

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (20/20)

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Justin Chadwick 29 May 2020



“Everything is OK in the end. If it’s not OK, then it’s not the end” Anon

LESSONS DURING LOCKDOWN

The CGA took a decision to try and get the citrus industry and the organisation itself to come out of the lockdown stronger than when it went in, and here are some of the lessons learnt:

Resilience: the ability to withstand shocks and maintain industry strengths whatever challenge is faced. By facing up to challenges, taking them on, joining forces with others and keeping communication lines open the industry can continue to prosper come what may. Past challenges have prepared the industry well for present challenges – we will build from our learnings during the pandemic to build stronger and more resilient bonds/systems for the future.

Technology: Although we used Skype and other tools only when really necessary, the ban on movement has made our homes and offices our meeting rooms. And it has worked extremely well. All those early mornings, traffic jams and red-eye specials were not necessary; the job can be done through videoconferencing. The use of e-phytos has advanced in six months more than in the last six years – and it works. Job interviews have been conducted on computers. A new way of doing things has been found and we will not go back – saving time, money and hassles.

Government Relations: There is nothing like a common enemy to bring everybody close together. Over this pandemic our relationships with government have got stronger, we have opened communication channels that have brought quick results. This close relationship will now be nurtured into the future.

Importance of People: While the people in the business have always been recognised as being important – they are now seen as essential. In the fruit industry this is amplified by the number of people involved throughout the supply chain, and the restricted opportunities for automation. This swings both ways – industry has recognised the importance of keeping workers disease and fear free; government and workers have realised the importance of jobs in ensuring food security – which depends not only on availability of food but also the means to purchase the food.

Interlinked Industry: Lockdown has taught us how interlinked all businesses are, more especially how interlinked agriculture is. So many small/medium businesses are dependent on a functioning agricultural sector to survive, from those offering goods or services directly to agriculture, to those in rural towns and villages whose customers are reliant on agriculture. These links have strengthened during lockdown as the inter-reliance becomes starkly evident.

DIESEL

It has been announced that there is a possibility of diesel shortages in the next two to three weeks. As a result of lockdown refineries have not been operating, and as the economy re-ignites with the lockdown moving from level 4 to level 3, increased demand for diesel is expected. Panic buying may also exacerbate the position.

PACKED AND SHIPPED

The Orange Focus Groups met this week – navels left their prediction the same, while valencia’s increased by 150 000 cartons. The Lemon Focus Group has also met and adjusted their prediction upwards.

Million 15 Kg Cartons to end Week 21	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original Estimate	Latest Prediction	Final Packed
SOURCE: PPECB/AgriHub	2018	2019	2020	2019	2020	2020	2020	2019
Grapefruit	7.9 m	8.5 m	8.5 m	5.2 m	5.5 m	16.7 m	14.6 m	16.1 m
Soft Citrus	4.9 m	4.7 m	5.5 m	3.1 m	4 m	23.3 m	23.3 m	18.3 m
Lemons	8.9 m	8 m	13.4 m	5.3 m	10.4 m	26.4 m	27.6 m	22.1 m
Navels	4.3 m	3.2 m	3.8 m	0.9 m	1.5 m	26.5 m	26.5 m	24.3 m
Valencia	0.1 m	0.3 m	0.2 m	-	-	50.4 m	50.5 m	46.8 m
Total	26.1 m	24.7 m	31.5 m	14.5 m	21.4 m	143.3 m	142.5 m	127.5 m

CGA GROUP OF COMPANIES (CRI, RIVER BIOSCIENCE, XSIT, CGA CULTIVAR COMPANY, CGA GROWER DEVELOPMENT COMPANY & CITRUS ACADEMY) ARE FUNDED BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITRUS GROWERS