

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (14/14)

Justin Chadwick (18 April 2014)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK “Competence, like truth, beauty and contact lenses, is in the eye of the beholder”

Laurence J Peter

Best wishes for a blessed and peaceful Easter.

NTOMBI MSIMANG

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of Ntombi Msimang this past week. Ntombi was a true agriculturist; her role as Chairman of the National Agricultural Marketing Council meant that she touched the lives of many of us in the agricultural sector. Her ability to unite people and see the common good will be sorely missed. We wish her family and friends strength as we all mourn a great leader.

SUSTAINABLE FRUIT INITIATIVE (SFI)

This past week Shelly Fuller of WWF SA gave the Fruit South Africa Board feedback on the SFI. She recapped the key goal of the initiative - *To develop a locally relevant and internationally recognized environmental framework for the South African fruit industry to support the achievement of environmentally sustainable fruit farming – the third pillar complimenting the ethical and economic components of sustainable business practice.*

THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH: ☐ The SFI resource provides a systematic framework to assess, identify and prioritize environmental risk from which an appropriate environmental management plan can be developed to reduce these risks going forward. ☐ The process is designed to encourage and support a process of learning and continuous improvement through regional working groups and shared experiences. ☐ The end result can be validated and used to proactively communicate the environmental management actions and strategies to retailers, end-consumers and other stakeholders.

STRUCTURE & CONTENT: The content covers four environmental categories – water, energy/materials, soil, and farm ecosystem, and is structured in a logical system comprised of the GOAL, the PRINCIPLES necessary to achieve the Goal, and the CRITERIA consistent with the fulfilment of each Principle. The lowest level of the hierarchy is the INDICATORS, which are objective measures or metrics intended to help infer the status or health of the criteria and high-level principles. The set of proposed indicators are very important in that they provide the feedback through which growers can identify environmental risks or shortcomings, track the progress of specific interventions, and to help in the identification of those practices that support the achievement of ecologically sustainable farming (as well as to identify those which are not).

The following resources were used as references for the content and structure: the WWF Living Farms reference, Global Social Compliance Programme's (GSCP) Environmental reference tool, Global Gap, Woolworths Farming for the Future, Tesco's Nuture and the relevant South African legislation. The end goal is that the SFI framework will go through a GSCP equivalence process to enhance the international credibility of the locally developed measurement and reporting process – that it will become the one-stop-shop for all environmental auditing requirements.

Pilot projects have been running in the Western and Eastern Cape.

FEEDBACK TO DATE: The SFI framework was originally designed as a guidance resource and self-assessment tool rather than a compliance standard. However through the feedback from the pilots there is strong support for this to be development as a Framework that can be independently validated. The validation framework will be structured in such a way so as to encourage progress from the more basic elements, to the more advanced ecosystem wide elements.

There is also strong recognition of the need for a scientifically rigorous environmental programme, particularly one that can converge with existing market access and compliance programmes such as SIZA, Farming for the Future etc. in order to streamline the auditing process, reduce the costs and avoid duplication of effort.

In addition, a standard that has industry-wide endorsement will enhance the reputational benefits for the products from South Africa and facilitate trading relations between key export countries.

NEXT STEPS: WWF SA remains committed to resourcing the SFI project until completion of the Draft Standard due at end September in line with end of current funding cycle. Thereafter Fruit South Africa will need to decide on the way forward. This will involve formalised industry endorsement, formation of a governance structure and funding (with likely co-funding from WWF SA).

**GROWERS' ENSURE A COMPETITIVE AND SUSTAINABLE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITRUS INDUSTRY BY
FUNDING AND GUIDING THE CGA GROUP (CRI; CITRUS ACADEMY; CGACC; RB AND XSIT)**