



FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (13/09)

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Citrus Growers Association (CGA)

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "America has not led but fled on the issue of global warming" John Kerry

CELEBRATE SUCCESS: JOHAN BOTHA AND HIS MEN IN PAJAMA'S GIVING THE AUSSIES TWO HIDINGS IN T20 CRICKET. LET'S HOPE THE 50 OVER TEAM DO AS WELL.

CLIMATE CHANGE

CGA and CRI have joined with other fruit sector bodies (DFPT, SATI, SubTrops and FPEF) and the wine industry in a study entitled "Confronting Climate Change". Funding comes from these industry bodies, as well as the Post Harvest Innovation Fund (PHI), National Agricultural Marketing Council and the ComMark Trust.

The first part of the study is to communicate on climate change to all stakeholders. An informative document has been developed. A summary of this document has been sent by e-mail to all growers, while the full document (only 18 pages long) has been posted on www.cga.co.za. I would recommend this document as good reading to better understand the climate change debate.

The most significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) is land use change – degeneration and deforestation. This dwarfs all other emissions in its magnitude – and is equivalent to the total emitted by all global transport. The second highest are from nitrous oxide emissions from mismanaged and over fertilized soils. There follows methane emissions from livestock farming, biomass burning, rice production, fertilizer production, irrigation and farm machinery. The second part of the study will be to develop a standardized industry carbon footprinting protocol and tool. Individual growers will be able to do their own carbon footprint calculations on a web based program.

The final part of the study will be the development of a climate change response and industry strategic framework. This will allow industry to respond to threats and opportunities.

PACKAGING MATERIAL 2009

I have been informed of growers/packers who are purchasing sub standard packaging from the centre of the country (cheetah's region). Now as poorly as the cheetah's rugby side has performed, so people say is their packaging material. And growers face a further problem – PPECB will reject fruit packed in these sub standard cartons. The relevant section in the Agricultural Products Standards Act reads as follow:

" Containers, excluding bulk containers, in which citrus fruits are packed shall --

(i) be suitable, clean, dry and undamaged;(ii) not impart a foreign taste or odour or any substance which may be injurious to human health;; (iii) be free from any visible signs of fungus growth;(iv)be free from Arthropoda infestation; and (v) be strong and rigid enough to ensure that the original shape be retained and not bulge out, dent in, break or tear, to the extent that citrus fruit are damaged or are at risk of being damaged, during normal storage, handling or transport.

So best get yourself a copy of the packaging guidelines (members section of www.cga.co.za), which gives all the specifications for PROPER cartons and other packaging material. And the problem does not stop with cartons – apparently a lot of timber that would have gone to the mines is now ending up as sub standard pallets. This is not a good year to be experimenting with new suppliers.

STERILE INSECT TECHNOLOGY

After some teething problems in 2007/8 the FCM sterile insect company XSIT has hit its stride in 2008/9. A recently released report shows the trap counts from 2007/8 versus those of 2008/9. Orchards in the treated area have minimal wild FCM catches, while those not treated continue to have higher catches. The levels are significantly lower than those recorded in the same orchards a year ago. It seems that this technology works; trial work is commencing in Letsitele. The ultimate goal is to roll the SIT program out over all citrus growing regions.

PACKED CITRUS - 2009

Its still all about lemons and satsumas; roughly ½ million cartons of lemons and 300 000 cartons of sats packed to date. Of this 140 000 cartons of lemons have been shipped (mostly to Middle East) and 90 000 cartons of Satsuma (mostly to UK). With Easter approaching at the end of next week a few packhouses will start in week 14; but most will start in week 15 (with the bulk of the grapefruit getting going). April is going to be a fairly disruptive month with each week containing a public holiday.

FPT DURBAN WORKING HOURS - EASTER WEEKEND

FPT Durban has announced that the terminal will be open on Saturday 11 April 2009 from 07h00 to 17h00, but closed on 10th, 12th and 13th April. Anyone needing to contact the terminal in this regard can do so on 0836756472.

PPECB PRE SEASON MEETINGS

PPECB is half way through their pre season meetings, where the main topic is the official citrus protocol. Meetings are still to be held in Durban (Jewish Club 10h30 On Monday 20 April), Nkwalini (Farmers Hall, 21st April) and Paarl/Cape Town (29 April).

YOUR LEVY WORKING FOR YOU – GROWER LEVIES ARE USED TO FUND THE ACTIVITIES OF CGA, CRI AND THE CITRUS ACADEMY