

New appointments to **CGA Board of Directors**

GLORIA WEARE



Smit le Roux



Pieter Nortjé

Smit le Roux, CGA Director for Burgersfort/Ohrigstad (a new citrus growing region). Over the past few years the area under citrus production in the Burgersfort/Ohrigstad area has increased considerably. Previously, growers in this area fell under the Nelspruit region and it was felt they should form their own region under a representative voted by themselves.

Smit Le Roux was nominated and elected to represent these growers from 1 April 2020. Smit was born and raised in eMalahleni (Mpumalanga), but in 1987 his father bought a cattle farm in Ohrigstad. In 1994 he started farming with game (after a leopard took 27 calves), reasoning that it might be better farming with nature than against it.

In 1998 Smit's father bought his second farm and started planting oranges in 1999. This awoke Smit's interest in citrus and in 2001 he started his BSc Plant Production degree at the University of Pretoria. From his second year onwards, he did vacation work at Du Roi Nursery and obtained a bursary from Du Roi to complete an MSc Horticulture degree at Stellenbosch University (SU) under the guidance of Dr Graham Barry.

After obtaining a Master's degree at SU in 2006, Smit started as Production Manager at Du Roi Nursery and was promoted to General Manager in 2008. Here, under the invaluable guidance of Abraham van Rooyen and Bryan Offer, he learned the great lesson: "Be hard on standards, but soft on people". He says that working at Du Roi helped him gain insight into our citrus industry, meeting our researchers and gaining first-hand experience of the Citrus Improvement Scheme, while sitting on their cultivar advisory committee.

During his years at Du Roi, Smit was also fortunate to be able to visit other citrus producing countries and their nurseries, and seeing their industries made him realise how privileged we are in SA to have bodies like the CGA and CRI working exclusively for our growers, ensuring our markets stay open and grow by doing brilliant research and ensuring that clean plant material is being used.

In 2014, Smit joined his father and two brothers in the family business in Ohrigstad, where they grow mainly mandarins and Navels on nearly 300 ha. All family members are involved in the business, with Smit's wife Marthie assisting with the financials.

"Ohrigstad is a small town, but luckily we do have a primary school with about 140 children where my two kids, Adrian (10) and Zani (6) go," says Smit. With the drought tightening its grip on the area, the family decided to spread its risk, and expanded into the Western Cape close to Worcester, where wine will make way for mandarins.

Smit finished by saying, "Ohrigstad is still a young citrus area compared to the rest, with nearly 1 500 ha under production. Ohrigstad is already famous for producing quality fruit, and is expanding rapidly into mandarins and navels. I believe in the near future corn, wheat and beans will make way for citrus and other permanent crops."

The CGA Directors bid farewell to **Pieter Nortjé** at the end of the 2019/20 financial year. He gave tirelessly of his time by serving on the Board for more than 10 years, six as chairman and two as Vice-chairman. He is thanked for his strong leadership, often in very trying circumstances.

Dr Hennie Ehlers has been elected to replace Pieter Nortjé as one of the two representatives on the CGA Board for the citrus growers in the Sundays River Valley. Hennie is gebore in Kirkwood in die Sondagsrivier vallei, en het sy skoolloopbaan in 1977 aan Hoërskool Daniel Pienaar voltooi. In 1989 het hy sy doktorsgraad in Fisika aan die destydse UPE (nou bekend as Die Nelson Mandela Universiteit) verwerf. Nog steeds nie gereed om die akademie agter te laat nie, registreer hy by Unisa vir sy MBL-graad wat hy in 1993 voltooi het. Hennie was egter ontnugter deur die tekort aan werksgeleenthede in die privaatsektor vir iemand met sy kwalifikasies, dus wend hy hom toe tot die landbou, waarna hy in Oktober 1994 sy eerste stuk grond in Kirkwood gekoop en hy en sy gesin plaas toe getrek het. Hy is 'n voorstaander daarvan om waarde by produkte te voeg en het sedert 1994 sy eie kwekery begin, asook 'n moderne pakhuis opgerig om vrugte te verpak.

Hennie is getroud met Dulcie, en het drie kinders – al drie betrokke by die familie-onderneming. Hennie Jnr. is die operasionele bestuurder by die 2 Rivers-pakhuis, Jacques (MSc Hort) is die produksiebestuurder en Cara (BSc Voedselwetenskap) begin hierdie jaar met haar eie laboratorium by 2 Rivers-pakhuis en is verantwoordelik vir die na-oes verslae. Sedert 1994 dien Hennie op verskeie bestuursliggame in die vallei. Hy dien tans as Direkteur van die Sondagsrivier-sitrusprodusenteforum. Die forum se fokus het ten doel om die lewensgehalte van die gemeenskappe in die vallei te verbeter.

Hy dien ook as mentor vir Nomzamo Trust. Nomzamo Trust het hul eerste grond in 1995 gekoop en sedert 2005 help Hennie hulle om sitrus te vestig. Nomzamo Trust bestaan uit 95 begunstigdes, en sedert 2016 word dividende betaal.

Hennie se toekomsvisie is om sy werkers te bemagtig deur middel van verskeie projekte. Kariëga Sitrus-ontwikkeling wat deur drie kommersiële produsente bedryf word, dien tans as so 'n projek waar 500 ha sitrus binne die volgende drie jaar gevestig gaan word. Werkers sal voordeel hieruit trek deur middel van 'n gemeenskapstrust.

Another stalwart leaving the Board is **Fanie Meyer**, representative for Hoedspruit growers. As his eight years' service on the CGA board ends, he continues his 10-year tenure on the CRI board. Oom Fanie, as he's affectionately known, gave wise input during board meetings, which will be missed.

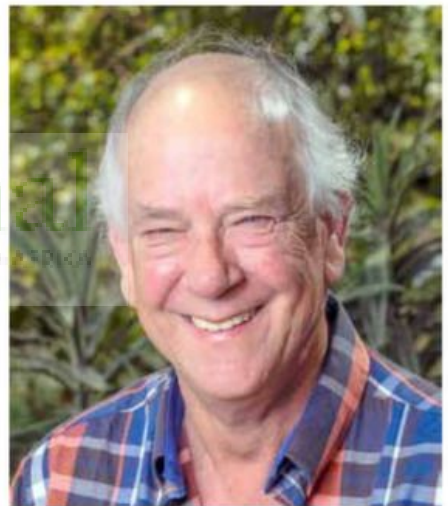
Taking over the Hoedspruit chair on the Board is **Tommie Landman**. Tommie's father Hertzog moved to Letsitele from the Eastern Cape back in 1956 where he had been farming and building dams. He and his wife Hazel called their farm Letaba Drift. They worked hard cultivating the land and concentrated on vegetables. Over the next 34 years they had five children and had built up their farm to an irrigated 500 ha enterprise, having diversified into citrus and mango production as well. The farm Jassie was purchased in 1966 and La Cotte in 1970, one on either side of the Letaba River.

Tommie Landman was their second son, born in 1959. After completing his schooling locally, he completed his BSc Ag at Pretoria University and his BCom Hons through UNISA. When he had completed his compulsory military training in 1984, he managed his father's La Cotte farm, purchasing it in 1991. Tommie continued to specialise in citrus, mangos and vegetables.

In 2012 The Landman Group was moved from Letsitele to Hoedspruit. The business farms approximately 1000 ha and produces more than 20 000 tons of fresh fruit annually. Tommie's two sons Duo and Dirk serve on the executive committee of the Landman Group. ❀



Hennie Ehlers



Fanie Meyer



Tommie Landman