

South Africa: U.S.-focused citrus group plans 2017 campaign

The group of South African citrus industry members eligible to ship to the U.S. have held their annual meeting to review marketing plans, production volumes shipping schedules, and

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category trends to support the 2017 season.

Summer Citrus from South Africa (SCSA) entails some 300 growers based in the Western Cape, the only South African region with access to the market.

The recent meeting brought together members from across the U.S. and Western Cape.

Seald Sweet International's Mayda Sotomayor opened the planning sessions by introducing the growers, importers, retailers, marketing team, and other key members of the organization.

SCSA grower Piet Smit gave a production update, confirming that crop has increased from 2016. All products have seen volume growth including Easy Peelers at 15%, Navels at 7%, Midknights at 40%, Cara Caras at 11%, and Star Ruby grapefruit at 26% growth, according to a release.

Sam's Club's Shanan Cox spoke to the trends in citrus consumption and purchasing behaviors of the Club Channel shopper while Joel Nelson from California Citrus Mutual (CCM) spoke on behalf of the California citrus producers to "educate the group on economic realities of the citrus market" in the U.S.

"I've had the honor to be part of the South African program now for 17 seasons. We've come a long way, and weathered several perfect storms together," Seald Sweet CEO Mayda Sotomayor.

"Now look at us and what has been accomplished – we're growing stronger each year and building a legacy."

DMA Solutions CEO Dan'l Mackey Almy and vice president Megan Zweig presented the success of last year's inaugural consumer marketing campaign along with expected outcomes of this year's marketing efforts, based on the data collected from last year's consumer outreach.

The company's Swing Into Summer! promotion will launch next month, followed by a promotion in July.

"Our annual planning meeting is a vital part of our company's success and offers the opportunity to bring all of our partners together before our first vessel arrives in the U.S. in June," said SCSA CEO Suhanra Conradie.

"This year was a tremendous success as we've continued to bring thoughtful discussion to the table in order to best serve the U.S. market while domestic citrus is not available."

Meeting attendees also included key players from the brand's four main importers – Seald Sweet, DNE, Capespan, and AMC.

SCSA said the event resulted in collaborative planning and preparation amongst the entire supply chain to support the most successful summer crop season to-date.

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