint Venture with the Boyes Group we have converted Mariveni from a co-operative to a company and our company's new name is Lizilor Pty. Ltd. This was completed in 2015 and since then things have started to progress smoothly. Due to our joint venture, for the past two seasons we have been exporting our fruit through FruitOne, the fruit marketing company affiliated to the Boyes Group. In 2015 we produced 235 000 cartons, a big improvement on the small crops of the previous years.

"The Boyes Group has provided us with production inputs and we are also making use of their company's farming implements such as tractors, spray carts and picking trailers as well as their picking teams to bring in the harvest. We are pleased and grateful for the assistance that we are receiving from the Boyes Group. We are now able to implement production practices when they are required as there is no longer a shortage of resources which previously often delayed the process beyond the ideal timing for its implementation.

"Government has provided us with a 15km mesh fence to enclose our property. This has been a great help for our security and to prevent theft and damage to our crops by livestock. We have also received crop protection chemicals to the value of R500 000, fertilizer to the value of R500 000 and electricity, also to the value of R500 000. Government also provided us with 200 litres of GF 120, the crop protection chemical

"From when we thought that Mariveni was finished after the hail, things are looking good and we have the Boyes Group to thank for their much needed assistance." Samson Qomondi, Mariveni General Manager.

we need to spray for fruit fly. These inputs from the government have been a great help to us and we are very grateful for this assistance.

"We have a further 100ha of land that we could develop in the future, as well as enough water to irrigate this. We plan to plant all of this in the next few years and are already starting with this. We are planning to plant 32ha of Tangos during next year and are currently clearing the bushes off the land where we plan to plant the Tango orchards.

"Although it is very dry at the moment, under normal circumstances we have enough water for this proposed development. Government has indicated that they will help us to upgrade our old storage dam. We are waiting for this to happen and once this is completed we will have enough water for this development.

"From when we thought that Mariveni was finished after the hail, things are looking good and we have the Boyes Group to thank for their much needed assistance," concluded Samson.



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Mkharo, Shikundu

Above: The Chauke farming family of Mkharo Irrigating Scheme. Amos Chauke (at right) with his wife Pinkie Chauke (centre) and son Amon Chauke (left).

Shikundu is in Northern Limpopo, east of Thohoyandou and just west of the Kruger National Park and here Amos Chauke, his wife Pinky and son Amon have established their farm Mkharo Irrigating Scheme. The family established this farm of 14ha in total with 7.5ha of citrus from scratch and with their own funding during the last five years.

The drought was evident in region as the bush was clearly dry and the cattle in the area were painfully thin but on the farm the citrus trees looked healthy and lush. “I am from this area and grew up close by,” explained Amos. “My parents were small-scale farmers and growing up I saw daily how my father went about his farming business and this is where I developed my passion for farming. To become a farmer was always a dream of mine. I hope that my son will take over from me.

“One of my subjects at school was agriculture and I loved this as a subject. I wish that I could have attended Agricultural College after high school but

there was no funding for this and I had to get a job. After completing high school I worked for the government in the former Gazankulu homeland in the Department of Public Works. I worked in the electrical division of the Department and received electrical apprenticeship training in order to work as an electrical technician. I later moved to Waterval Township here in Limpopo where I also worked in the electrical division of public works. Even while I lived in the township I used to grow vegetables in the back yard.

“In 2010 I turned 60 and I wanted to live my dream of farming in my retirement. I came back home to this area and I approached the local headman (tribal leader) in the area and put my request for farming land to him and his council. They were willing to assist me. I then scouted the area for land suitable for vegetable and fruit production and identified this area. Once I had done this I returned to them and we went to the tribal office to confirm that I had received permission to start farming on this land.

“This was successfully processed through the Agricultural Office of the Department of Home Affairs and we received certification of the process. I have 14ha in total and 7.5ha of this is citrus. On the other land we grow vegetables such as chillies, cabbages and okra to assist us with cash flow. In the citrus orchards I have Baianina and Late Navels, Midnight and Delta Valencias, Thambo Clementines and Empress Mandarins. We also have a herd of cattle.

“We hope and trust that God will bless us.”

Amos and Pinkie Chauke

“I had some capital to begin with and my wife Pinkie and I have established the farm to this point on our own without any outside financial assistance. We have not received any loans or grants and it has been tough going at times as the finances are a constant battle. Farming is very risky and we rely on God for his providence and we are now living from hand to mouth. If the Development Chamber could assist us with setting up a business plan with which we could access funding this could make all the difference to us.

“We do have the opportunity to develop more land but water security is currently our biggest limiting factor. We use borehole water and have no dam or stream to tap and the drought we are experiencing is causing big problems for us. If we had a storage dam this would solve this problem for us.

“I believe that there is good business opportunity in agriculture but I will caution that you must have to have the necessary knowledge and capital available before you start farming. There are four important issues to consider before starting and these are water, development and running capital, input costs and markets. Farming is tough. To farm with cattle you need extensive grazing areas. When your cattle graze amongst other herds they are exposed to disease and cross breeding.

“I am very pleased that I started farming as I am passionate about farming and my wife is very supportive. Farming is a long-term investment but we believe that we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Besides water our other need would be a small pack house to pack our fruit.

Amon has been a great help to his parents in establishing the farm. “I have been involved on the farm for around 70% of the time over the past five years,” explains Amon. “I am 31 years old and after matriculating from Waterval High near Makhado in 2003, I completed a certificate course in Civil Engineering at the FET College at Polokwane followed by a certificate course in Electrical Engineering at the FET College in Giyani. I enjoy my involvement on the farm and as a result of the knowledge I have from my studies I am able to apply this on the farm.”

Amos Chauke is rightly proud of the beautiful farm that they have managed to establish with their own capital. The current drought is playing havoc with their productions and is severely straining their cash flow and the family is concerned about the future. In closing Amos and Pinkie Chauke both said: “We hope and trust that God will bless us.”





Welgevonden, Swart Umfolozi

Above: Nkosi Zondo with farm workers at Welgevonden Citrus Farm, Swart Mfolozi. From left to right: Nkosi Douglas Zondo, Thobile Dlamini, Ntombi Mbatha, Zanele Khumalo, Thembele Kunene, Hloniphine Mtshati and Eunice Sikhakhane.

Nkosi Douglas Zondo is the local chief (Nkosi) in the remote rural Swart Mfolozi District near Vryheid in Kwazulu-Natal. He has established 60 hectares of Eureka lemons on his farm and plans to plant a further 40 hectares and the main purpose of this considerable farming operation is to create jobs for the people in his area.

The term *Nkosi* is a Zulu term of respect used to address a chief of the local community, a hereditary position handed down from father to son. This is a very honourable position and a *Nkosi* is also responsible for the well-being of this community, assisting people where possible and also acting as an arbitrator in disputes within the community. "My task is to solve disputes and I am expected to set an example and help the people in my community where possible and appeal to the authorities to help them as well," explained *Nkosi* Zondo. "I have two sons and

they are both qualified Civil Engineers and studied at the University of KZN in Pietermaritzburg. They work at their jobs but are starting to take responsibility within the community. My eldest son will take my place as *Nkosi* in the future."

Nkosi Zondo bought undeveloped farming property from commercial farmers in the area in 2009. At the time the farms were bushveld and had only been used for grazing. There are four farms which together have a total size of 15 000ha. The farm with the citrus development is Welgevonden. The citrus development currently has 60ha of Eureka seeded lemons and the soil ridging and irrigation have already been prepared for a further 40ha of trees which are on order for planting within the next few years. In addition the farm produces butternuts, cabbages and irrigated wheat produced with irrigation pivots. There is currently 18ha of cabbages in production on the farm. In order to develop the farm to this point *Nkosi* Zondo has secured a loan from Ithala Bank and has also received assistance from the KZN Department of Agriculture.

The farm has 67 permanent workers. These are local people who have always lived in their own homes in the area and are able to walk to work at the farm, which is one of the biggest providers of employment in the

“It is my aim to distribute the wealth generated from the farm to the people in our area.” Nkosi Douglas Zondo

area. At the farm the female workers explained that the project has been a great help to them and their families as for many of them, this job is their only form of income.

“Our income helps us a lot as we can now feed our families and afford to send our children to school. *Nkosi Zondo* is like a parent to us and is a blessing to our community,” says Thobile Dlamini. “We really appreciate what *Nkosi Zondo* has done for us and these trees will provide employment for us for many years to come,” says Ntombi Mbatha.

“We would like to appeal to government to assist people like us in remote rural areas. Our government officials should visit us and see what we are doing and invest in our project and others like it. What we are doing creates jobs and contributes to rural development,” stressed *Nkosi Zondo*. “Our trees are now three years old and we will soon be able to start harvesting from them. It is my aim to distribute the wealth generated from the farm to the people in our area.

“One of our biggest challenges for people living in this area is that transport is very expensive and this makes it difficult for people from remote areas to have access to services. Many of the roads in our area are gravel roads and we need to appeal to our local municipality to assist us with keeping the roads in good order. When our citrus trees start producing and we need to transport this product from our farm we will need our road infrastructure improved.

“From the start of the project my wife has done all the required administration. As the farm has developed this has increased rapidly and I now have an accountant to assist us with this function. Our trees will soon be yielding their first good harvest and we are looking forward to the returns that this will bring as this will provide an income for our workers and the opportunity to further expand our farm,” says *Nkosi Zondo*.

Ethembeni Care Centre

Next to the government Clinic at Swart Mfolozi is a beautiful building which houses the Ethembeni Care Centre. *Nkosi Zondo* explained the origins and establishment of this important resource for people affected by HIV in the area. “My wife is a nurse and runs the Swart Mfolozi Clinic. Around 9 years ago she was telling me how many of our people were sick and dying from HIV. This terrible situation prompted me to go to Germany to seek financial assistance from the German people. I went over in 2009 and spent a month doing presentations at businesses and churches, appealing to the people to assist us with this huge problem. This was successful and we received R3.7 million from a range of individuals and churches. The funds were used for the design and construction of the Ethembeni Care Centre building which caters for members of our community who have HIV /AIDS and I donated the land for the building.



Above: Nkosi Douglas Zondo at the Ethembeni Care Centre

“We also receive ongoing funding from Germany for the project. In order to administer this, we opened a bank account in the name of the Lutheran Church and this is administered by the Lutheran nuns who work as nurses here at the care centre. We have an excellent working relationship with the nuns and since they arrived and started working here, they have also learned to speak Zulu to communicate with the patients. The ongoing funding includes funding for vehicles to transport patients to the care centre and to hospital in Vryheid. The Care Centre provides care for around 100 patients and also provides them with food parcels. The Lutheran Church has also assisted the community by providing bursaries for university education for some of the local youngsters. They have also provided funding for school fees and school uniforms for the local scholars. We are eternally grateful to the Lutheran Church and the German people for their assistance to our people,” concluded *Nkosi Zondo*.

Thulwane, Nkwalini

*Right: Mziwoxolo (Mzo) Makhanya of
Thulwane Investments Farm*



Mzo Makhanya is a mechanical engineer who changed careers to become a farmer and has been farming with citrus and sugar cane on his farm Thulwane Investments in the beautiful and fertile Nkwalini Valley for ten years. He is clearly passionate about the citrus industry and about assisting emerging farmers to become successful commercial farmers. Mzo is the chairman of the Citrus Growers' Development Chamber and has been involved with the Chamber since its establishment in 2010.

"I am extremely excited about the future of the CGA Grower Development Company," says Mzo. "The process to this point has been developing for a number of years and we are now at the start of great new things. The new company is correctly constituted, has a clear objective and the capacity of a General Manager. Along with the co-operation of industry and government, this company is going to fly!"

Mzo was well into his career as a mechanical engineer when an injury made it necessary for him to change careers. At that stage there were suddenly opportunities in farming which did not exist before and this was something that appealed to him. He had grown up near Mtubatuba where his family farmed with cattle and so his affinity with farming made him start looking for a suitable farm.

He found the property and started Thulwane Investments in 2006. The property is leased from the Department of Land Affairs through the Pro-Active Land Acquisition Strategy (Plas). At the start it was a 3-year lease with an option to buy but in the interim this has been extended to a 30-year lease with the option to buy. When he started farming the property needed replanting and other improvements. The total size of the farm is 352ha and initially there was 90ha of citrus and 175ha of sugar cane. Since then Mzo has replanted some of the citrus and more recently expanded the citrus by planting an additional 25ha. The younger orchards are lemons which have also diversified production. Currently Thulwane Investments has 105ha citrus and 145ha sugar cane.

Getting to this point has not been easy. "Farming always looks easier from the outside," stressed Mzo. "When you jump in like I did, initially the process was overwhelming. Before my first crop Capespan paid me a production advance for the harvest and I marketed 90% of my crop through Capespan. This was a great help indeed in allowing me to establish the farm and I still export some of my fruit through Capespan."

For several years local Nkwadini grower Vernon Tocknell mentored Mzo and the resulting skills transfer has proved to be invaluable for Mzo. The formal mentoring process ended some time ago but the relationship remains in place and Mzo still occasionally consults Vernon for advice.

The farm's productivity has increased and the newly planted lemon orchards are expected to start bearing crops within the next year. Mzo has also invested in modernising the pack house on the farm and the pack house complies with GlobalGAP and Nature's Choice accreditations. The farm has in excess of 60 permanent labourers and in season employs a further 60 seasonal workers to help with the harvest. In the past Mzo's successful improvements of the farm have not gone unnoticed in his local district as was awarded the Nkwadini Farmers' Association's award for Most Improved Farmer award for two consecutive years.

"My wife did not want to move here initially but now she loves it. I have three sons and as I have seen how tough farming is, I have not encouraged them to do this for their future. Nonetheless both the oldest and the youngest have become interested in becoming farmers when they grow up."

In his capacity as chairman of the Citrus Development chamber, Mzo explains that exposure to and a better understanding of the demands of the market are essential for emerging growers if they want to achieve success.

"I have been fortunate enough to visit Fruit Logistica more than once," explains Mzo. "The exposure that this international fresh produce trade show provides for growers and other participants in the international fresh produce sector is an invaluable eye opener. This provides the opportunity to see what our market share is in the international market and what the quality of fruit is that is offered to the market by our competitors. Here it is possible to investigate new market trends and new technologies from production throughout the entire supply chain. This is the one of the most important international meeting places for producers, customers and other participants in the global fresh produce industry. I would highly recommend that emerging growers are given the opportunity to attend this trade show for the remarkable exposure and perspective it offers."





Western Cape Update

Grower Development progress in the Western Cape production regions is proceeding well. Established projects in the Citrusdal and broader Western Cape region are flourishing and there are a number of new developing citrus farming projects that had been established in recent years and that are proving successful. CGA Director Piet Smit from Citrusdal in the Western Cape confirmed that the transformation projects in the province were generally thriving.

The Western Cape also has the CPAC commodity approach resource for a range of commodities including citrus. The commodity approach resource is unique to the Western Cape and was initiated to create a public partnerships between the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the various commodity groups, in order to access skills and knowledge and commodity funding to collectively address transformation in the Province.

The commodity approach is based on commodity committees referred to as CPAC (Commodity Project Allocation Committees), represented by industry experts as well as Government. These committees evaluate, assist and support the projects. In some cases, the Department of Agriculture and a commodity organisation will share the financial cost of a project. This unlocks additional funds, and keeps all stakeholders motivated for success. The extent of support ranges from the development of business plans up to the point where projects are supported with market access. This approach acknowledges the complexities surrounding land reform and what constitutes a successful project and to allocate scarce resources

more effectively and efficiently. The CPAC's also reports to the Departmental project allocation committee (DPAC) which is ultimately responsible for governance and oversight.

For Fruits of Success West published in 2012 the industry investigated several projects in the Citrusdal region and these were Mgro and Mouton Citrus, Cedar Citrus and ALG Estates, Paardekop, Maneberg and Bergendal, De Kamp and Boontjiesrivier and Goede Hoop Citrus. These group ownership projects all have partnerships with strong commercial entities and they are growing successfully.

Cedar Citrus beneficiary Lena (Tiekie) September confirmed that Cedar Citrus was continuing with their former successes. The project has 40ha of citrus trees planted in 2000 and 2001. Initially there were 36 beneficiaries of the Cedar Citrus Workers' Trust but this has now decreased as people have passed away or left. These shares have been bought out by the remaining 21 beneficiaries. "Our project is successful and we have received good dividends during the past few years," says Tiekie. "We have received a big John Deere tractor and plough from the Industrial Development Corporation which has been a great help to us."

Ronel van Zyl of Bergendal farm confirmed that Maneberg (Pty) Ltd. has grown from strength to strength. Here the 91 beneficiaries of the Bergendal Workers' Trust own a 32% share of the Maneberg Company which owns Maanskloof farm, the Bergendal pack house as well as a recently purchased 600ha farm near Piketberg. In addition to the original 91 capital beneficiaries, the project has also more recently included 61 "income" beneficiaries within the Bergendal Workers' Trust. The project is highly successful, pays dividends annually and to date has paid in excess of R2 million in dividends.

Mgro is Mouton Citrus's empowerment partner and was established in 2002 when 236 Mouton Citrus workers bought shareholding in Mouton Citrus by combining their LRAD (Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development) government grants. Shareholders have subsequently benefited from comprehensive growth in share value, performance bonuses, skills transfer, capacity building and social services. Hendrik Cloete is Quality Control Manager and Personnel Officer for Mouton Citrus. He is a Director on the Mouton Citrus Board of Directors representing Mgro on the board and has held this position for several years. "Our business has grown well over the years and the dividend payments that we have received have proved that our share in this business is highly successful," says Hendrik.

Ruigerivier (Pty) Ltd is 30% owned by Mouton Citrus and 70% owned by the Hexrivier Workers' Trust that consist of 150 beneficiaries. Ruigerivier has 35 hectares of citrus with opportunity for a further expansion of 50 hectares. The Ruigerivier Company has been making profit in the last two years.

Erasmus van Zyl of Paardekop Farm confirmed that the Paardekop development farming project was doing very well. The Paardekop Worker's Trust has 158 beneficiaries and owns a 300ha (250ha under cultivation) property used for the cultivation of Rooibos tea. Paardekop has a rental contract with the Workers' Trust for tea production. The Workers' Trust receives a quarter of the tea yield off the trust's property. This they market themselves and the income from this represents their dividend. "The Rooibos tea price is currently very good so the business is doing well. Dividend payments for the past two years have been R700 000 and R1 million so their business is flourishing," says Erasmus. "We are currently planning to extend their interests to buying ownership in a citrus production unit," he added.

The De Kamp and Boontjiesrivier farming project has also been very successful. The De Kamp Workers' Trust was established with 20 of the farm workers as beneficiaries and the project consists of 20ha of citrus. Of the original 20 there are now 11 left and the remaining trustees have bought the shareholding in the business back from those who have left or passed away. The De Kamp Workers' Trust is a 50% shareholder in the property along with the 50% balance which is owned by brothers Piet and Gerrit Smit. The trust hires the Boontjiesrivier machinery, labour and resources to prepare the harvest. The fruit produced by De Kamp gets the benefit of the supply chain and premium export supermarket programmes.



During the past several years the business has been profitable and has paid shareholders good dividends.

Paul Visser, Human Resources and Communications Manager at Goede Hoop Citrus confirmed that the Transformation project within Goede Hoop Citrus in Citrusdal has continued to be successful. The project was established in 2006 when Goede Hoop Citrus Empowerment Trust offered the shares to individuals employed by the company and the shares were bought by them through means of a loan from the company. Shareholders have received dividends annually for the past seven years. During the past two years 103 seasonal workers who have worked for the company for 15 years and more have also received shareholding in the company and at present the ownership of BEE ownership of the company is at 17%. "I am excited about the successes of this project. The dividend payments show the people involved that this works and The Goede Hoop Empowerment Trust is highly successful," concluded Paul.



*"I would like to thank
the Citrus Academy
from the bottom of my
heart."*

Andisiwe Kholwane

Andisiwe Kholwane is a Quality Controller for Spar and is based at the Spar's Eastern Cape Distribution Centre in Port Elizabeth. She lives in Port Elizabeth with her husband and baby boy.

She grew up in a village outside of Umtata in the Eastern Cape. Her mother, a teacher, chose to send her and her siblings to good schools in Umtata, and it is there that she attended St. Joseph's School from Grade 1 to 9, and finished high school at Zingisa Comprehensive High School, matriculating in 2006.

"In my Matric year I did not know what I wanted to do after finishing school. Our class attended a career exhibition, and while we were there one of my classmates asked about agricultural technicians and extension officers. I overheard the conversation, and the outdoor nature of the job appealed to me as I did not want to work in an office. I liked the idea of going out into the outdoors on farms and meeting people and getting involved in agriculture.

"This was ironic because while I was at school I had friends that took agriculture as a subject and, although I had not taken agriculture as a subject, I often accompanied them when they watered or tended to the fields as the practical part of the subject.

"I went home and told my mother, and she told me that she knew of an agricultural college – Fort Cox College of Agriculture and Forestry near King Williamstown. After I finished matric I took a bus from Umtata to Fort Cox College, and filled in the application form. Travelling back home

on the bus I received a call to say that I had been accepted. They told me to return the following week to start the course, and to bring a work suit (overalls) and gum boots!"

Andisiwe began her National Diploma in Agricultural Management at Fort Cox in 2007. The three-year course consisted of two and a half years of theory, and six months of practical training, and her subjects included Agricultural Extension and Agricultural Marketing. During her first year she was initially interested in Animal Production but also took Crop Production modules (Horticulture 1 and 2 and Crop Production 1 and 2) as extra subjects. She was the only student doing the course at the time to take these extra subjects, and during her third year chose Crop Production as her major subject.

"During the course we visited farms in the area. One of our visits was to a citrus farm in the Fort Beaufort area. I found this very interesting and decided that I wanted to start my career in the citrus industry. I spoke to the head of our Department and begged him to find me a placement at the Fort Beaufort Riverside Farm. I was very grateful when this wish was realised. I did my practical training at Riverside from June to November in 2009."

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2010

Qualifications: National Diploma in Agricultural Management, BTech Agricultural Management

Academic Institutions:

- 2007 – Fort Cox College of Agriculture and Forestry
- 2010 – Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)

Internship: Riverside, Fort Beaufort

Vacation Work: 2010 – Sundays River Citrus Company (SRCC)

Graduate Placement: 2011 – SRCC

Industry Exposure: 2010 – Global Citrus Conference

“I hope that the Citrus Academy continues to help empower black females to go into agriculture.”

Soon after graduating Andisiwe applied for a Citrus Academy bursary as she wanted to continue her studies. Her application was accepted, and so she enrolled at NMMU to complete her BTech Agricultural Management degree during 2010.

“Citrus Academy arranged vacation work for me after my course finished, and I was placed at SRCC (Sundays River Citrus Company) along with two other female Citrus Academy Bursary Fund students. I knew that SRCC would choose to place one of us in the company’s graduate training programme for the following year, so I took the initiative and told management that I was interested in participating in the programme. Taking the initiative paid off as I was selected to take part in the graduate training programme in 2011. During this year I worked at various posts in the packhouse including receiving, grading, sorting, packing and dispatch. This was for both local and export fruit and this practical experience was an invaluable start to my career.”

In 2012 Andisiwe landed a one year contract job as a Junior Farm Supervisor at Penhill Farm at Addo in the Sundays River, and was put in charge of a 53 hectares section of the farm, 40 hectares of which had just started bearing. A group of 20 employees reported to her, many of them older than herself, and she had to work hard to gain their respect.

“In this position my mentor was the Penhill Farm Manager, Errol Hewson. The job was tough and Errol taught me to be tough and set me challenges to see what I was capable of achieving. This was hands-on, practical work and I coped.”

Following her contract position she applied for a job as a trainee manager with Freshmark/Shoprite, and began working at Freshmark in Port Elizabeth in September 2012. This opportunity provided her with valuable exposure to fruit and vegetables as she learned how to do receiving, stock-taking and quality control for a range of fresh produce.

Late the following year she applied at Spar in Port Elizabeth for a position as an Overall Quality Controller for all produce. She got the job, and so resigned from Freshmark and began working at Spar in November 2013, where she works today. She currently lives in central Port Elizabeth with her husband, a junior cold chain assessor for PPECB (Perishable Products Export and Control Board), and their son.

“The Citrus Academy exposed me to the farmers, suppliers and how to conduct the business, as well as the functioning of the supply chain. They certainly opened doors for me, as without the opportunities that they created for me I do not think that I would have been able to achieve what I have so far.

“I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart. I hope that they continue to help empower black females to go into agriculture. I would also like to encourage them to keep looking for candidates like myself from the Eastern Cape.”

Andisiwe is a petite dynamo and is living proof of the old adage that dynamite does indeed come in small packages.

“The huge heart of what you are doing is unbelievable and please carry on to assisting young people like me.”

Bahle Kweba

Bahle Kweba is a Primary Production Manager for the Sundays River Citrus Company. He is enthusiastic about his studies and job, and spoke about his career journey with the Citrus Academy and SRCC with great energy.

Bahle was born and grew up in the Transkei at Engcobo. In 1997 he moved to East London with his family, and matriculated from Cambridge High School in East London in 2009.

“My grandfather had a maize farm at Elliot in the Transkei. I enjoyed going back to visit him on the farm. This exposure to agriculture was what prompted my interest and I chose this as a career direction as initially I thought that I could use this to help my grandfather. I am the youngest of my siblings and am the only one who has gone into agriculture as they are all professionals.”

After matriculating Bahle applied at NMMU to study Agricultural Management but at first attempt was unable to qualify. During 2010 he enrolled at Lovedale College and did a bridging course in Agriculture and reapplied at NMMU again for the following year. He began his National Diploma in Agricultural Management at NMMU in 2011.

“During the first year we did modules that included information from the Citrus Academy

and this prompted my interest in citrus production. During 2012 I visited the Sundays River Valley with NMMU and this was the first time I had seen citrus orchards. I needed a placement for my internship training year the following year, so I contacted Citrus Academy asking for assistance. At the end of 2012 I was thrilled to receive a reply from the Academy to say that I had been granted a placement for internship at SRCC. I had also applied for an internship training placement with a group of small growers at Bisho, so I cancelled this in favour of the placement with SRCC.”

Bahle started his internship year with SRCC in 2013. Here he worked in the packhouse as a Production Specifications Specialist, ensuring that there was traceability labelling on each carton.

“The pack line of 56 women worked under me, and as most of them were at least 20 years my senior, I just called all the pack line ladies ‘Mamma’! The traditional values of showing respect for older people was helpful in getting on with those who had worked in the packhouse for many years. It was about getting the job done and achieving this through gaining their respect.”

During the off-season he worked with the permanent employees doing maintenance work on the machinery and other systems in the packhouse, starting with a grinder and also learning a number of other maintenance skills.

“I really enjoyed working there and did not want to leave, so I went to see to John Perold, the SRCC Production Manager. I spoke to him and asked him what management had thought of me during my time with



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them, as I really wanted to stay. He replied that they had never had a graduate in the internship programme that was as humble and as willing to do the jobs that I was willing to do. The SRCC HR Manager then called me in and told me that the SRCC management had created a new Graduate Programme to begin in 2014, and that they would be able to accommodate me under this new programme."

Bahle began his second internship year with the SRCC in 2014. During the programme he was appointed in the SRCC's Agronomy Department and worked as a field technician doing orchard analysis and scouting for pests and diseases.

"I found it very stimulating to learn about production and the production challenges such as citrus diseases and how to prevent them."

After a year working in this department he was then appointed as an Assistant Production Manager at SRCC Primary Production, and is currently part of the team that manages

three farms with 17 permanent and 90 seasonal employees. He is also completing his BTech in Agricultural Management through NMMU with the continued assistance of the Citrus Academy Bursary Fund.

"I am extremely grateful to the Citrus Academy for all their support in the past as well as their ongoing support. A big thank you to Candice Burgin, Sam Louw and Jacomien de Klerk for believing in me and assisting me as they have done. The opportunities I have been exposed to have been remarkable, including something as exciting as my first plane flight. Without the Citrus Academy's support I would not have been exposed to the AgriSETA Excellence Awards and won the award!

"The huge heart of what you are doing is unbelievable and please carry on what you are doing to assist young people like me.

"SRCC have done more for me than any other company and for that I am extremely grateful. I am also attending the AVCASA (Association of Veterinary and Crop Associations of South Africa) Integrated Pest Management course sponsored by the SRCC. This was very relevant to my current position and is teaching me a great deal. I really need to thank Mark Keun and the whole SRCC team for the opportunities I have had, and also for their guidance and trust. I am looking forward to many years in the citrus industry with SRCC."

"The pack line of 56 women worked under me and as most of them were at least 20 years my senior, I just called all the pack line ladies 'Mamma'!"

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2013 – 2015

Qualifications: National Diploma in Agriculture, BTech Agricultural Management

Academic Institution: 2011 – present: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)

Ready-Steady-Work: 2013, 2014

Internship: 2013 – Sundays River Citrus Company (SRCC), Addo

Special Awards: 2014 – AgriSETA Excellence Award Winner – Best Performance: Internship

Industry Exposure: 2013 – Citrus Production Workshop, PMA Fresh Connections



**Kate
Hlongo**

“To young people I will say make sure that you take the opportunities that come your way.”

Kate Hlongo is currently the Audit Compliance Officer for Indigo Farming at Letsitele. She is both a former and current Citrus Academy Bursary Fund student.

Kate completed her National Diploma in Plant Production at the Lowveld College of Agriculture in Nelspruit at the end of 2008 and is currently doing her BTech degree through UNISA (University of South Africa). The Citrus Academy interviewed Kate in 2008 and she has progressed well since then. She is gracious and radiates a quiet confidence.

Kate grew up in Mariveni village near Letsitele, and after matriculating in 1996, she studied Early Childhood Development at Soshanguve College in Pretoria. Once she had completed her studies, she was unable to find a job, and thus follow her ambition of opening a crèche.

Kate's brother Joseph, a shareholder in the Mariveni Farmers' Cooperative, had asked her periodically to help him with his citrus trees. Du Roi assisted the Cooperative at the time with technical and management input.

“My brother's involvement in the citrus industry was a motive for me to go in the same direction. I enjoyed working with trees but realised that I did not know anything about the production process. This motivated me to find out more about plant production. It was while I was helping him at Mariveni that I heard about the Citrus Academy bursaries.”

Kate's application was successful and she completed her National Diploma in Plant Production at the Lowveld Agricultural College in Nelspruit. In 2008 she worked as a supervisor at Indigo Fruit Farming as part of her internship for her National Diploma. She continued in the same position in 2009 while taking part in the Agri-Industry Development Programme of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and was employed full-time by Indigo as an Assistant Section Manager the following year.

In 2014 she began working as an Audit Compliance Administrator, a new position within the company, which she still currently holds. Her responsibility is to ensure that the company complies with the set standards, for the annual compliance audits for GlobalGAP, Tesco's Nature's Choice, Carbon Calculation, as well as Health and Safety.

“I'm also responsible for making sure that all our production units are registered with DAFF. Every year, before harvesting, DAFF officials visit the

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2006 – 2008; 2015

Qualifications: Early Childhood Development Course, National Diploma in Plant Production; BTech Agricultural Management
Academic Institutions:

- **Soshanguve College, Pretoria**
- **2006-2008 – Lowveld College of Agriculture, Nelspruit**
- **2015 – UNISA**

Internship: 2008 – Indigo Farms, Letsitele

**2009 – Department of Agriculture Internship Programme (AIDP):
Indigo Farms, Letsitele**

farm to do citrus black spot inspections. This is to ensure that the fruit that we export to countries in the EU meet the phytosanitary standards for CBS and false codling moth. During these inspections I assist the officials by showing them around the farm, ensuring that all blocks are inspected, as well as ensuring that the inspection report is correct and that it indicates all of our blocks.”

Indigo Letsitele has three farms, at Letsitele, in the Letsitele valley, and Steyn Farm, with a total of almost 130ha of ClemenGold orchards. In total the three farms employ about 90 permanent employees and about 300 seasonal workers. The fruit that is produced at Indigo Letsitele is packed at Naranja Packers in Burgersfort.

“Farming is very rewarding as I enjoy working closely with nature, and with a natural product, as well as proactively striving to improve the production systems. Working with plants requires nurturing skills much like raising children, and their strong growth is your reward. While I enjoy my new job I also miss working in the field.

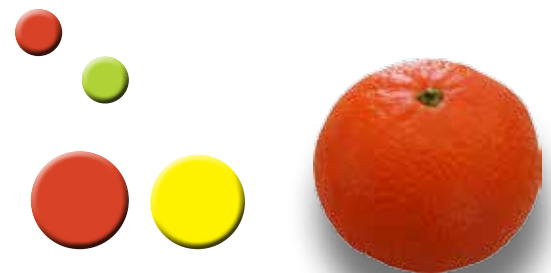
“I am 39 years old and a single mom with two daughters. My first born is planning to study journalism. After my father passed away in 2010 I decided to stay with my mother. I have met a special man in my life and we plan to get married soon.

“I really want to say thanks to the Citrus Academy for the help that they have given me over the years. I am currently completing my BTech degree for which the Citrus Academy has provided me with a bursary. Citrus Academy started assisting me in 2006 and I want to say a very big thank you to Desiree (Schonken) and Jacomien (De Klerk) for helping me to become the person I am today. I would also like to say happy 10th year anniversary to the Citrus Academy Bursary Fund!

“I recommended another young student to Citrus Academy and he is currently studying with help from the Academy. I would certainly advise young people to go into agriculture. As I have experienced first-hand, there is so much more to agriculture than meets the eye. In our farming operation we make use of soil scientists, laboratory technicians, risk management, bio-security and a number of other fields that have high tech applications. I have worked in a range of fields and I would like to study risk management in the future.”

Kate’s message to young people is one of encouragement. “Make sure you take the opportunities that come your way. Be proactive and jump at these opportunities as they will not hang around for you. Stay motivated and keep pushing to get ahead. It is important to have a positive mindset to get ahead.”

***“The Citrus Academy
started assisting me
in 2006 and I want to
say a very big thank
you to Desiree and
Jacomien for helping
me to become the
person I am today.”***



A circular portrait of a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a grey cap and a light-colored shirt. He is standing in front of green foliage. The portrait is surrounded by several colorful circles in red, yellow, and green.

Lavhengwa Nemaorani

Lavhengwa is a second generation citrus farmer at Easy Farm. Together with his wife Meme, who assists with the production and management of the property, they have three children. They expect to take over from Lavhengwa's citrus farming pioneer father, Israel Nemaorani, when he retires within the next few years.

Lavhengwa grew up in Johannesburg with his four siblings, and moved to the farm with his parents when he was in Grade 8. He matriculated from Tshihevha Christian School near Thohoyandou in 2003.

"I am in agriculture as a result of my father's involvement. When I was at school I was not interested in agriculture as I did not think I was cut out for this rural lifestyle, preferring something that I could do in the city. My father's encouragement and the obvious future potential of his farming operation changed my mind, and I enrolled at the Lowveld Agricultural College to do my National Diploma in Agriculture. I received a Citrus Academy bursary for my studies."

After two years of theory Lavhengwa spent his practical internship year working with the Du Roi Group. During this time he worked in the Letsitele nursery, the Naranja Packhouse in Burgersfort, as well as with Indigo Farming in Letsitele. After graduation he continued working at Du Roi for a year in 2008 while doing the AIDP internship of the Department of Agriculture.

"I gained a great deal of experience during this time and it has given me a good perspective and understanding of the various sectors of the industry. This broad knowledge is invaluable and I would never have had this perspective if I had come straight back to the farm."

Lavhengwa has been at Easy Farm for six years and has found it more challenging working in a family business than at the highly technically developed commercial farms he worked at previously.

"When one has seen operations like that, it is frustrating to know how to improve production practices but not be able to do this. I have had to learn patience! Looking into the future, there are many things that I will change. Our trees are currently all in full production and we are continuously improving our production methods. Fortunately we are able to access our crop protection chemicals from Levubu – a large fruit production region – which is closer than Tzaneen.

"The Citrus Academy Bursary Fund was a great help to me. Looking back today I wish I had studied further and still hope to study further in the future.

"I would encourage youngsters around here to start farming. When I was at school in the city agriculture was never mentioned as a career option. The focus was generally on science and when we went on field trips to universities we usually visited the science faculties. School children need to be exposed to the true nature of the agricultural sector at an early age, as high school children are very easily influenced by perceptions. The past perception of agriculture as a sector dominated by white people, and in which farm workers are unfairly treated, is unfortunately still prevalent and this is largely what puts youngsters off entering this sector.

"Farming has become a business and needs to be run like one and I do believe that there is plenty of opportunity for farming right here in our area. On our farm we have both land and water and in the future I would like to expand our production. This will provide food and employment in the area and contribute to rural development. There is opportunity for diversification into other agricultural fields and I look forward to following through on these ideas. I believe that nothing is impossible if you set your mind to it."

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2005 – 2007
Qualifications: National Diploma in Plant Production
Academic Institution: Lowveld College of Agriculture, Nelspruit
Internship: 2007 – Du Roi Group, Letsitele.
2008 – Department of Agriculture Internship Programme (AIDP): Du Roi Group, Letsitele

***"The Citrus Academy
Bursary Fund was a great
help to me. I still hope
to study further in the
future."***



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Ncumisa Njombolwana

"I would like to encourage the Citrus Academy to continue doing the remarkable job that they are doing."

Ncumisa Njombolwana works for Bayer CropScience in Paarl as a Research and Development Specialist, which involves the development of products for registration. She has been in this position since 2013.

Ncumisa grew up in Cofimvaba, east of Queenstown, in the Eastern Cape, and matriculated at St. James Catholic School, a private school in Cofimvaba, in 2003. She did a three-year BSc degree at the University of Transkei in Umtata (now renamed the Walter Sisulu University), majoring in Pest Management, with Entomology and Plant Diseases as her main subjects. She completed her studies at the end of 2006.

"During my studies I received a bursary from the Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture. After graduation, the department offered an internship so during 2007 and 2008 I did an internship with the Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture in Umthatha. Part of my responsibility was to assist extension officers with the skills required for production and pest control, to enable them

to assist small farmers in the area. This experience provided me with exposure to the very basic practical side of agriculture, and also gave me a clear indication of what my interests were. I realised that I wanted to focus on plant diseases."

Following her internship at the Department of Agriculture, Ncumisa realised that the Agricultural faculty at UNITRA would not provide her with the opportunities she sought, so she applied to do her Honours at the University of Stellenbosch in 2009.

"This was a big step as many people asked me how I would cope with the Afrikaans. I went ahead, was accepted and completed my honours in 2009, majoring in Plant Pathology. During this year I received a University of Stellenbosch departmental Plant Pathology bursary as well as an NRF Scarce Skills bursary."

Towards the end of her Honours degree, Ncumisa was informed of the Citrus Academy by her supervisor, Dr Paul Fourie. She applied to do her MSc in 2010, and her application was successful. She completed her MSc at the end of 2011, and graduated in March 2012. Following graduation, and with the help of her supervisor, she worked for the CRI as a Post-Harvest Research Technician working on post-harvest diseases. For the duration of her contract she was still based within the Plant Pathology Department at the University of Stellenbosch.

*“Agriculture is important for every person on earth
because without agriculture we will starve.”*

In early 2012 Ncumisa approached the CRI for sponsorship to attend a citrus conference in Valencia, Spain, in November 2012, but her request was unsuccessful. She approached Candice Burgin at Citrus Academy, who suggested that she apply and motivate her application for sponsorship.

“I did this and the Citrus Academy arranged for me to attend the conference as well as to present a poster on my field of studies at the conference. This was one of the best experiences of my life and a remarkable opportunity to meet people and make valuable career contacts. I will forever be grateful to the Citrus Academy for making this possible.”

Ncumisa continued to work for the CRI until July 2013 when Bayer contacted the head of the Plant Pathology Department at the University of Stellenbosch asking for recommendations for a person to fill the position of Research and Development Specialist. Ncumisa's name was put forward, and she has been working with Bayer CropScience in Paarl since then.

“My job involves testing the Bayer products on plants to evaluate their efficacy and to determine the ideal dosage. We do the testing and make recommendations to the company for registration purposes. When I arrived at Bayer I only knew citrus but I now work with cereals, vines, pome fruit and stone fruit. I enjoy my job, and am learning a great deal on a daily basis and becoming more confident in the process.”

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2010 – 2011

Qualifications: BSc, BSc Hons, MSc (Plant Pathology)

Academic Institutions:

- **Walter Sisulu University**
- **University of Stellenbosch**

Graduate Placement – 2012 - CRI

**Industry Exposure: 2010 Global Citrus Conference, Cape Town
2010 Citrus Research Symposium,
Drakensberg
2012 Citrus Conference, Valencia, Spain**

“The successes I have had with studies and career opportunities have been by the grace of God all the way and I will forever be grateful for the opportunities that I have had due the assistance I received from the Citrus Academy. The Academy's support extended beyond financial support as they supported us personally, visiting us on campus to find out if we were coping with our studies. This made me feel special and also motivated me to succeed. I would like to encourage the Citrus Academy to continue doing the remarkable job that they are doing. The former Citrus Academy Bursary Fund recipients are becoming important and significant people within the citrus industry due to the efforts of the Citrus Academy and they need to continue this very important process.

“When I return home to Cofimvaba today people have great respect for me, and young people ask me about studying further. My parents are very proud of me. My mom is unemployed and my father is unable to work due to an injury from a mining accident. I am the eldest of five children. My brother is studying and our three younger siblings are still at school.

“In conclusion I would like to say that I have great confidence in the future of agriculture. Agriculture is important for every person on earth because without agriculture we will starve.”

“Good luck and hard work got me to where I am today.”

A circular portrait of Dr. Nhlanhla Mathaba, a Black man with short hair, wearing a blue polo shirt, smiling. The background of the portrait shows green foliage. The portrait is surrounded by several colored circles (yellow, green, red) of varying sizes. A large green oval contains his name.

Dr Nhlanhla Mathaba

Dr. Nhlanhla Mathaba is a Senior Researcher in Post-Harvest Technologies at the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) in Nelspruit.

Nhlanhla matriculated in 2000 and, after 12 years of study interspersed with teaching, he received his doctorate in Horticultural Science from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The Citrus Academy interviewed him at the university in 2008 while he was busy with his Master's degree, and it is exciting to see how well his career has progressed in the interim. He is enthusiastic and clearly passionate about his field.

“I matriculated from Uyengo High School in Empangeni in 2000. When I finished school I really did not know what I wanted to do. I was from a rural area so there was not really much in the line of career guidance available. My school did not offer proper maths, so in 2001 I enrolled at the Science Foundation Programme, a bridging course offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which provides the required bridging between secondary and tertiary education. I began my BSc in Horticulture in 2002, completing at the end of 2006.”

“From 2007 to 2009 I did my complex Master's degree which resulted in an upgrade to Doctorate. At this point my supervisor left the university. I was the only person in the Department of Horticulture that knew the material so I was asked to teach for two years and fill these big shoes in his absence. While this slowed down the progression of my studies during

this time, I persisted and, at the end of 2012, I received my Doctorate.”

During his studies Nhlanhla put a lot of energy into recruiting graduating students to continue studying within the post-graduate arena. He also designed the Master's degree projects for a number of students during the time he was teaching.

“In 2013 I started my job with the ARC. Since I started here, I have attracted approximately R1 million in funding for various projects, and 12 students (Master's and PhD levels), providing capacity for the projects within this system. The research I am doing is mainly for the citrus and litchi industries. The students are from the University of Limpopo, Tshwane University of Technology and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. They provide capacity in developing the projects and the industry exposure provides an invaluable learning experience. They are able to use the projects to learn as well as utilise the research for their studies.

"The 12 years between matriculating and completing my Doctorate were 12 tough years. Good luck and hard work got me where I am today. When I was doing my undergraduate studies I regularly returned to my high school and surrounding schools to encourage youngsters to continue their studies. In the course of working with the students in the projects I manage for the ARC I visited the University of Limpopo in Polokwane, and while I was there I realised that they do not have a specialist in my field in their Agricultural Department. What has developed from this is that during every university holiday I go up to the University of Limpopo to teach post-graduate students about post-harvest technology. My teaching work has thus continued. My dream lies in academia and I am passionate about research within the boundaries of teaching. I truly love the classroom situation!

"I left school with an open mind and was prepared to see what interested me. My field of studies was quite a surprise to my family but today my mother is proud of me. The exposure to agriculture in my childhood was with my father who has since passed away. He worked for a forestry company and had his own vegetable garden and grew vegetables and sugar cane. I come from a big family and my dad used to tell us: 'If you want me to buy meat for the family, sell some of the vegetables and then we can do that!' My interest in agriculture was in the scientific side of farming and that is the field I followed."

Nhlanhla applied for a Citrus Academy bursary in 2007 and studied with support from the fund until 2011, when he was able to pay for his continued studies with the income from teaching.

"If you really look into my career life you will see that it is owed to nobody else but the Citrus Academy. My story is evidence that for the industry to provide resources to empower keen young people within agriculture can be very successful. I am passionate about applying my knowledge to assist the industry and I love what I do! To kindle and sharpen passion requires resources to empower young people to follow this route.

"The science of agriculture supports agriculture and agriculture supports human health and thus agricultural science is as important as medical science. Agriculture is fundamental to human health."

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2007 – 2011

Qualifications: BSc Horticulture, MSc Horticulture, PhD Horticulture

Academic Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)



"If you really look into my career life you will see that it is owed to nobody else but the Citrus Academy. My story is evidence that for the industry to provide resources to empower keen young people within agriculture can be very successful."



**Nhlanhla
Nkuna**

“In order for me to study my mother went to a loan shark to borrow the R2 000 that I needed to register for college. My parents both cried at my graduation.”

“This was a tough time as I worked without payment. As I had proven myself, I started being paid for my dedication in 2004.”

In 2005 he registered to study at the Lowveld College of Agriculture to do a National Diploma in Agriculture (Plant Production) but only had enough funds to pay the registration fee.

“I went to the college administration, explained my position and appealed to them for assistance. They told me that they might be able to assist me but that depended largely on my performance. In the middle of the year I applied for a Citrus Academy bursary and was very grateful to hear that my application was successful, so from my second year my studies were covered by the Citrus Academy bursary. I received distinctions for all my courses and was the top student at the college when I graduated. In honour of this the Citrus Academy presented me with a laptop computer. This was a wonderful surprise and I was quite speechless when I was presented with this!”

Nhlanhla was accepted and welcomed into management by Dr. Hoppie Nel, who was in Senior

Nhlanhla Nkuna is the Market Access and Safety Officer for Golden Frontier Citrus in the Hectorspruit and Malelane area. The Citrus Academy interviewed Nhlanhla in 2008 when he had just received a permanent appointment at Golden Frontier Citrus. He has remained with the company and his career has certainly progressed since then.

On the southern banks of the Crocodile River, bordering with the Kruger Park, Nhlanhla’s offices at Golden Frontier Citrus overlook the shallow river protected by the game fence at the bottom of the lawn. On any given day he sees elephants, buffaloes and other game grazing in the river in front of his office.

Nhlanhla is from Hazyview (Mkhuhlu). Although he had always wanted to become involved in agriculture he could not find a job after matriculating from Chayaza High School in 1997, and so worked as a volunteer teacher at his high school for five years, teaching maths, physics, biology and agriculture.

Management at Golden Frontier Citrus. Most students do not go straight from their studies into the management office.

"I was lucky in this as most of the students start at the bottom and go directly to work in production on the farms. The consequence of this is often that the permanent section leaders might feel threatened by this educated newcomer and worry about their own job security. To be on the receiving end of this as an intern is very difficult. I did not have that experience but for me to move into the mostly white management environment was difficult, and I had to work hard to prove myself. It was tough in the beginning. After a spell at one of the pack houses things improved."

Today Nhlanhla is the Market Access and Safety Officer for Golden Frontier Citrus. His position includes being responsible for all the company's farms in Hectorspruit and the Malelane area, and part-time responsibility for Letsitele and Hoedspruit area. This involves GlobalGAP and HACCP accreditations.

"I am responsible for pre-auditing for GlobalGAP, HACCP and Waitrose, and also facilitate training. I am the Chief Health and Safety Officer, and am also responsible for the Health and Safety Committee. I am employed by Golden Frontier Citrus under the larger umbrella company Bosveld Citrus, and am responsible for market access and safety at ten farms. Bosveld Citrus is the biggest citrus producer in South Africa.

"I am also chairperson of the Workers' Committee. This is the liaison between the workers and senior management. This will now also see me take on additional responsibility on the HR side of the company from the 1st of March 2016, and this

will include arbitration between workers and management, and dealing with disciplinary procedures. This is currently an empowerment initiative and my responsibility.

"Agriculture is very important but hard work is required in this field, make no mistake. Youngsters today want to go into IT and I believe that agriculture is in fact more important than any other industry. All people working in agriculture such as general worker, tractor driver and so on are all equally important. We need more technologists in agriculture and I am appealing to youngsters to consider agriculture. There are many fields that provide services to agriculture beyond just production, and we need a considerable amount of extra capacity of trained people in these fields. It is quite simple as without food we will die. We need people to develop new varieties that are improved varieties, and new varieties to extend our seasons.

"My father is still alive but my mother has passed away. My parents never believed, or could imagine that I would achieve what I have today. In order for me to study my mother went to a loan shark to borrow the R2 000 that I needed to register for college. My parents both cried at my graduation. I am married and have 2 children. My eldest is a second year medical student at the University of the Western Cape, and my youngest is in Grade 7.

"The Citrus Academy played a very big role in my life during and after my studies. They asked me what I wanted to do when I had finished studying. I was good at management and with this in mind they spoke to Dr. Nel on my behalf. The Academy was very supportive and called me after I started at Golden Frontier Citrus to hear how I was doing. In fact, I never applied for a job at Golden Frontier Citrus, they arranged it for me. They also arranged holiday jobs for me at GFC during the holidays while I was studying. Desiree Schonken was particularly remarkable and supportive, and I am forever grateful for the assistance from the Citrus Academy."

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2006 – 2007

Qualifications: National Diploma in Agricultural Management (Plant Production)

Academic Institution: 2005 – Lowveld College of Agriculture

Internship: 2007 – Golden Frontier Citrus

Vacation Work: 2007 – Golden Frontier Citrus

"We need more technologists in agriculture and I am appealing to youngsters to consider agriculture."

Phumeza Sitole



Phumeza is currently completing her Doctorate in Microbiology at Rhodes University in Grahamstown.

Her natural habitat, according to her, is in her laboratory amongst a collection of hand-labelled jars and bottles used by her and her colleagues. "Yes, when you look around you, you see me in my natural habitat as I am truly a lab rat."

Growing up in Mdantsane near East London, and matriculating from Mizamo High School in 2004, Phumeza first applied to the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) to study Pharmacology, but did not qualify. She applied to do a BSc degree at Fort Hare University in Alice, where she was accepted, and began her studies in 2005.

"It was a tough decision as the university is an hour and a half's drive from home and I was not used to living away from home."

Phumeza coped with the course and took Microbiology and Entomology as her third year major subjects. After graduating she wanted to

do an Honours degree in Agricultural Entomology but, as this was not offered at Fort Hare, she opted to study Environmental Microbiology.

"During my Honours year, I applied to Rhodes University to do my Master's degree. I spoke to the Professor of Microbiology at Rhodes and heard that there was a citrus industry project underway researching bio-controls for citrus pathogens. I was interested, and so applied for a Citrus Academy bursary, which I received, and I started my Master's degree at Rhodes in 2011."

"Moving to Rhodes from Fort Hare was a big change in learning environment and it has certainly been very interesting. I completed my Master's degree at Rhodes in March 2013 and started with my Doctorate in May 2013. I am currently finishing off my doctorate and hope to complete this in early 2016. I was a bit late with the application when I applied to Rhodes but took a chance and applied anyway. I took a chance and the Citrus Academy supported and encouraged me. Candice (Burgin) from the Academy could not finish telling me that I had been granted the bursary when she called as I was so excited. Right now I just want to get my Doctorate completed and hope to follow this up with research for a while. I told you that I am truly a lab rat!"

Phumeza's parents paid for her first year of studies, and thereafter she used NSFAS for her second and third year of studies. The Govan Mbeki Bursary Fund sponsored her for her Honours year, and Citrus Academy has assisted her from Master's level.

“When we were in matric the advice we received did not inspire us to go any further. We were told to just get our matric so that we could apply for a job, perhaps just across the road at the supermarket.”

“My parents are very proud of me. My mom bought and sold goods and my father works for Spoornet. I am one of five siblings. My sister is doing a marketing course at Tech and our other sister has a HR and nursing diploma.

“At school we had very limited resources. We did not have a school library or computers and we even shared text books between five pupils. When we were in Matric the advice we received did not inspire us to go any further. We were told to just get our Matric so that we could apply for a job, perhaps just across the road at the supermarket.

“I did not really receive career advice while I was at school. I did well in science and as a result I was selected to meet Mark Shuttleworth when he visited our township during my Grade 10 year. This was quite an inspiration for me. Of my matric class of 29 pupils, 11 passed and 5 went

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2011 – 2015

Qualifications: MSc in Agricultural Microbiology, PhD in Microbiology

Academic Institutions:

- 2005 – 2010 University of Fort Hare, Alice
- 2011 – 2015 Rhodes University, Grahamstown

Industry Exposure: 2012, 2014 – Citrus Research Symposium

to university. Taking this into consideration I still find it difficult to believe that I am here completing my PhD.

“The Citrus Academy has made it possible for me to focus on my studies without having to worry about funding. Without this I probably would not be where I am now. I am learning the skills for my future. I want to finish my studies before thinking about a family.”

“Candice from the Citrus Academy could not finish telling me that I had been granted the bursary when she called as I was so excited!”



“In order to raise the funds for the college registration fees I had to ask for contributions from various family members.”

Theron Lunga Maphanga

Theron Maphanga is a Senior Supervisor at Crocodile Valley Citrus Company near Nelspruit and has been in this post for a year.

He is very enthusiastic about his job and career prospects and his manager, Vusi Nkosi, stressed that he is very proud to have this positive and accomplished young man in his team.

Theron grew up in Barberton and matriculated from Barberton Comprehensive School in 2009. Financial constraints prevented him from studying in 2010 and 2011, but in 2012 he was able to enrol at the Lowveld College of Agriculture to do a National Diploma in Plant Production.

“When I left school, agriculture was my second choice as it was my dream to become a pilot. After two years of no progress after completing matric I realised that I had to choose agriculture as it was the more realistic possibility, and also because cousins of mine had agricultural land which could provide me with a career opportunity.”

“I love agriculture and it was not new to me as agriculture had been one of my subjects at school for Grade 10, 11 and Matric. I really enjoyed the opportunity to study. I started studying in 2012, and in 2013 I was appointed by the college as a mentor to the first year students.”

“During my first year I did not pay for my studies, I just paid the registration fee. In order to raise the funds for the registration fees I had to ask for contributions from various family members.”

At the start of Theron’s second year he saw a Citrus Academy poster on campus advertising the Bursary Fund, and asked Joy Nkosi, the Head of Administrations, for help with his application. His application was successful and he received a Citrus Academy bursary for his third year of studies.

“During my second year at College I went on a trip to Cape Town as part of our curriculum for the 2nd year students. We went to the Elsenburg College of Agriculture in Stellenbosch and also saw the process of winemaking. We visited farms and also went to the parliament buildings.”

As students are expected to spend a year working as an intern on an agricultural production unit during their third year, Theron approached the Head of Administrations again for assistance. She assisted with his placement and the arrangements, and he began his internship at Crocodile Valley in January 2014.

“I was lucky that this was set up in advance as I had the peace of mind to know that I had a placement. Citrus Academy contacted Crocodile Valley, and an agreement was arranged whereby

the Academy would subsidise my salary through a grant received from the AgriSETA. I started at the HR office which is where all the students at Crocodile Valley start, and after two weeks I was transferred to the macadamia section. I spent two months there and found this very interesting.”

“This is a big farm with three different sections – two citrus sections one with macadamia nut production. Working with macadamia’s broadened my field of experience. I worked in citrus production and also in the pack house. The people and work environment was trusting and transparency of all production practices allowed me to learn a great deal on a practical level.

Theron completed his studies and course at the end of 2014, and graduated in March 2015 receiving four awards at graduation, for best student in Citrus, Agronomy, Soil Science and Horticulture. After completing his studies he began looking for a job.

“At the end of 2014 Crocodile Valley had to advertise for placement for senior supervisors. I went for an interview after my contract with them had ended and landed the job. I started working in a permanent position as a senior supervisor in February 2015 and I’m still currently in this position. I enjoy my job tremendously as I learn a lot and can truly say that I learn something new every day.”

In 2014 Theron attended the Citrus Academy’s Ready-Steady-Work programme with his fellow Bursary Fund students, presented in KwaZulu-Natal by Carine Taute. The programme aims to prepare students for the work environment – how to behave in an interview, how to prepare a CV, and many other skills such as leadership skills. Theron found the experience extremely useful.

In September 2015 Theron was nominated for an AgriSETA Excellence Award for Best Performance in an internship programme. Theron went on to win this award, and the R10 000 prize money!

“I shared some of this money with my manager as without his motivation I would not have won this award. As a nominee, I even flew to Johannesburg and this was my first flight ever.”

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2014 – 2015

Qualifications: National Diploma in Plant Production, BTech in Agricultural Management

Academic Institutions:

- **2012 – 2014 Lowveld Agricultural College**
- **2015 – University of South Africa (UNISA)**

Internship: 2014 – Crocodile Valley Citrus Company, Nelspruit

Industry Exposure: Ready-Steady-Work: 2014*

Special Awards: 2015 – AgriSETA Excellence Award Winner – Best Performance: Internship

Theron, together with three other Citrus Academy students, visited Meridian Karino Independent School, a newly established school near Karino, and spoke to school children about the value of studying agriculture. Citrus Academy had raised the possibility of providing bursaries to students in agriculture, which was being introduced at the school as a new subject.

Theron also studied part-time during 2015, and completed his BTech in Agricultural Management through UNISA. At the end of the year, the Citrus Academy again contacted him, informing him that he had achieved the best marks overall from the group of Bursary Fund students who were doing the same course through UNISA while working.

“I am very grateful to the Citrus Academy for their help in the past as well as what they are likely to help me with in the future. Without them I would not be where I am today. I want to encourage the Citrus Academy to continue to assist young students like myself to go into the citrus industry because it is a very exciting industry.

“My parents are proud and they cried at my graduation. They never imagined that I would achieve what I did, and today they boast to their friends about this. I am the oldest in a family of five boys, and my younger brothers are showing a keen interest in studying agriculture. I have other youngsters calling me for advice. My manager, Vusi Nkosi, is a remarkable mentor to me and motivates me to help other youngsters.

“I would encourage youngsters to go into agriculture as it is a very dynamic and exciting industry with a great deal of opportunities, especially the citrus industry. If you are prepared to work hard in agriculture you will not go wrong. I believe that nothing is impossible. Put your mind and effort into a purpose and follow this with your body and you will achieve successful results. Also always put God first in everything you do.”

A portrait of Tsakani Mogale, a woman with short reddish-brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue polo shirt with 'Tsakani' and 'naranja PACKERS' logos. The background is a circular frame containing green foliage. To the left of the frame are several overlapping colored circles in red, yellow, green, and orange. To the right is a large red circle containing her name.

Tsakani Mogale

Tsakani Mogale is the Quality Control Manager for Naranja Packers in Burgersfort, occasionally working for BBI Packers in Hoedspruit.

She is positive, articulate, self-assured and in her own words, a 'proactive role-model for young people seeking their dreams'.

Tsakani was born and grew up in Mariveni Village near Letsitele. She matriculated from Zivuko Secondary School at Mariveni in 2001.

"It was not possible for me to study after school as my mother was a single mother and she was unemployed, so there was no money for me to study. After Matric I stayed at home for five years and worked as a waitress. My uncle, Jonas Mogale, is one of the members of Mariveni Farming Cooperative, and he had heard about the Citrus Academy Bursary Fund and told me about this."

Six young people were selected from the Mariveni Village to receive bursaries to study at the Lowveld College of Agriculture. Initially Tsakani was not one of the selected, but when

two people in the group did not pass the compulsory aptitude test at the college, she received a call inviting her to write the aptitude test, and possibly receive a bursary.

"I was in Pretoria at the time and I was told to get to Nelspruit as fast as possible to write the aptitude test. I organised to get to Nelspruit in a huge hurry, wrote the test, passed and was thrilled to be accepted to receive a bursary to study! I enrolled at the Lowveld College of Agriculture and started with my National Diploma in Agricultural Management in 2006.

"I grew up close to agriculture and am passionate about agriculture. It was always my dream to become involved in agriculture and this dream has become a reality due to the Citrus Academy Bursary Fund. While I was studying I asked if we were able to get holiday jobs and this was then arranged for us. I worked at Citrus Research International in Nelspruit in the 2006 and 2007 holidays, and worked with Kim Scholtz. She mentored me and I learned a great deal from her."

Tsakani did her internship at Golden Frontier Citrus in 2008. Citrus Academy arranged that she attend an entrepreneurship course with the University of Stellenbosch Business School in 2009 after graduation. The course was offered by the Umsimbi Institute for Training, and she received a certificate from the Department of Agriculture.

Westfalia contacted Tsakani, and offered her a position in the company as a Research Technician, which she accepted. She worked in Tzaneen in this position from 2010 to 2012.

“Words are not enough to express my gratitude to the Citrus Academy and sometimes this moves me to tears because they have empowered me to escape poverty.”

“I was looking for a change so I applied for a job as a junior inspector with PPECB. This was successful so I worked for PPECB in packhouses in the Tzaneen, Letsitele and Burgersfort areas. It was while I was working for PPECB the management at Naranja Packers met me and they offered me a job as the Quality Control Manager for Naranja Packers.”

Naranja Packers is a specialised soft citrus packhouse at Burgersfort that packs all fruit produced by Indigo Fruit Farming in Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces and also packs for other farmers in the Burgersfort area. Naranja Packers and Indigo Fruit Farming are both part of the Du Roi Group. BBI Packers at Hoedspruit is part of a joint venture between Bavaria Estates, Blyde River Mangoes and Citrus CC, and Indigo Farming. Tsakani has been seconded to work here as a quality controller for a few weeks.

“Looking back, I realise every day that I have come a long way. When the opportunity to study further came my way I was determined to seize this and to make it in life. My mother is single and unemployed, so it was up to me to help my siblings. I am the oldest and have twin younger brothers who needed to go to university at the same time. They are currently nearing the end of their studies in Financial Administration at the Tshwane University of Technology and will be graduating soon. I have been able to supplement their costs while they were studying. I am a single mother myself and my daughter is in Grade R. I live with my mother at Mariveni and while I am away for work, my daughter stays with my mother.

“When I think about the Citrus Academy, I wish that I had the opportunity to go to them personally and thank them for the difference their help has made in my life. Words are not enough to express my gratitude to the Academy, and sometimes this moves me to tears because they have empowered me to escape poverty. Their help has been an honour and a privilege as they took my life from 0 to 100. While I studied, the Citrus Academy paid all of my costs, not just part of them like many other bursaries. The Citrus Academy has played the role of my parents, helping me in a way that my parents were not able to. Today I have a car and I have been able to build a house for my family. I say to others that Tsakani

would not be who she is today without the Citrus Academy. I truly hope that they can continue to help other young people in the same way as they have helped me.

“My mother is happy and proud of me and is also endlessly grateful to the Citrus Academy for the help they have given me. People in the community and youngsters approach me for advice on how they can follow a path of success as I have, and I am happy to give advice and encouragement where I can.

“I truly have a passion for Agriculture and I have started a project in our local community to encourage youngsters to consider careers in agriculture, explaining the wide range of possible careers within this field. As part of this campaign I visit schools in our area to address the children and I also speak on our local radio station in Tzaneen on this topic. One of the things I tell them is that agriculture is not just about wearing boots and working in the field. It has so much more to offer. As a result of this eight youngsters from Mariveni Village decided to study agriculture. Some of them have already graduated and others are still studying, and the feedback I have received from them is that they are truly enjoying their chosen field.

“So in conclusion I want to thank Citrus Academy, CGA, Du Roi, Indigo and Mariveni Cooperative for their assistance and faith in me. I know that this was not easy for them but they have helped me to be the successful person that I am today.”

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund: 2006 – 2008

Qualifications: National Diploma in Agricultural Management

Academic Institution: Lowveld College of Agriculture

Vacation Work: 2006 – 2007 CRI, Nelspruit

Internship: 2008 – Golden Frontier Citrus



Citrus Academy

Above: The Citrus Academy Team wearing official Citrus Academy T-Shirts from 2010.

From Left To right:

- Angela Phillips** – Data Manager wearing the industry exposure shirt from 2010
- Desiree Schonken** – Programme Manager wearing the industry exposure shirt from 2012
- Sive Silo** – Office Administrator wearing the Ready-Steady-Work shirt from 2013
- Londiwe Ngcobo** – Bursary Fund Assistant wearing the industry exposure shirt from 2014
- Candice Burgin** – Bursary Fund Manager wearing the Ready-Steady-Work Shirt from 2014
- Jacomien de Klerk** – General Manager wearing the CGA Citrus Summit shirt from 2015

The Citrus Academy is a company that was established by the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa to enable human resource development in the Southern African citrus industry. The Academy is tasked with addressing specific challenges faced by the industry, being low production skills levels, employment equity, scarce and critical skills, black economic empowerment, and the quality of skills delivery.

The Citrus Academy an independent non-profit company that operates with the support and under the direction of the Citrus Growers' Association, executing the mandate given to it by the CGA.

The Citrus Academy Bursary Fund is the flagship project of the Citrus Academy. The Bursary Fund was established in 2006, a year after the establishment of the Citrus Academy in 2005. This makes 2015 the Bursary Fund's tenth birthday. In those 10 years, 528 bursaries were awarded to 210 individual students, amounting to just on R12 million. In this publication are only a few of the great many good stories that have been made in these 10 years.

Angela Phillips – Data Manager

“The Citrus Academy is unique in the way it is managed in that, as ambassadors to the Industry, we are expected to produce work of a high standard, but are given an incredible amount of professional and individual freedom in which to meet these standards. I am grateful to be part of a work environment that allows for growth on a holistic level. With purpose great things can be achieved, and working with the Academy has taught me the value of having a purpose, and giving your best when in service to others.”

Desiree Schonken – Programme Manager

“Having been part of the establishment of the Citrus Academy in 2005, I resigned in 2010 to pursue other interests. I soon realised it was a mistake, as no other career could give me the same sense of fulfilment. In 2015 I returned, and was astonished by the Academy’s incredible success and growth. Being part of such a remarkable team that makes tangible improvements to people’s lives, is an honour and a privilege that I will never take for granted again!”

Sive Silo – Office Administrator

“If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together” – African proverb

“This proverb is the summary or definition of what it means to me to be part of the Citrus Academy Team. Being a member of a team that changes people’s lives constantly reinforces the idea of Ubuntu, doing things for others and not just oneself.”

Londiwe Ngcobo – Bursary Fund Assistant

“I have been with the Citrus Academy since 2010 and I have learned so much about the citrus industry as a whole. I’ve really started to understand how important agriculture is. I am now interested in studying agriculture myself! The Citrus Academy has become so important to me and I love being part of it!”

Candice Burgin – Bursary Fund Manager

“Working for the Citrus Academy is so much more than just a job for me. I have close relationships with so many of our past and present students and feel so proud when I see how far they have come. It is really special being part of something that is making such a difference in people’s lives.”

Jacomien de Klerk – General Manager

“Successful people make a country or community or industry successful. This is the conviction that drives the work I do and have done at the Citrus Academy – we drive industry growth and success by helping individuals to grow and succeed. And only when every current and prospective grower, worker, and student have the opportunity to grow and succeed, will our work be done.”

Industry exposure opportunities referred to by the students in the course of their interviews:

AgriSETA Excellence Awards – Some of our bursary students are supported by the AgriSETA. Each year they have an awards ceremony recognising excellence in the industry.

Students are entered into 3 categories – Best Performing Learner: Bursaries; Best Performing Learner: Internships; Best Performing Learner: Graduate Placement.

Global Citrus Conference – This conference was held in Cape Town in 2010 and discussed global trends in the industry

Citrus Research Symposium – CRI’s biannual research symposium held in the Drakensberg

allFresh! – A conference held in Sun City and Pretoria where current market trends in the industry were discussed

Ready-Steady-Work - A workplace readiness programme which was designed for Bursary Fund students who are preparing to enter or have recently entered the workplace.

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to our advertisers:**

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It has been 11 years since CGA commissioned me to compile *Our Citrus Transforms* (2005). Since then we have completed a range of publications tracking transformation within the Citrus Industry and witnessing the successes that have been achieved over this period first-hand has been an unforgettable, life-time experience.

The development and establishment of the CGA Grower Development Company is an exciting and bold step for meaningful transformation within the citrus industry. The company's clear objective and range of resources illustrate that it is well placed for success.

Hearing the remarkable stories of personal empowerment through hard work and determination and the assistance of the Citrus Academy Bursary has been a privilege. Witnessing the considerable growth in human capacity that has been facilitated by the Citrus Academy during the past decade has clearly shown that this is one of the great successes of industry initiatives within the citrus industry.

During the travels for the interviews contained in this publication I was accompanied by CRI Extension Officers Melton Mulaudzi in the Eastern Cape and Andrew Mbedzi in Mpumalanga and Limpopo and I am very grateful to them for their assistance, patience, driving and good company on the road.

It remains an inspiration and a privilege to experience the very real and successful transformation in the citrus industry first-hand and I would like to thank the CGA Grower Development Company and the Citrus Academy for entrusting me with this memorable assignment.



Author's Note

Louise Brodie is a freelance photojournalist who reports on the South African Fresh Produce Sector for South African and international publications. This is her sixth publication commissioned by CGA.