

Enhancing skills IN THE CITRUS INDUSTRY

The Citrus Academy programmes are designed to bridge critical skills gaps within the citrus industry. By **Sam Louw**, Engagement Manager

Through its targeted programmes, the Citrus Academy continues to lead in agricultural learning and development by bridging critical skills gaps within the citrus industry.

The Citrus SuperPower and Citrus Master Class programmes are new initiatives launched to enhance the capabilities of supervisors and production and technical professionals. These programmes not only address the immediate skills needs of the industry, but they also lay a strong foundation for sustainable growth and excellence in agriculture.

The Citrus SuperPower programme was developed in response to a need for quality supervisor training in citrus workplaces. Recognising the pivotal role that supervisors play in the day-to-day operations of citrus enterprises, this programme focuses on essential competencies that are crucial for effective management and productivity.

Key components of the Citrus SuperPower programme include

- **Becoming a Super Supervisor:** This module equips supervisors with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their teams effectively and maintain high operational standards.
- **Ownership:** Supervisors are trained to take ownership of their roles, fostering a sense of responsibility and accountability.



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- **Numeracy:** Given the importance of accurate data management in agriculture, this module enhances supervisors' mathematical skills, ensuring they can handle budgeting, inventory, and other numerical tasks efficiently.
- **People management:** Effective people management is crucial for any supervisory role. This segment focuses on conflict resolution, team motivation, and communication skills.
- **Achieving excellence:** Supervisors are encouraged to strive for excellence in all aspects of their work, setting high standards and leading by example.
- **On-farm training:** the Citrus SuperPower programme ensures that training is contextual and immediately applicable. This approach maximizes the relevance of the training and minimizes disruption in farming operations.

The Citrus Master Class offer a flexible and in-depth learning experience tailored to individual aspects of citrus production. These e-learning modules are designed to cater to a wide range of learners, from new managers to advanced practitioners, ensuring that knowledge is accessible and scalable.

Each Citrus Master Class focuses on a specific area of citrus production, allowing participants to grow their expertise in topics such as citrus integrated pest and disease management, production management, irrigation management. The integration of basic to advanced levels within each class ensures a thorough understanding and proficiency of the subject matter.

Benefits of the Citrus Master Class include

- **Accessibility:** Being an online platform, the Citrus Master Class is accessible to anyone with an internet connection, breaking down geographical barriers and providing learning opportunities to a broader audience.
- **Flexibility:** Participants can learn at their own pace, making it easier for them to balance their professional responsibilities with their educational goals.
- **Expertise:** The courses are developed with the assistance of subject matter experts, ensuring that the content is relevant, up-to-date, and of high quality.

These programmes represent an on-going professional development approach in agricultural education and training.

- **Comprehensive learning:** The structured progression from basic to advanced levels within each module ensures that learners build a solid foundation before moving on to more complex concepts.

Citrus Academy programmes and their development are vital for several reasons

- **Addressing skills gaps:** By targeting specific skill deficiencies, these programmes help improve the overall competence of the agricultural workforce. This is particularly important in the citrus industry, where technical knowledge and effective management are crucial for productivity and sustainability.
- **Promoting excellence:** Training initiatives like Citrus SuperPower and Citrus Master Class promote a culture of excellence. Supervisors and production staff who are

well-trained are more likely to implement best practices, leading to higher yields and better quality produce.

- **Sustainable growth:** By investing in human capital, the Citrus Academy contributes to the long-term sustainability of the citrus industry. Well-trained professionals are better equipped to adapt to changing conditions and implement innovative solutions.
- **Economic impact:** Enhanced skills lead to better job performance, which can translate into higher efficiency and profitability for farms. This, in turn, supports the economic stability and growth of the citrus industry.
- **Empowerment:** These programmes empower individuals by providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in their roles. This empowerment

can lead to increased job satisfaction and career advancement opportunities.

The Citrus SuperPower and Citrus Master Class programmes represent an on-going professional development approach in agricultural education and training. By addressing the specific needs of the citrus industry, these initiatives not only enhance individual capabilities, but they also contribute to the overall growth and sustainability of the citrus industry. As the agricultural landscape continues to evolve, the importance of such targeted and effective training programmes cannot be overstated. ▶



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