

FOREWORD

Women in the fruit industry

The boardrooms of the SA fruit industry may give the impression that the sector is a male-dominated environment. Though, senior management teams of many fruit bodies and, perhaps a visit to farms across the country reveal a very different story. On many farms, women drive decision making and strategic direction. And, at an organisational level, more and more women are shaping the future of our industry.

In this foreword I mention a few of these female trailblazers. But since they're largely from the citrus industry, I'm merely scratching the surface. There are many women driving innovation in the deciduous, table grape and sub-tropical fruit industries.

Fruit SA, the umbrella organisation for the fruit industry, is led by a number of women. The first CEO was Konanani Liphadzi – who moulded the organisation into a well-respected and recognised commodity leader in the agricultural space. Konanani left Fruit SA this year and Fhumulani Rathshitanga was recently appointed

as the new CEO, having been promoted from within the ranks of the organisation. Fhumulani is a person who leads by example, her work ethic and attention to detail have earned the respect of many fruit industry stakeholders. The Board of Fruit South Africa is also fortunate to have Vangile Titi-Msumza and Nompumelelo (Mpumi) Obokoh to provide guidance – their input brings a fresh perspective to many fruit industry strategies. In the past, the Fruit SA Board also included Bongzi Njobe – a veteran of the agricultural sector. Vangile, also serves on the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) Board. Her assessment of many difficult board decisions is highly valued.

The citrus industry is also represented on the Perishable Products Export Control Board by Martli Slabber – a successful citrus grower who brings practical experience to the PPECB Board, as she enters her second term as director. She was joined this year by Mariette Kotzé who has many years of experience at HORTGRO.

'N OSEAAN VAN VOORDELE

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Vertical icons on the right: target, sun, water drop, leaf, gear, and a globe.

doing it for themselves

Operationally, the CGA Group boasts a dynamo in Jacomien de Klerk as General Manager of the Citrus Academy. Jacomien's enthusiasm and in-depth knowledge of the skills development environment has meant that the Citrus Academy is forever introducing new ideas and projects. And it does not end with her – her entire team is made up of capable and enthusiastic women.

SIZA, the preferred platform for fruit industry ethical trading and environmental stewardship compliance is given direction and leadership by Retha Louw, who had cut her teeth in the deciduous fruit industry. Drill a bit deeper into the industry and there are women whose experiential knowledge is hard to beat – Lindi Benic and Dr Elma Carstens come to mind.

The citrus industry is built on the bedrock of research and technical expertise – these are just some of the women who have played a leading role; in entomology Drs Aruna Manrakhan and Caroline Knox; in pathology Drs Glynnis Cook, Elize Jooste, Ronel Roberts, Providence Moyo, Ethyl Doidge, Lise Korsten, Wilma du Plooy, Cheryl Lennox and Catherine Savage, Elaine Basson and Laura Huisman. There are so many women in this field that mentioning them all would fill this journal.

In the logistics domain – seen by many as male-dominated – women like Mariaan Rademan and Delena Engelbrecht have

emerged as powerhouses, driving innovation and expanding their businesses to be at the forefront of fruit logistics. Fruit exporting companies also boast a number of dynamic women:

Cecilia Landman (Xtreme), Theda Doman (Dole), Petronette Nortjé (IMCOL) and Marquerite van

Staden (Clemengold), just to mention a few. The Fresh Produce Exporters Forum (FPEF) has women representation on the board, with Annelie Haumann (Stemms) and Juliette du Preez (SRCC) – Juliette having also served a stint as a founder board member of the CGA Grower Development Company.

And, of course, our entire sector is led by a powerful woman, Minister Angelina Thoko Didiza. Minister Didiza's extensive knowledge and experience within the agricultural sector means she is able to provide the critical leadership the industry requires, in order to boost rural economic growth, job creation and the further transformation within the fruit industry.

I would like to thank every woman working within the sector for the contribution they are making towards the creation of more profitable, equitable and sustainable fruit industry in SA. ❀



JUSTIN CHADWICK
CEO: CGA

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