

COOPERATION

an underrated driver of implementation

While healthy competition is generally useful and warranted, the role of cooperation in the development of economies and communities is vital.

According to *Scientific American*, Peter Kropotkin challenged the Darwinian principle of evolution as being strictly about the survival of the strongest. Instead, he proposed that animal cooperation was crucial for understanding the process of evolution. "Competition is the law of the jungle, but cooperation is the law of civilization." – Peter Kropotkin. This assertion (which goes beyond the understanding of the evolution process) is as relevant in today's context as it was then.

Cooperation is the springboard for intentional collaboration. In SA, where slow economic growth, unemployment and inequality are prevalent, it is only sensible for all economic sectors to adopt a cooperative approach in addressing these and other pressing challenges. This also applies to the South African fresh fruit industry – and the agriculture sector at large – where sustainable success hinges on intentional cooperation within the industry, as well as with other economic players and communities.



Fhumulani Ratshitanga
(Fruit SA CEO)

Take the Agriculture and Agroprocessing Master Plan (AAMP), for example, of which the fruit industry is a signatory. The Plan has many initiatives requiring different resources and skill sets that do not reside with one social partner. With each partner left to operate independently, critical objectives contained in the document are at risk of remaining an elusive pipedream. Thus, like with any other large-scale plan, the successful implementation of the AAMP requires intentional cooperation in order to achieve meaningful results.

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On a smaller scale, the establishment of Fruit South Africa bears testimony to the importance of such collaboration, which has afforded the fresh fruit industry some big wins. For example, the establishment of the Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA) and – together with the wine industry – the formation of the Confronting Climate Change Initiative (CCC); streamlined engagements with government and other stakeholders for the resolution of industry challenges; and promotion of industry interests, and SA as a fresh-fruit supplier of choice in the global arena. Without robust collaboration, these achievements would have come at a huge price tag for individual industry bodies.

Another consideration to support cooperation as a springboard for effective implementation is the ever-increasing complexity of the agricultural landscape against the backdrop of limited resources. This complexity requires various parties to join forces in a coordinated fashion to create a lasting impact and to achieve efficiency gains.

Indeed, cooperation is the law of civilisation. With it, we will be stronger – together.

Keep your table grapes fresher for longer.

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info@agrofresh.com

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