



FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (065/09)

Justin Chadwick (13 February 2009)

Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "I'm not telling you it is going to be easy – I'm telling you it's going to be worth it" Art Williams
PACKHOUSE WORKSHOPS

Those in the market in 2008 tell us that the biggest cause of waste (some say 80%) was due to blue and green mould. Research survey on packhouses countrywide done by CRI and Stellenbosch University show that 90% of the packhouses sampled had less than a ¼ of the required post harvest product used to control blue and green mould on the fruit. So we have the tools to sort these problems out – but they are not being used correctly. Does it make sense for growers to pour millions into research every year when the recommendations from that research are so clearly ignored by those who the research is aimed at assisting? I must admit to being perplexed as to why these recommendations are being ignored. It could be a fear of exceeding the MRL for that plant protection product – but the recommended usage actually results in an MRL that is 40% of the permitted levels. It could be a cost factor – but believe me the costs associated with wastage in 2008 far exceed the costs of abiding by the recommendations. It must be really disappointing for Keith Lesar and others who spend their time advising and assisting packhouse personnel to hear of this disregard for best practices. The only upside that I see to this story is that at least the tools still work, and that the mould was not as a result of the PPP not working. Those who are unsure of the guidelines for packhouse practices can contact Keith Lesar (keithlesar@cri.co.za) to get the necessary information.

Another interesting presentation was that on air flow, cartons and pallets. There are still some packhouses/exporters who believe that they actually save something by purchasing sub standard cartons and pallets. The recommendations in terms of specifications for packaging material is being compiled into one document – once available it will be on the web.

The workshops were also updated on the procedures that will be in place in 2009 for phytosecurity. These procedures and regulations are being finalized by Department of Agriculture. As soon as they are confirmed by DoA they will be distributed within the industry and placed on the CGA website.

I am sure those who attended the packhouse workshops will agree that they are essential as we prepare for the forthcoming season. The topics are all well presented and relevant. Feedback so far is that the workshops have been well attended – so hopefully there will be more compliance with recommendations in the future. For those in the Western Cape there is still an opportunity to attend as the last workshop is scheduled for Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 February at Villa Via Hotel in Gordon's Bay.

VARIETY FOCUS GROUPS AND CITRUS MARKETING FORUM (CMF)

On the 24th February the variety focus groups (VFG) will meet at Willow Park Conference Centre near Joburg airport. This is an important meeting as we finalise estimated volumes for 2009 and discuss the forthcoming season. All regions are invited to have a representative on the 5 VFG's, this years members have been chosen by the regions via electronic means as the first meeting is before the CGA road shows (in the past members were elected at the road shows).

	Boland	W Cape	Patensie	E Cape Midlands	Sundays River	Nelspruit	Letsitele	Hartswater	Senwes
Soft Citrus	Stefan Bruwer	Martli Slabber	Martina Odendaal	Jock Danckwerts	Johnny Ferreira	A J Esser	Bryan Offer		
Navel		Gabrie van Eeden	Phillip Dempsey	Lew Roberts	Pieter Nortje	Graham Piner	Ben Vorster	Danie Mathewson	Kallie Schoeman
Lemons	Richard Allen	Rikus Groenewald	Phillip Dempsey	Das de Villiers	Jan Alberts	Piet Kieviet	Jacques Nel		Wim Engelbrecht
Valencia		Stiaan Engelbrecht	Ian Grieb		Deon Joubert	Andrew Muller	Barend Vorster		Ista Upton
Grapefruit					Pieter Nortje				

	Onderberg	Oranje Rivier	Hoedspruit	Limpopo River	Southern KZN	Swaziland	Zimbabwe	Pongola	Nkwalini
Lemon			Gert Bezuidenhout	Peter Nicholson	Peter Button				
Grapefruit	Charlie van Veyeren	Kobus van Zyl	Kobus van Staden	Danie Erasmus		Per Noddeboe		Antoine Rouillard	Tim Wafer
Valencia	Cornel van der Merwe	Kobus van Zyl	Fanie Meyer	Peter Nicholson	Klonkie Claassen	Per Noddeboe			Shane Dellis

This year's citrus crop is the most expensive ever produced – as input prices peaked during the setting of the fruit. At the same time this year's markets look to be the most difficult for some time. This makes the first CMF meeting on 25th Feb at Willow Park Conference centre an important opportunity to plan for 2009. The plan is to spend the first hour or two looking at how the markets may perform in 2009 – looking at what we expect to have available for export in 2009 and trying to determine guidelines for those marketing the crop. So put that date in your diary – and plan to be involved for a whole day on the 25th February. For directions and an agenda contact Gloria at 0317652514 or Gloria@cga.co.za. The agenda will also be on the web www.cga.co.za.

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