Valencia Focus Group

Minutes of the Valencia Focus Group Meeting held at 10:00 on Monday 17th March 2014 At Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre, Ort, Jhb.

1. Welcome

The Chairman, Deon Joubert welcomed all to the meeting.

Present

Deon Joubert	(chairman)	Sunday's River Valley
Peter Nicholson	(vice chairman)	Limpopo River
Cornel vd Merwe		Onderberg
Andrew Muller		Nelspruit
Marisa van den Heever		Senwes
Kobus van Staden for Fanie Meyer		Hoedspruit
Piet Smit for Barend Vorster		Letsitele
Graham Barry		(observer – CGA)
John Edmonds		(Secretariat) CGA
Ista Upton		(observer – Senwes)
Hannes de Waal		(observer – Sunday's River Valley)
Charl Tibshreany		(observer –Sunday's River Valley)
Martina Odendaal		(observer –Patensie)
Lawrence Mgadle		(observer –CDC)
Tertius Meyer		Patensie
Andrew Cooper		(observer –Letsitele)
Das de Villiers		(observer –East Cape Midlands)

2. Apologies

Danie Matthewson	Vaalharts
Paul Bristow	Zimbabwe
Andre Barnard	Pongola
Bester Snyman	Nkwalini
Samson Qomondi	Citrus Development Chamber
Andre Spangenberg	Oranje Rivier
Stiaan Engelbrecht	Western Cape
George Brown	Swaziland

3. Verification of regional focus group representatives for 2014 and election of chairman and vice chairman.

John Edmonds informed the meeting that Bester Snyman had replaced Shane Dellis as Valencia Focus Group representative for Nkwalini. Nominations for chairman and vice-chairman were done and Deon Joubert and Peter Nicholson duly re-elected as chairman and vice-chairman respectively.

4. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 28 August 2013.

The minutes were approved; proposed by Tertius Meyer and seconded by Cornel vd Merwe.

5. **Matters Arising from Minutes**
   There were no matters arising directly from these minutes.

6. **Estimates for 2014**

   Appendix1 below reflects the regional estimates for the 2014 season.

   Feedback from Letsitele region indicated that sizing will be better than last year; +1 to 1.5bigger. They had good rains although the effect on internal quality was not known yet.
   Deon Joubert said that Sunday's River Valley were a size better (1 up), with normal quality.
   Marisa van den Heever said Senwes sizing is better than last year , 72,88. A question mark hangs over cosmetics due to the effects of wind, so a lot of cl2 could be expected.
   Kobus van Staden, standing in for Fanie Meyer (Hoedspruit) said sizing is 2 bigger, very clean, and high packouts expected.
   Peter Nicholson, (Limpopo River) indicated that fruit was bigger, and pack outs would be better.
   Cornel vd Merwe said that in Onderberg some hectares were being removed for cane. He expected bigger sizes and cleaner fruit.
   Tertius Meyer (Patensie) said their season would run from week 27-39; expected sizes peaking 88,72,105,64 and good pack outs expected.

7. **General**
   7.1. Standards
   Graham Barry noted that there were no material changes to the quality standards for Valencias. Paul Hardman raised his concern that the standards may not have been promulgated. During the course of the meeting, Graham Barry checked the DAFF website and confirmed they were up to date.

   7.2. CBS
   Peter Nicholson noted that the strikes had come at the end of the season and warned lemon growers of feeling they could treat lemons differently to other citrus until such time that the EU authorities treated them differently. He perceived there may be a push from certain quarters to handle lemons differently. Hannes de Waal said that the Sunday's River Valley was considering many avenues to relieve the situation with regard to CBS. Growers had done a lot to control it. He felt that the current set up was a lottery and was not working for the growers. He added that R 50 million had been spent on CBS prevention and that this was not sustainable. He felt that there was a disconnect between the EU needs and DAFFs demands. He said that the problem lay with orchard inspections, where he felt that the new rules had not been thought through adequately. He added that Sunday's River Valley was the biggest exporter of lemons and stood to lose the most if they acted irresponsibly. Exports of lemons to the EU had gone well last year with only two strikes and said that Valencias were the problem. This year the weather has been kind but he foresaw a problem with the Russian market. Deon Joubert said that they would start exporting to Europe early in May with earlier fruit going to the Middle East.
   Peter Nicholson was concerned that some growers may be tempted to go to EU with out of season fruit. Hannes de Waal noted that during his recent visit to Argentina he found that they had rules in place whereby they could control what fruit went out. Piet Smit said that in principle, growers need to control the risk; not DAFF. If one packs from an orchard with CBS, it increases the risk drastically. It is proven that the problem is not sorted out in the pack house. By May, the orchard must be clean. Deon Joubert and Hannes de Waal

concurred. Hannes de Waal said that the rules on the ground must facilitate the industry. Peter Nicholson raised his concern that the fruit going out could not be electronically verified. Paul Hardman noted that currently two processes were required. Firstly electronic registration and a clean database were required. This had been put in place. Secondly a "post box" or FPT site was required which would be updated hourly. Information service providers would be able to access this site hourly, so affected fruit would not be loaded. This facility is in place and will be launched in a week. He added that DAFF have indicated that they have an online registration facility in place but he hasn't seen it yet.
Piet Smit said that if we know earlier if the fruit is "struck", growers and exporters will not lose revenue from refused phytos after the ship has sailed.
Peter Nicholson lamented the lack of a risk management system using an electronic verification system from which a phyto would be issued. He noted that PPECB had been founded to do inspections for Europe. Paul Hardman noted that the registration database and FPT facility had been created by CGA so that data could be analysed and risk management aspects such as tree age, varieties etc could be facilitated. When the PPECB system is ready it will be able to link in with this system. The DAFF registration system will only kick off in September whilst the FPT site (a CGA initiative) is running. Due to the urgency it is necessary to develop a parallel system currently. Peter Nicholson voiced his displeasure at the long time taken for PPECB to implement the electronic system. He said that it is the growers' responsibility to make sure a system is implemented as soon as possible and that this should constitute part of an overall risk management system. We need to woo the EU into accepting us with the systems we have in place. Paul Hardman noted that CGA could build a database, but ultimately a DAFF official has to sign the documents and do the inputs on the system. There is more to the system than building the database. Hannes de Waal said that the industry is in a potentially drastic situation. He noted that it was a complex situation for growers and for DAFF and asked what we must put in place. He agreed that the EU were convinced by systems and felt that CGA must put together a task group to fast track the implementation of a system. Paul Hardman noted that although the necessary system was not in place there were mechanisms to facilitate such coordination such as the annual Co-ordination Meeting, where DAFF, PPECB and industry meet. Peter Nicholson outlined the process from orchard inspection, through creating the consignment note and ultimately the phyto where each step should be a verification process as opposed to entering information from scratch where "finger problems" are likely to arise. Paul Hardman noted that some of the verification aspects mentioned will come into play this year. Peter Nicholson said that there must be a clear message from growers to the CGA that a proper database must be put in place and that the PPECB system be linked. Paul Hardman said that whilst there is a central Inspection planning tool in place, DAFF need a scheduling tool to make their inspections more efficient. He also noted the proliferation of additional PUCs on the system (about 300) which made the ability to analyse history more difficult. Deon Joubert said that the Valencia Focus Group proposed that the CGA ensure that a centralized electronic system be put in place by the end of 2014. This was supported by attending members of the Grapefruit Focus Group and Soft Citrus Focus Group. Tertius Meyer added that this system needed to be profiles in a way that it fitted in as part of a risk management system. The meeting agreed on this proposal.

7.3. Industry Meetings

Deon Joubert voiced the opinion that the CMF was inadequate in terms of getting growers together to discuss industry issues. He suggested that perhaps growers needed to get together on a larger scale every two years in January or February to discuss industry matters.

8. Meeting dates for 2014

(Last year the teleconferences were on the last Wednesday of the month at 11:30 starting in May)
A meeting date was not fixed. This will be decided by the chairman in due course.

Appendix1: Valencia Regional Projections

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CGA Region	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014est	
Boland	310 826	323 473	293 166	246 290	250 000	
E. Cape Midlanc	44 534	29 470	40 259	49 518	50 000	
Hoedspruit	4 289 915	4 213 106	4 472 607	4 750 967	4 900 000	
Letsitele	12 716 851	10 405 835	11 976 537	11 990 829	12 500 000	
Limpopo River	4 350 046	3 640 692	4 530 477	5 039 968	5 000 000	
Nelspruit	2 969 104	2 282 301	3 098 552	2 952 239	2 905 000	
Nkwalini	144 787	146 060	61 142	147 974	342 000	
Onderberg	2 506 187	1 644 100	2 109 057	2 036 196	1 850 000	
Oranje Rivier	187 309	211 656	170 965	175 200	166 000	
Patensie	2 028 308	2 773 692	2 006 006	1 985 891	2 020 000	
Pongola	79 050	69 960	76 298	77 410	79 000	
S.R. Valley	6 093 757	7 859 108	5 961 463	6 741 938	6 500 000	
Senwes	5 725 566	3 486 358	5 259 033	7 576 956	5 750 000	
S-KZN	365 479	141 748	180 793	230 147	150 000	
Unknown	3 495	27 407	2 560	4 782		
VaalHarts	88 314	15 680	17 053	60 007	50 000	
W. Cape	4 103 738	4 159 287	4 261 892	4 495 376	4 500 000	
Swaziland*	732 491	840 000	822 000	646 000	518 000	
Zimbabwe	1 600 000	1 900 000	1 950 000	2 200 000	2 000 000	
Grand Total	**48 339 757**	**44 169 935**	**47 289 860**	**51407688**	**49 530 000**	**-4%**