

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (07/18)

(Follow me on Twitter [justchad_cga](#))

Justin Chadwick 16 February 2018



“Let your food be your medicine, and your medicine be your food” Hippocrates

SIZA

The Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA) now has 1 649 active members on its platform – with the majority (23.5%) from the citrus industry. This initiative was started by Fruit South Africa (of which the CGA is a founder member) and has since evolved into an independent company with its own Board and management. SIZA has come of age under the guidance of Retha Louw and her Board, ably led by Chairman Nigel Mudge. The initiative was started in order to address all labor related issues on fruit farms – growers wanted to ensure that they were not only in compliance with labor regulations, but also exposed to best practice in terms of labor relations. Laborers wanted to ensure that they are treated fairly and with dignity, while importers, retailers and other buyers wanted a mechanism to give them assurance that ethical standards were being met, government wanted to ensure that fruit farmers' practices were in line with the law while also empowering workers. SIZA has developed a number of programs that give these value chain partners the necessary assurances and drives improvement throughout the South African fruit industry.

SIZA recently prepared a report for CGA on the fourth quarter of 2017. This report highlighted activities of SIZA, and in particular how this related to the citrus sector. Of the 553 primary members (producers and packhouses), 201 are in the Eastern Cape and 197 are in the Western Cape (combined 72% of citrus total) – while 99 (18%) are from Limpopo and 31 (6%) are from Mpumalanga. There is clearly some work to be done in exposing growers in the north to the benefits of SIZA. If you want more information, please contact Retha Louw (retha@siza.co.za) or look at their website www.siza.co.za. If needed, information days can be arranged for those who want to learn more.

Although in the past SIZA has been concentrating on ethical standards, a lot of work has been done on developing an environmental standard. Due to pressure on growers to show compliance with generally accepted environmental standards, this development has been fast tracked. During 2017, the standard was benchmarked and gained a Gold Rating against one of the world's leading sustainability standards (SAI FSA). A Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) was developed, and to date 184 SIZA members have completed the SAQ.

A common concern from all southern hemisphere fruit exporters was expressed at the recent SHAFTE (Southern Hemisphere Association of Fresh Fruit Exporters) meeting in Berlin – the proliferation of retail and importer standards is a financial and administration burden that has the potential of putting many growers (and particularly smaller scale growers with limited resources) out of business. It is this focus towards one standard, one inspection, and one certification that drives SIZA. The more members that SIZA attracts, the more the company can develop programs and practices that meet the multiple standards that we see being launched. Interestingly, this is not just a southern hemisphere problem, at the Freshfel meeting similar concerns were expressed by those producers in Europe.