FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (9/13)

Justin Chadwick (1 March 2013)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK "*If all our misfortunes were laid in one common heap whence everyone must take an equal portion, most people would be contented to take their own" Socrates*

CITRUS BLACK SPOT (CBS) AND THE INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC)

If two parties disagree with regard to a specific issue, and they continue to disagree for twenty years surely the best way to resolve the dispute is to subject it to an impartial third party for resolution. The present measures in respect to CBS and the European Union (EU) have been challenged since imposition in 1992. Over the past twenty years, there have been many exchanges, completion of pest risk assessments (PRA) and the publication of a great deal of scientific information, but the issue remains in dispute. The South African's PRA (with the same conclusion as the independently conducted USA PRA) concludes that CBS is not a risk to the EU. However, the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) opinion differs. In 2010 South Africa approached the IPPC secretariat to assist in resolving the impasse. The IPPC process requires initial facilitated bilateral consultations, if this fails to solve the issue then both parties can agree to form an expert technical panel to consider the two views and make a ruling (non binding).

And here lies the problem – both parties need to agree to formation of an expert panel. If two parties are disagreeing on something – how are you going to get them to agree on the forming of an expert panel??? In the case of CBS, in 2012 South Africa requested that the IPPC skip the bilateral consultations (as no progress had been made in the IPPC process since 2010) and move directly to expert panel. The reasoning was that after twenty years of disagreement on a bilateral basis, it was highly unlikely that either party would suddenly agree with the other. However the EU insisted on the consultation, and so this was held this past Tuesday (26 February). As expected there was no meeting of the minds and the dispute remains unresolved. In addition the EU declined to consent to the formation of an expert panel – citing the need to complete internal processes (yet another EFSA study of CBS) before possibly taking the matter to the next step. Unfortunately South Africa does not have the luxury of waiting for the EU to conclude another internal process (which they have had 20 years to do). Any further delay will mean that uncertainty continues and trade is disrupted. The South African citrus industry has called on DAFF to engage with the IPPC to persuade the EU to agree to the formation of an expert panel.

Let there be no misconception about the industry's efforts to comply with this regulation, regardless of it being disputed. In an attempt to avoid market closure, the industry continues to spend massive amounts on the most stringent control practices possible in pursuit of compliance in the face of increasingly intensified enforcement by the EU. In 2012 another tranche of new control and management measures were designed and have been implemented with huge costs and disruption.

Sustainability initiative of South Africa (SIZA)

The Fruit SA ethical trade program, the **Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA**) is a locally driven ethical program that aims to provide growers with support for ethical compliance and ongoing improvement on farms. SIZA is membership-based and encourages retailers, importers, exporters, packhouses and growers to register as members as the programme is designed to benefit the industry and all its stakeholders. SIZA uses membership fees to sustain the programme and provide the necessary support for growers.

What are the benefits of being a grower member of SIZA?

- A 'One-stop-shop' – one SAQ, one ethical audit and one reporting procedure recognised by all retailers removes duplication of audits, reduces costs and administration
- SIZA is locally-based, internationally recognised, and provides a barrier to other audit schemes
- SIZA's focus is on support for growers by: Giving feedback from the Self-assessment to help prepare for an audit; Applying a rating system that helps growers identify areas of risk; Providing cross-references to useful documents, policies and the law; Providing useful resources, such as the Ethical Trade Handbook and other toolkits
- SIZA data system provides an overview of the 'ethical' status of a business by analysing the SAQ & audit, identifying areas of risk, & benchmarking individual sites against the rest of the industry (or their own area)
- SIZA uses information from SAQs to identify industry needs in terms of developing improvement / training programs and other resources which can then be used by growers at no extra cost
- SIZA is South African-based and is specific to SA agriculture and it is well placed to adapt and respond to local needs
- SIZA membership fees are invested back into the industry and will support its needs
- Standing behind one program protects and enhances the industry

Members can sign on by logging onto the FSA Ethical programme website (www.fruitsa-ethical.org.za). Membership fees (excl VAT) for growers: R750 p.a; for packhouses, R1500 p.a.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITRUS GROWERS' FUND THEIR FUTURE THROUGH THE LEVY ADMINISTERED BY THE CGA