

A GROWER-CENTRIC APPROACH TO IPM **Kat River Valley**

RBX and the CGA-GDC have joined forces to implement IPM geared towards control of false codling moth in the Kat River Valley. By Nkwane Mphahlele

Collaboration between River Bioscience (RBX) and the Citrus Growers' Association Grower Development Company (CGA-GDC) in the fight against false codling moth (FCM), using integrated pest management (IPM), has shown remarkable progress. This joint initiative represents a significant leap forward in sustainable citrus farming for the 2023/4 season. The main aim of the programme is to ensure crop protection, quality improvement, risk management, and market performance.

Fifteen black citrus growers, collectively tending 445.74 ha of bearing citrus orchards, actively participated in the IPM programme.

Through dedicated collaborative efforts, these growers have embraced IPM practices to tackle pests and diseases in their orchards while minimizing environmental impact.

Under the guidance of experts from RBX and with the steadfast support of the CGA-GDC, growers received comprehensive training, technical assistance, and access to cutting-edge technologies to enhance their IPM capabilities. Throughout the season, they diligently implemented the IPM strategies, integrating various pest control methods to achieve optimal results.

The outcomes of the IPM programme have been overwhelmingly positive, with

participating growers reporting improved pest control efficacy, reduced pesticide usage, and enhanced overall orchard health. Encouraged by these results, growers expressed their satisfaction with the programme and are eager to continue their IPM journey in the upcoming seasons.

As the 2024/5 season approaches, the CGA-GDC and RBX remain steadfast in their commitment to building on the success of the IPM programme. Plans are underway to introduce new products, such as M3 Bait Station for fruit fly management, further empowering black citrus growers with sustainable pest management solutions.

Furthermore, a 14% growth projection to 508 ha has been forecast in bearing hectares for the 2024/5 season. This reflects the growing adoption and success of IPM practices among black citrus growers in the Kat River Valley.

On 9 May 2024, the CGA-GDC held a study group session with Kat River Valley black growers, in collaboration with RBX, to present their new product, the M3 Bait Station, for fruit fly management. The growers expressed approval of the new product and its potential to enhance their pest management practices. Their enthusiastic participation and positive feedback underscore the importance of collaboration and innovation in advancing sustainable agriculture. By embracing IPM principles, black citrus growers in the Kat River Valley are not only safeguarding the health and productivity of their own orchards, but they're also contributing meaningfully to a more environmentally friendly and resilient citrus industry. 🌱



Left: Andrew Mbedzi (manager, CGA-GDC), Lawrence Mgadle (grower), Athandile Shoba (extension officer, CGA-GDC), Tristan Comley (national sales co-ordinator, RBX), Eric Nohamba (grower), Nkwane Mphahlele (business support assistant, CGA-GDC), Marco Saayman (junior technical sales representative, RBX)



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