

Citrus Phytosanitary monitoring and inspection **ONLINE CERTIFICATION**

Nobody could have predicted the sudden and unprecedented events in the first quarter of 2020 that changed the way we live forever. Desiree Schonken

The COVID-19 pandemic that brought the world to its knees demonstrated just how fragile our traditional institutions are. It affected all aspects of society and compelled us to re-evaluate our approach to almost everything we do.

This is particularly evident in the education and training sector. The educational landscape before COVID-19 was notoriously slow to adapt, relying on an out-dated, lecture-based approach to teaching, entrenched institutional biases, and outmoded classrooms. Within a few

weeks in March 2020, millions of students worldwide had adopted to online learning, forcing educational facilities to find innovative solutions in a very short period of time. Many organisations were caught unprepared and ill-equipped to face the challenges of being able to provide quality learning under these circumstances.

Like numerous other training providers, the Citrus Academy had to suspend all workshops and training interventions that require social interaction. However, our e-learning platform provided us with the means and resilience to continue to service the citrus industry's needs.

The CRI Citrus Phytosanitary Monitoring and Inspection certification programme is a case in point. The FCM Management System (FMS) regulations stipulate that all orchard monitors, packhouse inspectors and graders must be trained and must undergo a competence evaluation before the onset

of the picking season. The certification programme was rolled out via the Academy's online platform in February, and hundreds of workers were trained, assessed and given competence certificates, even during the lockdown period.

Farms and packhouses were thus able to remain compliant with statutory regulations. This would not have been possible had we relied on traditional contact training sessions. Other online programmes that learners registered for during this time include the Citrus Business Administration Programme and the Citrus Packing Short Course.

As SA continues to grapple with the ripple effects of the pandemic and the need to adapt to new realities, the Citrus Academy strives to develop and refine its e-learning offering in line with the industry's needs. As always, we remain committed to providing high quality, functional training solutions. ▀



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