

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (13/13)

Justin Chadwick (29 March 2013)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK “Have no fear of perfection – you’ll never reach it” Salvador Dali

SUNDAYS RIVER VALLEY

I must get out into the country more often – what a pleasure to drive through the Sundays River Valley and get a wave from every farmer in their bakkies; as opposed to the grumpy looks from fellow drivers in the city. Visitors to the valley must feel really welcome, as the inhabitants of the valley make everybody feel at home. And the hospitality continued into the evening at the gala evening organized by Agri Kirkwood under the stewardship of Deon Joubert. Over 300 attended the evening as the Unifrutti Packhouse was transformed into a top class dinner venue – well done to all those who worked their butts off to provide an opportunity for all to have a really good evening; those who decorated the venue, those responsible for a delicious meal and Deon for putting it all together. And talk about “‘n boer maak ‘n plan” – as the guest speaker (Prof Nick Vink) got up to speak the electricity went off. No problem (nuwe plan) – get a torch, get everybody closer and carry on. But Prof Nick’s lecturing skills and vocal chords were stretched to the limit as the heavens opened (the first rain since Christmas) and the clatter on the metal roof of the Packhouse eventually drowned him out. No problem (nuwe plan) – get a generator and make sure the microphone and digital projector work – and so the show goes on.

Prof Vink had some interesting insights in terms of where agriculture is going – with some very positive indicators. One of his messages was the importance of adding value to your product. He showed some figures from the wine industry, if I remember correctly wine farmers who sell their wine for R30 a bottle make 54 cents a bottle. However farmers that sell their wine for R250 a bottle make R113 a bottle (and R200+ for a bottle is not unusual, in fact when I woke up this morning I realized I had bought a bottle from a shady auctioneer at the gala dinner for that amount!!). Many citrus growers have found ways to differentiate their product – such as taking the risk of getting in first with new varieties, or making sure that reliability of supply is better than competitors, or that packaging is better. There are ways to differentiate your product, packaging and your supply chain – which could mean a premium being earned.

The Prof also gave some interesting insights into the labour issues in the Western Cape, and labour trends over time. At the peak labour use (mid 60’s I think) over 1.6 million were employed in agriculture, this number is now between 600 and 800 000. This is what guides government in aiming for 1 million additional jobs in agriculture. But unfriendly labour policies make this unlikely.

Government support and spending on agriculture also make interesting reading. In the past (especially in the 70’s) government spent considerably in supporting agriculture – mostly on conservation (building dams, windmills, building contours etc). This spending on conservation has dropped to almost zero. Prof Vink suggests that this could have an influence on agricultural production in the future.

So as the Sundays River differentiates itself in terms of friendliness to visitors to the valley – I am sure everybody will score as visitors want to come back, tell their friends about the hospitality and ensure that another element of the valleys economy (tourism) grows.

COOL LOGISTICS CONFERENCE

Cool Logistics Africa is the only event that brings together perishable producers, exporters, importers and retailers with shipping lines, logistics providers, ports, cold store operators and other key stakeholders for “360 degree debate” on Africa’s cold chain efficiency.

- Prospects for the 2013 Southern Africa fruit export season: shipping capacity, rates and citrus blackpot
- What are the options for developing sustainable pricing of Africa’s fruit export logistics?
- What does retailer direct buying mean for African perishable producers and the supply chain?
- What is the outlook for expanding Africa’s perishables trade with the Middle East and India?
- Labour, investment and regulation in the South African agri-sector
- Infrastructure investment prospects for Africa and the perishables sector
- Challenges in managing the “cold” in the cold chain - and some solutions

These are just a few of the priority issues to be addressed at Cool Logistics Africa 2013, taking place just ahead of the critical Southern Africa citrus export season: **16-18 April 2013 | Vineyard Hotel & Spa | Cape Town, South Africa**. **SPECIAL CONFERENCE RATE FOR CGA MEMBERS:** CGA members are eligible for a **40% discount** on the standard delegate fee. Enter the discount code **CGAAfrica2013** when you book online at www.coollogisticsafrica.com/conference/register or contact helen@coollogisticsconference.com

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