



FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (11/09)

Justin Chadwick (20 March 2009)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "Old age isn't so bad when you consider the alternative" Maurice Chevalier

S A FRUIT JOURNAL

The SA Fruit Journal (SAFJ) is jointly owned by CGA, Deciduous Fruit Producers Trust (DFPT), S A Table Grape Industry (SATI) and Fresh Produce Exporters Forum (FPEF). This magazine is published every two months and is an essential communication tool. All citrus growers should get a copy of the SAFJ – if any grower is not receiving their copy please mail Gloria (Gloria@cga.co.za) and supply your name and postal details. The SAFJ is presently doing a readers survey (attached). Please take a couple of minutes to complete the survey so that the editor can stay informed as to how the SAFJ is perceived by readers.

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GROWER ROADSHOW AND INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

Driving up the eastern seaboard of KZN and through Swaziland and into the lowveld, one is struck by the quality of the veld and bush. Abundant rainfall this summer is evident by the lush, green countryside and strong flow in the Pongola, Usuthu, Komati and Crocodile rivers. Dams are full and all is looking good for a high quality, good volume citrus season. One of the pleasures of the grower road show is meeting up again with doyens of the citrus industry. On this trip two of these legendary citrus leaders, Hans Noddeboe (Swaziland) and Charles van Veijeren (Onderberg) attended meetings. It's really good to see them still so involved in the industry – they have forgotten stuff that we are still trying to learn. And talking about forgetting stuff Hans speaks of the four signs of aging – first you forget names, then you forget faces, then you forget to zip up after a leak, and finally you forget to zip down BEFORE a leak. The era of Hans and Charles was one where growers had huge foresight and a long term vision. The human development program run through SACCE ensured that young guns were given bursaries and employment opportunities in the citrus industry. The industry still has those with institutional memory (such as Hans and Charles), and through the work of SACCE the industry still has a generation or two thereafter that will ably serve the citrus industry, but what thereafter? To a large extent we will be relying on the Citrus Academy to ensure the human resources we need for the future, but they cannot do it alone. All citrus industry stakeholders should embrace the skills development and education initiatives of the Citrus Academy for the long term goals of both their own business and the industry. So here's the challenge – find a way that you can get involved in the activities of the Citrus Academy. There are a number of ways that you can do this – as a start you can register as an employer who will take on students during vacations, all students are required to do three weeks work in the citrus industry during their vacs – there are presently 50 students with bursaries (many funded through the Citrus Industry Trust); alternatively you could look at employing a graduate from the bursary program – all bursary students are required to work in the citrus industry after graduating; the Department of Agriculture has an internship program that you can link into, recognizing that many students fail to get jobs straight out of university due to their lack of experience, the DoA pays the salary of graduates that you get to work in your business for a year – no strings attached, if you find the intern employable you can do so, alternatively if there are no positions available or if the intern is not of the caliber you require then he/she will leave you after the year's internship; or you could look at the Citrus Academy website and see what training opportunities exist in your area, and make sure that your training vendors use Citrus Academy learning material; or you could get a skills assessment done on your business – which would identify skills gaps and help to inform your training program. To learn more about these opportunities go to www.citrusacademy.co.za or e-mail learnmore@citrusacademy.co.za or phone Jacomien or Desiree on 031 3133364.

There are many in the industry who are already linked into the activities of the Citrus Academy – they have expressed their appreciation for the work of the Academy and the benefits their business has achieved from such linkages – so do yourself a favor and get involved, and to those already involved thank you for stepping up to the plate and ensuring that the citrus industry continues to attract new talent.

SATUMAS AND LEMONS

Although very early in the season, it's interesting to note volumes of sats and lemons shipped to date. The volume of lemons this year (800 tons) is half that shipped to date in 2008. The volume of satsumas shipped to date this year (100 tons) is double that of 2008.

Reports out of Spain indicate a difficult northern hemisphere lemon season, and particularly in the European market. Only 40% of Spanish lemons (forecast production 1 million tons) were harvested by end February – it is reported that 200 000 tons will be left on the trees. Fino lemons will be in the market until mid April, and Spanish verna's will still be in the market until July. So the lemon market in Europe is going to be challenging – prices are very low at present (0.4 to 0.5 E/Kg FOB Murcia). So its time to build on the relationships in other markets, and to be careful in Europe.

The situation for Satsumas looks a lot brighter. South American countries indicate a drought affected decline of 20 to 30% in their Satsuma crops – which should mean that our 12% increased volumes will sell well.

PACKAGING GUIDELINES

During the roadshows mention was made of a document developed by the Citrus Cold Chain Forum that covers specifications for cartons, pallets, palletizing etc. This document is now available in the members section of the website www.cga.co.za.

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