

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (39/16)

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Justin Chadwick 21 October 2016



"My parents didn't want to move to Florida, but they turned sixty and that's the law" Jerry Seinfeld

CITRUS SUMMIT – PRE CONFERENCE TOUR

The Citrus Summit is being held in the friendly city, Port Elizabeth, during March 2017. In order to ensure that those who are travelling from far get to see some of the Eastern Cape growing region CRI is assisting in organising a pre-conference tour. The growing region of Sundays River is just an hour away – the tour will look at the XSIT sterile insect program in the area, see a packhouse that was opened earlier this year, tour some orchards (particularly under netting), amongst other interesting sites. Delegates will gather at midday Monday 6 March in PE; and transported to Sundays River. Accommodation and meals will be provided on Monday night and Tuesday – before being transported back to PE in time for the Welcome Dinner on Tuesday evening (7 March). Please register for the tour when doing your Summit registration. Arrangements are subject to change, details will be available on the website. **Register for the CGA Citrus Summit on www.cga.co.za. All stakeholders in the southern African citrus industry are urged to attend.**

FLORIDA CITRUS

Earlier this week I had the privilege of visiting the Florida citrus industry. Although it was a whistle stop tour it did give a good overview of the industry. There is no doubt that the full focus of the industry is on Asian Greening (HLB) and for good reason – the disease has caused a significant fall in Florida's citrus production; to levels that are becoming economically challenging. As part of the tour we visited three Research and Education Centres – at Lake Alfred, Ommakalee and Fort Pierce. Being a mere economist I was blown away by the work that is being done. Some observations:

- There is a multidisciplinary approach. We heard of the work done by geneticists, plant breeders, entomologists, pathologists, horticulturists and even economists (and others). Nothing is being ignored and every avenue is being explored.
- The approach is one of collaboration – these scientists in different disciplines do not work in silos – they all know what the other is doing and so can cross pollinate ideas and approaches.
- There are considerable funds being directed at HLB in Florida. This is both Florida state funds and USDA funding. The industry is getting excellent support from the Floridian State government at the highest level.
- Psyllid control and/or eradication is not currently the solution and there are also currently no effective options for controlling the bacteria.
- Probably the most exciting development is the work in various genetic approaches, not only genetic modification.
- A lot of work has been done on nutrition, but it has transpired that this provides only a short term alleviation from the impact of the disease. The effect of nutrition is seen in the foliage, but the bacteria destroys the root system.
- Rootstocks and cultivars are being assessed to determine those that are immune, resistant or tolerant. Four rootstocks of interest have been singled out as the most favourable in this respect. Certain cultivars fair better than others – more work is being done to learn why this is the case, which assists with other work.
- Citrus production costs in Florida have increased by an additional 75%; this is because of the use of more insecticides, bactericides, tree replacement, and cultural practices. Incomes have reduced due to yield decline – returns are poor.
- Whereas in the past an orchard may be replaced every 40 years; growers now say if they get 20 years they are relieved – many replace orchards after 15 years. In addition, one notices that most orchards have a mix of big and small trees; an indication of the tree replacement that has taken place during the orchards lifetime.
- Abandoned orchards are a huge problem. Should a grower be in an area where there is a patchwork of different owners, and where bad neighbours have abandoned the orchards but not removed the trees – good work in trying to control the problem is undone by reinfestation from the abandoned orchards. Growers who abandon their orchards are not keen to remove the trees due to tax regulations. The government is looking at regulatory changes so as to encourage tree removal.

One thing is for sure – there are some of the brightest minds in the world working on Asian Greening in the USA; they will find a solution. The only concern is that time is running out in terms of the growers ability to survive.

PACKED AND SHIPPED

To end Week 14/10/16 Million 15 Kg Cartons	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original Estimate	Latest Prediction	Final Packed
SOURCE: PPECB/AGRIHUB	2014	2015	2016	2015	2016	2016	2016	2015
Grapefruit	15.6 m	16.1 m	13.8 m	14.7 m	13.2 m	12.4 m	13.8 m	16.1 m
Soft Citrus	9.9 m	10 m	12.1 m	9.2 m	11.3 m	11.2 m	12.1 m	10 m
Lemons	13.2 m	14.9 m	15 m	14.5 m	14.6 m	16.1 m	15.1 m	15.1 m
Navels	26 m	24.5 m	26.2 m	23.2 m	25.5 m	25.1 m	26.2 m	24.5 m
Valencia	50.1 m	52.2 m	41.1 m	45.2 m	39.4 m	46.4 m	41.9 m	52.7 m
Total	115.5 m	118.1 m	108.7 m	108 m	104.6 m	111.2 m	109.1 m	118.4 m

SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITRUS GROWERS FUND THEIR FUTURE THROUGH THE CGA GROUP (CRI, RIVER BIOSCIENCE, XSIT, CGA CULTIVAR COMPANY, CGA GROWER DEVELOPMENT COMPANY AND CITRUS ACADEMY)