## FOREWORD

# The future of horticultural industries in South Africa

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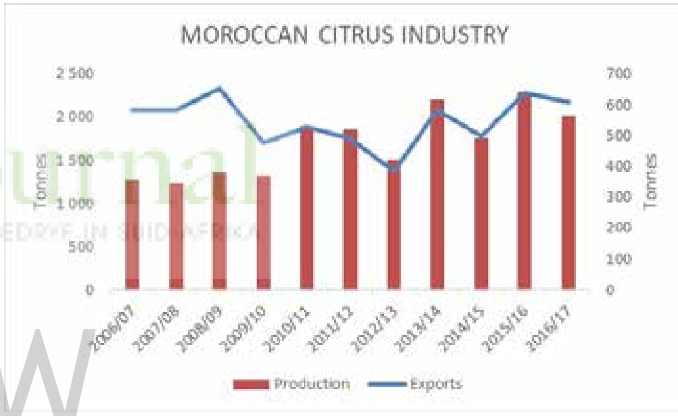
The Moroccan government introduced the "Plan Moroc Vert" (Green Moroccan Plan) in 2009. This plan was to stimulate the agricultural sector in Morocco – which was faced with the multiple challenges of low investment, poor organisation, inadequate management, limited water, land fragmentation and a predominance of cereal production. The advantages of the Moroccan agricultural sector was geographic location (just across the Straits of Gibraltar from Europe), the big domestic market and skilled farm labour. Similarly to South Africa, the agricultural sector was characterised by two distinct groupings – large-scale commercial farming, and small-scale semi subsistence farming.

The government tackled the two sectors with different projects. The industrialised, commercial agricultural sector was incentivised to maximise production on farms by promoting agribusiness investment. Trade conditions were improved by eliminating barriers to trade, and signing free trade agreements. Small-scale agriculture was given support in marginal areas, farmer's income was supported and natural resources safeguarded. The 2020 goal is to create 1.5 million jobs, triple agricultural exports, increase agricultural value by 250% and attract US$ 15 billion into agriculture. This involved extensive investment by government, and the results have been spectacular. In the citrus sector alone area the under citrus increased from 40 000 hectares in 2006 to 122 600 hectares in 2017, and production more than doubled. Since Morocca consume a considerable amount of citrus per capita, exports have not shown any growth.




Sound familiar? Job creation, attracting investment, increasing exports. Although there are many similarities between Moroccan and South African agriculture, there are also many differences. South African agriculture is heavily invested (look at all the new plantings, using new technology such as nettings and the latest water saving methods), agriculture is well organised (through commodity organisations and agricultural unions), South African farmers are amongst the most qualified in the world (see how they are sought in neighbouring countries and abroad) and there is less fragmentation. However, we are geographically poorly located, the domestic market demand is relatively small and government policy is not farmer friendly.

Yet South African horticultural industries record ever-increasing plantings, production, exports and earnings – in an unfavourable political climate. Government has done precious little to assist farmers in this growth. However, that needs to change. It is very well having all this product available, but it needs to have a market, and it needs to get to the market. Government is going to have to work with industry in ensuring that the infrastructure is adequate and efficient to get product to, and through the ports. At present volumes the ports are stressing; what will happen when all the plantings start getting to maturity? In addition, government is going to have to adequately capacitate those government departments involved in market access. Present market opportunities will become subject to oversupply.

The horticultural industries in South Africa are well placed to assist in economic recovery, job creation, land reform and rural development – and they have done that by expanding production and exports. We need a true public-private partnership to fully benefit from this potential.