

A model for inclusive growth in agriculture

Recently, I represented the CGA-GDC at Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong – a privilege. By **Lukhanyo Nkombisa** (General Manager of Grower Development Company)



Lukhanyo Nkombisa

Asia Fruit Logistica is the biggest gathering of global fruit exporters in the East, who trade with countries like China, Vietnam, South Korea, and India. These countries also hold significant growth opportunities for South African fresh fruit exports.

The attending delegation of officials from the Citrus Growers' Association Grower Development Company (CGA-GDC) represented the growing interests of black citrus growers in SA. They have successfully commercialised their enterprises as active participants in the local citrus success story. In fact, 74 of the 120 black citrus farmers have been participating in export markets for more than 10 years.

During a recent parliamentary Q&A, President Ramaphosa referenced the citrus industry as an example where both small and commercial farmers are producing meaningfully. And he assured Parliament that market access efforts in the European market are done with both in mind. Ramaphosa also urged commercial farmers to join government in supporting black farmers (who were previously excluded from the value chain).

A large portion of citrus growers' levies funds GDC initiatives – it's how established growers invest in a transformed future in citrus.

On-going support

The CGA founded the GDC as a subsidiary

in 2016, based on the premise of sustainable transformation.

To be sustainable, growth must be inclusive. This is where the GDC comes in, facilitating the viability of black citrus growers through targeted, practical support.

The GDC plays a vital role in engaging with government on all levels – national, provincial, and local.

The GDC provides training, mentorship, and support to young, emerging, as well as established black growers. Being part of the CGA also means that black growers – with the assistance of the GDC – receive the same

level of information and technical expertise that is available to large commercial growers. This extends to advice on cultivars, disease management, and other important aspects of the citrus value chain like cold storage and transport. Black growers are then able to plant suitable citrus trees that will yield optimally, with a guaranteed local and international market to supply.

Also integral to the development of black growers is guidance from the GDC on the business aspects of their farms, and facilitation of land access and funding opportunities.

The on-going input from the GDC has been yielding promising results, with black growers' growing success in the citrus export arena.

Public-private efforts

More robust public-private efforts can help realise the goal for black citrus growers to pack 50 million 15 kg cartons of citrus for local and export markets by 2032.

The GDC plays a vital role in engaging with government on all levels – national, provincial, and local. The growing alignment between the knowledge and skill set within the GDC, and related government initiatives makes for even better cooperation.

As new and larger markets like Asia open, the GDC looks forward to helping black citrus growers become more active players in expanding market share. Ultimately, this also stands to benefit the broader fresh fruit industry and, of course, our local GDP. 🍊



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