

Citrus Growers' Association appoints new CEO

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The new CEO of the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa, Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele.

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has appointed Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele as its new Chief Executive Officer with effect from 1 February.

The CGA announced in a statement on Wednesday that Ntshabele would take over the reins from outgoing CEO Justin Chadwick, to lead the association which represents more than 1 560 citrus growers from South Africa, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia. The association champions the role that the citrus industry plays in South African agriculture and the economy.

Ntshabele has extensive experience spanning academia and the private and public sectors. For the past five years he has been the Director Biosecurity at the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development.

Originally trained as a veterinarian, Ntshabele has also held leadership positions at Onderstepoort Biological Products. He was the Minister Counsellor Agriculture in the South African Embassy to Belgium, Luxembourg and the Mission to the European Union from 2015 to 2019.

His successful track record in management, policy development, international engagement and negotiation positioned him as a knowledgeable advocate for the interests of local citrus growers, the CGA said. The South African citrus industry is largely export-orientated and generates more than R30 billion a year in foreign revenue for the country.

Ntshabele said he was looking forward to helping shape the future of the local citrus industry.

"This is a crucial time for the sector. We must make sure that the projected growth in citrus production is translated into increased economic opportunities. A key to achieving that is expanding market access for our growers."

He added that he would also prioritise the association's focus on sustainability.

"I have always believed true sustainability is of little meaning if it does not embrace inclusive growth. In this area it is important for the citrus industry to continue building on the exceptional work it has done. If all obstacles are removed, Southern African citrus can create even more significant economic opportunities for all."

Gerrit van der Merwe, the chairperson of the CGA said: "We are enthusiastic to start this new chapter in the CGA's history with Dr Ntshabele. He has our full confidence and support."

Chadwick welcomed the appointment.

"I have known Dr Ntshabele for many years, and I am thrilled that he has accepted the post of CEO of the CGA. His ability to calmly assess and reason, as well as his diplomacy, will be a huge asset to the CGA as the industry strives to continue on its growth path during more and more uncertain times. I wish Dr Ntshabele well as he takes the organisation forward."

After many years as CEO, Chadwick is retiring at the end of March.

"I have been incredibly fortunate to have been afforded the opportunity to be CEO for the past 25 years, and I have no doubt that Dr Ntshabele will take the CGA from strength to strength," Chadwick said.

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