

A tribute to ISRAEL NEMAORANI

Louise Brodie recently produced the *Succession* publication on behalf of the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA). The industry remembers Israel Nemaorani through these excerpts from the publication, of an interview with him and his family.

Israel Nemaorani, owner of Easy Farm, a citrus and banana enterprise near Thohoyandou, passed away in the early hours of 22 July 2019 leaving a great void in his family, as well as the citrus industry.

In what now seems prophetic, Israel said in his interview with Louise Brodie, "I am getting to the point where I am slowing down and handing over the responsibility to the next generation."

Israel, who was married to Eunice, was in the process of handing over their dry cleaning business to their son Muhoyo, who has done very well in learning the ropes. Their eldest son Lavhengwa and his wife Meme, who had been assisting Israel on the farm for 10 years, had largely taken over the running thereof. Israel's daughters Dakalo, Khavha and Gumani each own part of the family business complex.

The businessman

A stalwart of the citrus industry, Israel served on the CGA board from 2005 to 2013. His fellow directors remember him as a quietly spoken gentleman, who championed the cause of new growers in

the industry. But behind that quiet exterior was a brilliant businessman who, together with Eunice, fulfilled a significant economic role in Thohoyandou.

Israel also served on the Citrus Academy Board from its inception in 2007 until 2014, and provided guidance in the development of the youth in the industry. He and his family featured in many CGA publications and he was very proud of his children's progress.

Leaving a legacy of growth

Easy Farm, nestled on the southern slopes of the Soutpansberge, was started by Israel in 1990, who received his title deed in 1994. Over the years, Israel and his wife Eunice worked hard and sacrificed much to build a legacy for their family. Currently, the total size of the farm is 220 ha, with 150 ha of citrus (mostly Valencias) and 70 ha of bananas. The farm also produces mangos and incorporates pig farming. In December 2018, 10 ha of citrus (Benny Valencias) was planted; and after sinking a borehole, the water capacity has improved greatly.

Eunice, a vital part of this dynamic husband and wife team, has continued to develop the family's dry cleaning business and business complex buildings.

In his interview, Israel expressed gratitude all round, as well as for the opportunity to have built a legacy for their children. "We live close to the farm and we plan to retire there. We have 13 grandchildren and as most of them live close by, we see them regularly." Says Eunice: "My husband is a hard worker. He is on the farm every day and does not take a day off, not for Christmas, New Year or even Sunday. He built this farm himself, from scratch. Israel is successful because he is very strict, keeping a strict control over the budget. Although we never lacked anything, his strict control over the budget is why we are here today. It's enabled him to pay for the children's education. I pray that my children



The Nemaorani family of Easy Farm, left to right: Meme Nemaorani, Lavhengwa Nemaorani, Israel Nemaorani, Eunice Nemaorani and Gumani Nemaorani.

will follow in the footsteps of Israel." To which Israel quipped: "Behind every successful man, there is a successful woman."

Israel's successor on the farm

"When I finished school I wanted to go to Pretoria to study Business Management," says Israel's eldest son Lavhengwa. But Israel had convinced him to study agriculture at the Lowveld College in Nelspruit, instead. Lavhengwa enjoyed 10 years of working with his late father on the farm. After I graduated, I did some short courses through Stellenbosch University and I spent some time with the Du Roi group at Letsitele, where I worked in the production sector, in the nursery and in the packhouse," he says.

Lavhengwa believes that having worked elsewhere before returning

to the farm stood him in good stead, as he's gained invaluable knowledge about citrus farming. "There were times that my father and I clashed, but we sorted things out and it became easier over time. I admit that I was young and big-headed when I arrived here," laughs Lavhengwa. He and his wife Meme, have four children. She helps him with administration in the office. "The opportunity that my father has presented us with is a true gift. I have friends who have died and others who are in prison, so I am extremely fortunate to be a recipient of the legacy my parents have built for us." He concedes that working in a family business has its fair share of challenges, but with perseverance he's clocked ten years and counting. The citrus industry extends sincere condolences to the Nemaorani family.

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