

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (7/12)

Justin Chadwick (24 February 2012)

MAKES YOU THINK "I was thrown out of college for cheating on the metaphysics exam; I looked into the soul of the boy sitting next to me - Woody Allen "

FEEDBACK FROM ROADSHOWS

Paul Hardman and his team have now completed their two weeks of road shows, and reported as follows: "Paul Hardman, Robert Miller, Mitchell Brooke (all CGA), Vaughan Hattingh (CRI) and Colleen Chennells (Fruit South Africa) visited the Eastern Cape this week. Grower turn-out was excellent and debate and exchange of views robust – some meetings went well over three hours. In terms of the considerations around the Enhanced Services proposal all three growing regions were in support of the increase in the levy, recognizing the future challenges facing the citrus industry and the need to resource up for this. Concerns were also noted, effectively for the CGA group to remain focussed, to be relevant and efficient in the services provided.

It was stated more than once that the value CGA members obtain from the services provided by the CGA group is enormous, and the ROI especially high when compared to other costs within the supply chain.

What was also very pleasing was the interest shown by growers to participate in the Carbon Footprinting exercise – some regions indicating they want all the growers to go through the process of getting their data on the system. This will really help to build a reliable reference point that can be used to engage with trading partners. Colleen's presentation on the Sustainability Initiative of South African (SIZA) programme also generated good interest and showed the great progress being made in this area. When the inevitable request to have an ethical trade audit is put to growers, you will find the information on SIZA most helpful (see www.fruitsa-ethical.org.za).

My team included Keith Danckwerts (River Bioscience), Jonathan Roberts (CGA Cultivar Company), Jacomien de Klerk and Candice Sydenham (Citrus Academy), Lukhanyo Nkombisa and John Edmonds (CGA) – and we headed north. We learnt fairly quickly that citrus likes good, hot weather as we experienced temperatures of 40 plus, before ending up with a good dousing in Zimbabwe. From this trip one can conclude that the growing sector of the citrus industry is in excellent condition – although growers in Letsitele commented that they needed more rain (when is a farmer ever completely content). We were privileged to get an opportunity of seeing Letsitele from the air, and what was noticeable was that all the dams are full and the river is flowing strongly (with the dam at Tzaneen spilling over at the moment). But it is not always like this, and we were shown the site of the new dam which will assist growers in providing secure water in the future. In Hoedspruit the situation is a little different – the river and canals are running strongly, but the January floods destroyed many dams and affected irrigation infrastructure.

In all regions growers were appreciative of the work of the CGA and its associate companies. In particular there was a lot of interest and support for the newly created cultivar company. The Citrus Academy was commended for the training DVD's – with a request for a DVD on pruning. At the end of February a Citrus Harvesting DVD will be posted to all growers. One area that was coming up short is communication – with growers requesting more feedback on how their research priorities are being addressed and what progress is being made. Regions agreed that the present services and enhanced services are necessary – but asked that the Board take into consideration the difficult season experienced in 2011, which is anticipated will continue in 2012.

One of the learning experiences from the roadshow was the border crossing at Beit Bridge into Zimbabwe. Both the South African and Zimbabwean governments should hang their heads in shame for creating the bed of corruption, inefficiency and despair that is Beit Bridge border post. If it was not for a facilitator who helped us with the procedures we could easily have spent five hours or more each way at the border. The long winding queues ensure that there is a thriving business for backhands as those with resources and connections get processed quicker, while those without sit sweltering in the African sun – being poor is not fun in Africa.

ROADSHOWS NEXT WEEK

With Paul finished it's just my team that heads south on Monday. In the afternoon (27/2) we are in Citrusdal at 14h00 for the Western Cape meeting at Goedehoop Offices; Tuesday 28/2 09h00 is the Boland region meeting at ARC Infruitec; then we depart to Upington to hold the Oranje Rivier meeting at 16h30 at Lake Grappe (29/2). We finish at Hartswater on 1/3 at 14h00 for the Vaalharts regions – the venue is Die Voordeur.

Hannes Bester and his team have packhouse workshops planned for next week - 28-29/2 Western Cape, Villa Via Hotel, Gordon's Bay. For more information on how to register and the agenda etc. please contact

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**GROWER FUNDED ACTIVITIES OF THE CGA, CRI AND CITRUS ACADEMY
ENSURE A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITRUS INDUSTRY**