

Citrus Information Day LIMPOPO

Information days are an important contributor to growers' know-how and viability. By Princess Mogale



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Growers' sustainable development hinges heavily on regular dialogue with stakeholders and with each other.

Over the years, the Citrus Growers' Association Grower Development Company (CGA-GDC) and the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (LDARD) have cultivated a relationship focused on providing grower support through combined efforts. A product of these efforts are the quarterly study groups and annual information days, held across the various citrus growing regions within Limpopo. This

collaboration has been cemented through an active Memorandum of Understanding, wherein the strategic goals of both the CGA-GDC and the Department are highlighted.

Last year, the Limpopo Province Information Day was held on 4 September at Ga-Rawesi community hall in the Capricorn District. This area falls under the Onderberg citrus producing region. The event was run by the citrus industry technical committee, comprising members of the CGA-GDC and officials from the LDARD, who also provided grower transport.

In attendance were potential funders and financiers, such as the Land Bank and Standard Bank. The attending marketers discussed opportunities in alternative markets, like processing and juicing.

Other topics of discussion included:

- technical information
- finance
- compliance
- capacity building.



Farmers in attendance

Key takeaways from the programme

My presentation focused on the monitoring and evaluation platform that the organisation uses to manage and monitor grower information. The platform uses tree census data and production information to determine the profile of each entity, the province, region and the overall database. This assists the GDC to effectively seek and allocate the necessary support.

Lukhanyo Nkombisa, general manager of the CGA-GDC, spoke briefly on the strategic goals of the company and how they are aligned with especially grower production support. He further reiterated the dedication of the CGA-GDC towards helping to strengthen growers' viability, and achieving the objectives as set in the transformation strategy, which aligns with the government's agenda for an inclusive sector of job creation.

Pheladi Tlomatsane is a grower and chamber member. She gave an overview of growers' prevailing needs within a growing, capital-intensive industry. She also highlighted some of the challenges that growers experience regarding access to funding and reliable markets. "As growers, we must be prepared for the good and the bad in this challenging environment," she said.

In 2024, the Limpopo Province recorded a total of 36 growers and 2 821 ha of planted land (Table 1).

Sam Louw is the stakeholder engagement manager at the Citrus Academy, responsible for grower training and identification of skills gaps. He discussed programmes and developments within the Citrus Academy, including a newly launched programme that grants growers access to free training in certain courses. He encouraged growers to make use of the opportunities by visiting the Academy website at www.ca.org.za.

Lenka Chitja of the Land Bank presented a talk on blended finance schemes available to citrus growers across all provinces. He highlighted that the current structural financing challenges continue to hinder the ability of black producers to access funding. Hence,

Table 1: Limpopo total area under cultivation in 2024

Commodity	Non-bearing	Bearing	Full bearing	Consider replacement	Grand total
Clementine	-	15	-	-	15
Grapefruit	9	63	454	-	526
Kumquat	-	-	-	4	4
Lemons and limes	131	169	110	161	571
Mandarin	49	59	58	-	167
Navel	15	46	139	104	303
Satsuma	-	4	-	-	4
Valencia	76	120	974	62	1232
Total	280	475	1736	330	2821

The CGA-GDC and LDARD have cultivated a relationship focused on providing grower support through combined efforts.



Pheladi Tlomatsane, grower and chamber member



Lukhanyo Nkombisa
GM of CGA-GDC

the government has devised mechanisms to unlock financing opportunities.

The profiles of farms in the province range from small communally-owned entities to joint ventures and robust public-private-community partnerships. Beyond farming, most of these entities provide vehicles to support food-security initiatives and community upliftment.

The Limpopo Province is a primary production hub for high-value agricultural commodities like citrus, with its high growth potential.

The province grows a diversity of cultivars with harvesting periods spread throughout the season. The CGA-GDC and the DARD lead interventions to integrate historically disadvantaged farmers into the mainstream industry economy. To this end, they address value chain structural barriers to attain a re-imagined industrialisation in the agriculture and agro-processing sectors. ▶

