

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (3/20)

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Justin Chadwick 24 January 2020



"The best leaders can see around corners" Anon

GROWER LEADERS

Southern African citrus growers have been blessed with the calibre of people that have represented them on the CGA Board over the past twenty years. Pieter Nortje (Sundays River Valley) spent twelve years on the Board, including a stint as Chairman and many years on the Executive Committee. He was at the helm over some of the more difficult years for the industry. Pieter has given notice that he will be resigning in March – he will be remembered as a Director who always fought for the greater good, with vision and foresight. His contribution will be missed – we all have great appreciation for his contribution to the Association.

Fanie Meyer (Hoedspruit) is also a veteran of the Board, having served for eleven years, many of them as Executive Committee member. He has also had numerous other leadership positions on the CRI Board and Chairman of the Citrus Improvement Scheme. Fanie often had a different take on things – and added lateral thinking in Board meetings. His constituency and the growers in southern Africa have benefitted from all the sacrifices he has made to serve in these positions. Fanie will also be stepping down in March 2020.

CGA Board members are elected for a two-year period. Before April 2020 the following regions will hold elections for their respective representatives. In brackets are the present incumbents and their availability. **Sundays River** (Hannes de Waal – available and Pieter Nortje – unavailable); **Senwes** (Piet Engelbrecht and Charles Rossouw – both available); **Letsitele** (Ben Vorster and Jan Louis Pretorius – both available); **East Cape Midlands** (Jock Dankwerts – available); **Hoedspruit** (Fanie Meyer – unavailable); **Limpopo River** (Guy Whitaker – available); **Patensie** (Phillip Dempsey – available) and **Zimbabwe** (Paul Bristow – available). CGA is busy sending out the necessary call for nominations.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Over the past twenty years I have travelled to China at least twenty-five times. In all those visits I can count the number of wild birds I have seen on two hands. This includes visits to rural areas in China. I am a bit of a part time twitcher – and love to see birds in the wild. Literature tells me that one of the reasons for the lack of birds in China was the practice of paying Chinese to kill birds. Birds were seen as competing for the grain and foodstuffs consumed by the Chinese. People were paid by district officials for every dead bird they delivered. Given the dire poverty in China in those years, Chinese pursued this cash flow with gusto, resulting in a collapse in bird populations.

This past weekend I was cycling in the Winterton area – a grain district. There were flocks of Amur Falcons on the power lines (at least there is a good use for our power lines) – amongst many other birds around. Likewise, when travelling in citrus regions one cannot miss the diverse bird types and sheer numbers of birds around. South African farmers/growers should be applauded for their farming practices that allow nature to thrive – this is true environmental stewardship.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS IN SPAIN

The South African citrus industry would like to wish Spanish growers well as they battle with heavy rains and hail. We hope that the impact will not be too severe. It is disheartening to have done all the work in preparing a decent harvest, only to have it ruined by adverse weather.

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