

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (46/11)

Justin Chadwick (25 November 2011)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK *"As I grow older, I regret to say that a detestable habit of thinking seems to be getting a hold of me"* H Rider Haggard

CITRUS GROWERS ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

After three years at the helm Fanie Viljoen (Letsitele) stepped down as Chairman of CGA due to business reasons. At yesterday's Board meeting Pieter Nortje (Sundays River) was elected as Chairman, Piet Smit (Western Cape) was elected as Vice Chairman. Continuity on the Executive Committee was ensured by the election of the remaining three members – Hoppie Nel (Onderberg), Graham Piner (Nelspruit) and George Hall (Boland). The outgoing Chairman paid tribute to five CGA Board members who had served for over ten years on the CGA Board – Peter Nicholson (Limpopo River), Herman Malan (Patensie), Hoppie Nel, Antoine Rouillard (Pongola) and the late Eddie Ueckermann (KZN Midlands).

Apart from the election of CGA representatives on various boards, committees and bodies, the other important matter of business was approval of the research budget for 2012/13. This has to be concluded in November so that research projects can be commissioned and the necessary personnel and students aligned for the start of 2012. The research budget goes through a thorough and transparent process including the identification of research priorities (by growers, export agents, packhouse managers and other stakeholders), consideration of research proposals by committees consisting of experts in the fields of crop load and fruit quality, pest and disease management, and cultivars and rootstocks; acceptance by the CRI Board and final approval by the CGA Board. The research budget was approved by the CGA Board.

In December 2012 the present levy period comes to an end. As a result the CGA Board is already giving consideration to the next levy cycle (2013 to 2016). Since the levy application is subject to a long government process, it is advisable that the application is submitted to the NAMC at the end of March 2012. The CGA Board agreed on a process that would ensure sufficient time for consideration and feedback from ALL growers. Before 15 December growers would be sent a document outlining what could be included in a new levy application. Feedback would be requested to reach CGA before mid January; this would then be taken under consideration by the CGA Board. Taking all feedback into account, and after deliberation by the CGA Board, a levy proposal will be taken to the CGA regional roadshows (last two week of February). Feedback from the roadshows would then be included in a final application that would be approved by the CGA Board in March 2012.

A short précis of the CGA Board meeting will be sent out to all CGA members within the next few days.

CITRUS RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Deon Joubert (Sundays River) and Fanie Meyer (Hoedspruit) join Louis von Broembsen, Hoppie Nel, Kobus de Kok and Piet Smit (Letsitele) as grower representatives on the CRI Board.

This year marks ten years of existence for the CRI – celebrated at an event in Nelspruit on Wednesday evening. Four of the founding Board of CRI were still on the Board some ten years later – Jock Dankwerts, Hoppie Nel, Org van Rensburg (ARC) and Chris Kellerman (SASSCON).

The buildings that CRI accommodate were specifically designed and built for citrus research in 1973 (on land donated by the late Dennis Solomon) – this means that citrus research has been conducted there for the past 38 years!! At the function on Wednesday guests were reminded of our rich research heritage with a slide show showcasing those who have dedicated their lives to the industry – including youthful (and somewhat grainy) pictures of Faan van Vuuren who has spent 51 years in the industry; and is STILL at CRI !!!! Fortunately the future of research looks good – with many young bucks ready and willing to take the challenge. Those who travel to citrus industries abroad will agree that the Southern African industry is based on its technical expertise – in selection of cultivars and rootstocks, in orchard layout and irrigation, in pest and disease management, in harvesting and packing, in transport, warehousing and packing. The tour around the Nelspruit facility was an excellent reminder of where most of this technology has been developed; and a comforting message that it is still in good hands.

To all CRI Directors and Staff – congratulations on being ten years young. Many CGA Directors were meeting the staff and having a look at the facility for the first time – they were impressed with the level of professionalism, energy, passion and integrity displayed by the CRI staff as well as the extent of the research infrastructure that underpins this industry.

PMA CAREER FAIR

The PMA (Produce Marketing Association) has established both capacity (Marianne van der Laarse) and a Country Council in South Africa. One of the objectives of the Country Council is to attract new talent into the perishable products industry (broadly speaking perishable products include fruit, nuts, salads, vegetables and flowers). Marianne organized a very successful career day at the University of Pretoria (UP). The objective was to expose first year BSc students to the career opportunities that exist in the perishable industries. The Citrus Academy had a stand at the fair, as did many other companies and entities operating in the fruit industries. It was a very successful initiative, and planning is underway for similar events at other Universities in 2012, and a follow up event at UP. It is interesting to note that UP have their own initiative aimed at encouraging school children to study agriculture at the University – called "Young Tuks" the program targets high school children studying maths and science.

**GROWERS LEVIES ARE USED TO FUND CGA, CRI AND CITRUS ACADEMY ACTIVITIES.
ENSURING A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITRUS INDUSTRY**