

RSA optimistic ahead of new US citrus campaign

SCSA heralds positive outlook as outgoing chairman Johan Mouton is replaced by Boet Mouton

Summer Citrus from South Africa (SCSA) says the outlook for its 2018 campaign in the US is favourable in spite of the challenges associated with the droughts occurring in the Western Cape.

The first containers of easy peelers, followed by Navels and Star Rubies, will start to arrive in the US at the end of May, with the first conventional vessel arriving the third week of June at the port of Philadelphia.

SCSA held its annual planning meeting last month to review sales and marketing plans, production volumes, shipping schedules, and category trends.

"The annual planning sessions form a critical part of our forward planning as this is the time when importers, retailers and growers have the opportunity to exchange information regarding current production and market conditions," said CEO Suhanra Conradie.

"Despite the severe drought in the Western Cape, the group estimates to increase volumes to the US."

During the meeting it was announced that Johan Mouton was stepping down as chairman of the board and would be replaced by Boet Mouton.

Conradie said the move was "a generational change in leadership that the brand is very excited about as it continues to be young enough to change, but old enough to know better".

SCSA also presented its 2018 marketing plan at the meeting, including a Sweet Summer Sweepstakes to encourage all ages to enjoy Summer Citrus from South Africa with their favourite summer activities.

Karen Caplan, president and CEO of Frieda's, also led as keynote speaker about the importance of retail partnerships, innovation, and opportunities for the brand to grow in the US market.

"It was exciting to learn from this group of top citrus growers the innovations they have planned for upcoming seasons," said Caplan. "I also encourage retailers to travel to South Africa so they can experience their passion and high quality in person."

For the first time this season, SCSA is sending a bi-weekly trade newsletter to include crop updates, availability, promotional efforts, and grower spotlights.

