

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (15/10)

Justin Chadwick (16 April 2010)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK *"Thanks to the Interstate Highway System, it is now possible to travel from coast to coast without seeing anything."* **Charles Kuralt**

JAPAN

The Japanese authorities (MAFF) have accepted that South African exporters and authorities have the ability to manage phytosecurity and stepped down their pre clearance program. Whereas in the past a Japanese inspector was resident throughout the citrus export season, this year the inspector will be here to get the season started and thereafter South African authorities will be responsible to ensure that protocols are followed. What this does mean is that exporters will need to be extra vigilant in following protocol requirements, there will no longer be a Japanese presence to sort out little glitches like jammed printers or typing errors. These will now have to be cleared by correspondence with Japan. Obviously this change will save some charges for the pre clearance program.

In addition MAFF has also agreed that the 24 hour empty deck testing is no longer required. This after submission of information from shipping lines, DAFF and other industry bodies and requests from CGA and the South African embassy in Tokyo. This will save a full day that ships used to spend in port, which will save costs for the shipping lines (which has already been passed through to the exporter in the form of lower rates).

The Japanese coordination group has been meeting since the beginning of April – with Sandra Baetsen contracted by the Grapefruit Focus Group (GFG) to manage the process. In order to improve on the coordination it has been proposed to include as much container information as possible in the planning.

RAILING CITRUS

One trainload of citrus can remove about 36 trucks from our roads – imagine how many of these trucks could be removed from roads if more citrus moved to rail. Approximately 50,000 citrus truck trips are made through to the Durban port each year and in terms of the carbon footprint reductions can be made quickly by moving to rail. At this week's Transport Budget Debate the state of our roads was highlighted – with most roads exceeding their original lifespan and a huge maintenance backlog. Those who only travel within cities and on national roads linking cities would not have been exposed to the disintegration of secondary and rural roads. However, they would have been exposed to the growing number of heavy vehicles on the national roads, and the growing number of lane closures and detours as the destruction from these heavy road vehicles is repaired. Mitchell Brooke has just returned from a visit to growers and packhouses in the Letsitele area – where he was accompanied by Transnet Freight Rail (TFR) executives. There is a huge amount of interest in rail as it is clearly more effective to clear the packhouse floor, likely to be less costly and COULD be more efficient. And TFR have recognized how to make it work as well, and are aware that rail will be utilized if cost and efficiencies are GUARANTEED. It is imperative that citrus trains are given priority from loading station to receiving point – as delays in transit cannot be considered. Citrus trains must reach the ports and be offloaded in the shortest time possible to allow the rolling stock to go back to the loading station. For now the focus is up north in Letsitele and Hoedspruit, where the greatest opportunities and benefits can be quickly deployed – other areas can also use rail but the industry needs to have the assurance that rail will deliver. Congestion on the roads and around the port environment is expected during the FIFA World Cup and growers should use this opportunity to fast track the move to rail.

**GROWERS' FUND THEIR FUTURE THROUGH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CITRUS
GROWERS' ASSOCIATION, CITRUS ACADEMY AND CITRUS RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL**