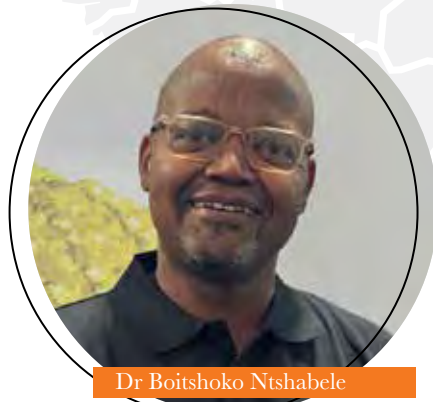


CGA welcomes new CEO

The CGA is pleased to announce Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele as its new Chief Executive Officer. By the CGA



Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) champions the vital role of the citrus industry in the agricultural and the economic context of SA. It represents over 1 500 citrus growers from SA, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia.

Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, who took office on 1 February, has extensive experience spanning the areas of academia, and the private and public sector. For the past five years, he was Director of Biosecurity at the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). And having originally trained as a veterinarian, Ntshabele has also held leadership positions at Onderstepoort Biological Products. Plus, he was the Minister Counsellor Agriculture in the South African Embassy to Luxemburg and Belgium, and was part of the Mission to the European Union from 2015–2019.

"I am looking forward to help shape the future of the local citrus industry."

His excellent track record in management, policy development, international engagement, and negotiation positions him as a knowledgeable advocate for the interests of local citrus growers. The South African citrus industry is largely export-orientated and generates over R30 billion a year in foreign revenue for the country.

"I am looking forward to help shape the future of the local citrus industry. This is a crucial time for the sector. We must make sure that the projected growth in citrus production is translated into increased economic opportunities. A key to achieving that is expanding market access for our growers," said Ntshabele.

"Continued focus on sustainability is a priority as well. I have always believed true sustainability is of little meaning if it does not embrace inclusive growth. In this area, it is important for the citrus industry to continue building on the exceptional work it has done. If all obstacles are removed, Southern African citrus can create even more significant economic opportunities for all," he continued.

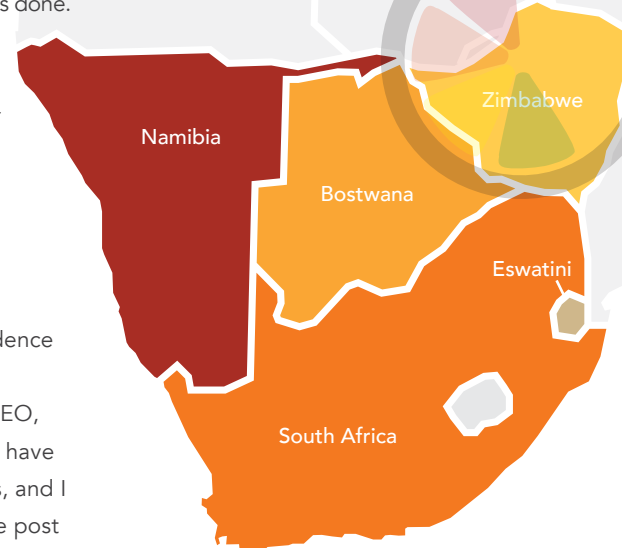
Gerrit van der Merwe, the Chairperson of the CGA, says: "We are enthusiastic to start this new chapter in the CGA history, with Dr Ntshabele. He has our full confidence and support."

Justin Chadwick, the outgoing CEO, also welcomed the appointment: "I have known Dr Ntshabele for many years, and I am thrilled that he has accepted the post of CEO of the CGA. His ability to calmly assess and reason, as well as his diplomacy, will be a huge asset to the CGA as the industry strives to continue on its growth path during more and more uncertain

times. I wish Dr Ntshabele well as he takes the organisation forward."

After many years as CEO, Chadwick is retiring at the end of March. There will be a two-month handover period between the incoming and outgoing CEOs. "I have been incredibly fortunate to have been afforded the opportunity to be CEO for the past 25 years, and I have no doubt that Dr Ntshabele will take the CGA from strength to strength," concluded Chadwick.

"It is important for the citrus industry to continue building on the exceptional work it has done."



Loskop Valley rail transport potential

The Loskop Valley is a vital agricultural hub in SA. By Mitchell Brooke

Situated along the Olifant's River between the Loskop and Flag Boshilo Dams, the Loskop Valley holds significant potential for citrus production. Key areas within the valley include Groblersdal and Marble Hall. These engage in a diverse range of agricultural production, prominently featuring citrus fruits – among other categories.

Projected growth in citrus production

Vision 260 highlights Loskop Valley as an area of significant promise for citrus production. Current volumes have reached approximately 22 million 15 kg cartons, with the possibility of increasing output to 30 million cartons by 2027. This growth trajectory positions the Loskop Valley as a potential leader in annual production, possibly surpassing the Sundays River Valley.

Transportation challenges

The anticipated increase in production necessitates optimal transport logistics. Forecasts indicate that the weekly truck

demand will escalate from 600 truck trips per week to over 900. This projection is based on the assumption of the complete absence of rail transport, which will demand a super-efficient alternative transport solution.

Importance of rail transport

Upscaling rail transport in the Loskop Valley is crucial due to its strong agricultural volumes and ideal location near the Durban-Johannesburg rail corridor (Concor). The latter provides easier access to key transport routes.

Initiatives for rail development

On 22 January the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) held a meeting with key citrus producers in the region. Two main initiatives were planned:

1. Formation of a rail project working group: This group will develop strategies to improve rail transport to support agricultural growth.
2. Commissioning of a rail study: A comprehensive study will be conducted to

identify sustainable and cost-effective rail transport solutions for regional producers.

Request for quotations (RFQ)

The CGA is preparing an RFQ to invite firms for a rail study that will assess logistics needs and explore collaboration opportunities among producers.

The future of rail transport in SA

SA's rail network is undergoing significant reform, allowing private operators to run trains. Transnet Freight Rail (TFR) has been reorganised into:

- Transnet Freight Rail Operating Company (TFROC): a competing rail service provider.
- Transnet Rail Infrastructure Manager (TRIM): focused on maintaining and managing rail infrastructure.

This restructuring presents a promising outlook for rail transportation, underscoring the relevance of the Loskop Valley Rail Working Group.

The Loskop Valley is at a pivotal point in the development of its rail transport. With its strong production base and ideal location, the region can significantly enhance its rail capabilities. The CGA's initiatives and collaboration among citrus producers will be key in meeting anticipated transport demands.

Rail Runner Africa MD Mike Daniel highlighting the importance of efficient transport solutions for agricultural growth



Vision 260 highlights Loskop Valley as an area of significant promise for citrus production.

