

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (21/11)

Justin Chadwick (3 June 2011)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK "Against logic there is no armour like ignorance" Lawrence Peter

FOOD SAFETY

Before this week the names shiga-toxin E-coli (STEC) or EHEC were probably unknown to most people in Europe – the tragic deaths of consumers of fresh produce in Germany has thrown this bacteria into the spotlight, and raised some serious question;

Has Traceability Failed: Some time has passed since the first case was reported, and yet the source of contamination still has not been found. The purpose of traceability is to be able to trace back to the source of contamination as quickly as possible so as to prevent further distribution of contaminated product, and trace forward from the contaminated source so as to recall any suspected contaminated product. Media reports are that trace back was done erroneously to certain suppliers, who have now suffered extreme financial losses as a result. It leads to the conclusion that traceability back to the source of the product (original supplier) seems to work; but trace back to the source of contamination does not. So as authorities and industry come to grips with this problem, please do not impose additional traceability requirements and costs on the producer; get it right throughout the chain.

Caught in the Crossfire: In war times one talks about "collateral damage" – innocent people killed as a result of being caught up in the crossfire. Unfortunately this incident has also resulted in collateral damage – the suppliers incorrectly identified as the source of contamination have lost significant business and their reputation has been tarnished, the price of the product has dropped from Euro 0.20 to Euro 0.05 per item; so all producers of that product have been impacted. In fact the entire vegetable sector will be impacted as consumers react to the outbreak. It is reported that Russia has ceased all imports of vegetables from the EU – more collateral damage.

Spotlight in the EU on Bacterial contamination: EU concerns with regard to food safety have largely been concentrated on the use of chemicals in the production and preparation of fresh produce, and the setting of appropriate MRL's. In the US the spotlight has been more on bacterial contamination which gained momentum after the "spinach crisis" (when consumers died from consuming contaminated spinach). It is likely that this outbreak will concentrate minds on bacterial contamination and suppliers would do well to ensure that all checks and balances are in place to ensure food safety. Present food quality and food safety protocols in place in the sector should ensure safe food.

Where were the NGO's: Many NGO's claim to be gatekeepers with regard to food safety. They take part in attention seeking capers to raise awareness about unfounded food safety concerns, but when a real crisis emerges they are nowhere to be found. Instead of chasing shadows should they not have been aware of these real dangers? As self imposed gatekeepers they have failed to identify this risk and need to take some responsibility. Instead of sensation seeking they should be working with supply chains to identify REAL risks and working with stakeholders to rectify them.

Case Study: There is a great deal of speculation as to where contamination occurred – with many identifying either the transport or during preparation in the importing country as the source. It is vitally important that the full results of where and how the contamination occurred be shared with all in the fresh produce supply chain. In that way all supply chains can take measures to prevent a reoccurrence in the future.

Suppliers Demands: Primary producers (suppliers) in the fresh produce sector are required to meet a raft of requirements from those further up the supply chain (mostly importers and retailers) in order to ensure food safety. Is it not time that primary producers demand that those further down the supply chain report back to them as to how they are handling the produce, after all it seems that the primary producer is hardest hit by a food safety scare. Service providers can move to handling a different product, retailers find an alternative source or competing product; but the primary producer is left with unwanted product, and in some case an unjustified tarnished image.

CITRUS MARKETING FORUM (CMF)

Remember the date; 22 June 2011 at Willow Park Conference Centre, from 10h00 to 15h00 (with lunch provided for all those who rsvp to gloria@cga.co.za).

PACKED AND SHIPPED 2011

To Week 21 Million 15 Kg Cartons	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original Estimate	Latest Prediction	Final Packed	Final Shipped
SOURCE: PPECB	2009	2010	2011	2010	2011	2011	2011	2010	2010
Grapefruit	6.7 m	6.1 m	7.1 m	4.1 m	5.4 m	14.7m	14.8m	12.5m	12.2m
Soft Citrus	3.2 m	4.2 m	3.6 m	2.2 m	2.8 m	7.9m	7.4m	7.5m	7.1m
Lemons	3 m	4.7 m	3.6 m	3 m	2.8 m	9.8m	9.7m	9.6m	9.4m
Navels	3.9 m	5.6 m	4.3 m	2.9 m	2.4 m	19.4m	19.1m	22.9m	22.6m
Valencia	-	-	-	-	-	42.9m	42.8m	46.5m	45.9m
	16.8 m	20.6 m	18.6 m	12.2 m	13.4 m	94.7m	94.2m	99m	97.2m

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