

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (34/19)

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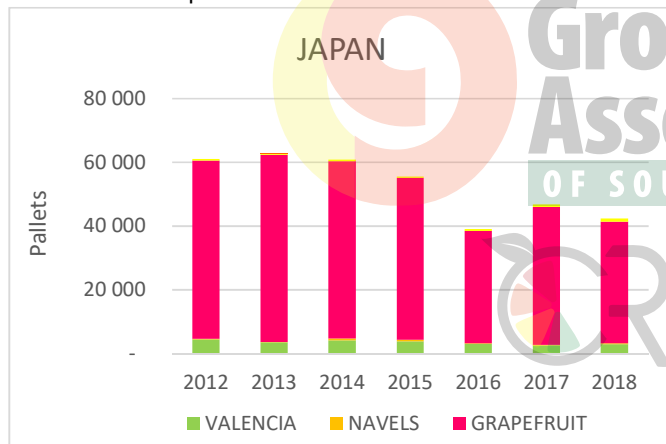
Justin Chadwick 30 August 2019

“At the end of the day it’s not about what you have, or even what you have accomplished. It’s about who you have lifted up, who you’ve made better. It’s about what you’ve given back” Denzel Washington

JAPAN

I remember a teacher who had been working at a school for twenty years telling me that he felt that he had one years’ experience repeated twenty times. That is why I enjoy working for the citrus industry – not only is one year completely different from the next, but each month, week and day is different. On a Monday I do not know whether my plans for the week will pan out. And so it was last week – on Monday we met with Minister Didiza and implored her to intervene in our market access applications by ensuring that trading partners had the political will to open, retain and optimise market access. The Minister asked if we would be prepared to be part of President Ramaphosa’s business delegation to Japan. The response – “If you ask us to accompany a Minister or the President tomorrow, we will be there”. Well, the President’s visit to Japan was this week, and the invitation from Minister Patel arrived on Wednesday. In two days the super-efficient Gloria Weare had all the documents together for a visa, flight and accommodation all booked. Department Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) organised a visa in six hours, Ministerial briefing papers were prepared and by Sunday I was on the flight to Japan.

It is not often that you get quality time with a Minister – on Tuesday evening a group of ten or so had a briefing session with Minister Patel. He was well briefed on the fruit industry – quoting facts and figures about the industry that he had recalled from previous interactions. He was very supportive of our requests, and had already briefed President Ramaphosa on the issues.



Japan is a very important grapefruit market – with a long history of South African grapefruits imports going back to the 1970’s. However, there is potential to increase the market for other citrus varieties. Since 2004, South Africa has had an application for a review of the protocol and the cold treatment requirements – the last submission by DAFF was in 2014; with no response from Japan MAFF since then. In addition – the Japanese have an unacceptable policy of requiring access applications per variety of soft citrus, despite international standards showing that there is no varietal

difference to treatments. The Japanese are one of the most ethical nations in the world – but here they have let themselves down. Despite losing a case at the WTO – they persist with this technical barrier to trade. This is also true for navel oranges – where some varieties are not permitted; and for table grapes where only the barlinka variety is permitted.

On Wednesday I had the opportunity of briefing President Ramaphosa about these issues, as well as avocado access which had been on the table since 2007. The President had been well briefed before the session – he clearly understood what is required and promised to take the matters up in his discussions with Prime Minister Abie. With over 250 000 EXTRA tonnes of soft citrus, and particularly premier late mandarins that will be very popular in Japan due to their vibrant colour and sweet taste, it is imperative that the soft citrus access list be widened. Addressing the cold treatment review will also allow a wider range of citrus to enter the Japanese market.

Million 15 Kg Cartons to end Week 34	Packed 2017	Packed 2018	Packed 2019	Shipped 2018	Shipped 2019	Original Estimate 2019	Latest Prediction 2019	Final Packed 2018
SOURCE: PPECB/AgriHub								
Grapefruit	15.4 m	18.2 m	15.7 m	16.4 m	13.9 m	17.1 m	15.7 m	18.8 m
Soft Citrus	12.5 m	14.8 m	16.8 m	13.5 m	14.8 m	18.3 m	18.9 m	16.2 m
Lemons	18.2 m	18.3 m	20.6 m	17.1 m	17.6 m	22 m	22.4 m	19.9 m
Navels	20.8 m	25.9 m	22.5 m	24.5 m	19.4 m	26.9 m	23.2 m	26.7 m
Valencia	36 m	32.3 m	30.9 m	22.8 m	21.1 m	52.9 m	47 m	54.4 m
Total	102.9 m	109.5m	106.5 m	94.3 m	86.8 m	137.2 m	127.2 m	136 m