

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (11/19)

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Justin Chadwick 15 March 2019

“A good decision is based on knowledge and not on numbers” - Plato

RECORD YEAR FOR CITRUS EXPORTS

The citrus growers from Southern Africa will export a record crop of close to 137 million boxes of citrus fruit to more than 100 countries this year. The rise in exports should translate into job opportunities, more foreign exchange revenue and a growing economy.

The provisional export estimate was presented to the Citrus Marketing Forum – a body representing citrus growers and exporters. There have been no changes and this is now the official citrus crop estimate for southern Africa for 2019, after being signed off by the Citrus Marketing Forum today. The higher export crop represents an increase of 0.7% year-on-year. The citrus industry has enjoyed two record crops for the export market in succession. Last year's export crop yielded a revenue of nearly R19 billion. Total industry earnings (including processed and local market sales) exceeded R20 billion.

The interim results were announced at the CGA Citrus Summit held in Port Elizabeth over two days. Some 600 delegates, including citrus growers, economists and business people, attended this year's event. The main drivers of growth are in the soft citrus and lemon categories. However, the net growth in these categories is somewhat muted due to a 3% decline in Valencia oranges. Valencia oranges make up the biggest portion of the citrus export market at 39%, followed by navel oranges (20%), lemons (16%), soft citrus (13%) and grapefruit (12%). This increase is due to the resilience of the citrus industry and its ability to adapt to technological changes and overcome challenges.

Our local citrus industry is one of the country's most important fruit groups by value and volume. It yields a revenue of over R20 billion per year of which 92% comes from exports, and provides jobs to more than 100 000 people on farm, a further 20 000 in packing facilities and many more up and down the value chain.

CGA CITRUS SUMMIT

Thanks to all the delegates who attended the CGA Citrus Summit, and made it a truly citrus family affair. There was an incredible amount of positive energy at the venue. The delegates did not hear all good news, but they took it in their stride – the real threat of HLB (Asian Greening), the anticipated increase in shipping costs and the pressure on markets had all delegates sitting a bit straighter in their chairs.

There was much to celebrate – in the next three newsletters I will cover the highlight of the Summit; the announcement of the next three Citrus Legends. I will also cover some of the main messages and themes that came out of the discussions.

I would also like to thank all the speakers – brilliant presentations that nailed the subject matter perfectly. Thanks to all the sponsors – due to their generous contributions registration fees are kept ridiculously low.

And a BIG thank you to the CGA, CRI and Citrus Academy staff – who worked tirelessly over the week. The CGA Citrus Summit committee – Gloria, Paul, Jacomien, Robert, Shelly and Candice can be rightly proud of what was achieved.

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