

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (12/23)

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"Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens" Jimi Hendrix

CITRUS LEGEND – AREND VENTER

The 2023 CGA Citrus Summit had as its theme "Remembering our Roots, Forging our Future". There are few in the citrus industry that have deeper roots than this year's Summit Legend number two – Arend Venter. I spent a week trying to determine Arend's real name – only to find out that it is in fact, Arend.

Arend has dedicated his life to the citrus industry, and has made his mark through the regulated and deregulated eras. He started in the technical department of the Citrus Exchange back in 1964 (when I was five years old). In 1975 he was Operations Manager of the Local Marketing Department and in 1979 Assistant General Manager – this gave him a perspective on all aspects of the citrus industry.

After deregulation Arend joined Dole, taking with him his immense knowledge and network that gave them a jump on the competition. His knowledge of every citrus variety, his relationships with individuals both in the citrus sector and the wider agricultural sector and his keen eye for detail meant that Dole and its marketing plans went from strength to strength.

Arend was a workaholic, and expected all around him to be the same. Colleagues describe a typical day with Arend: Breakfast – black coffee; Morning meetings with growers; Lunch – no lunch; Afternoon – repeat of morning session; Late night – medium rare steak, red wine, double espresso; Overnight – remotest accommodation possible that was closest to his grower visits the next day; Late late night – recapping the day into his Dictaphone for his long suffering assistant to capture (she probably also should be a Legend). Travelling with Arend was risky. Most trips started at 5 in the morning.

Arend was a mentor to many – and those who he mentored still display his values of treating all with respect, hard work and building relations. He used to say that you can't be everything to everybody, somebody is bound to be upset with you – he was a realist.

As the industry emerged from the regulated era, Arend took up roles in the new structures that were formed to bring stability and order to the industry. He chaired the Citrus Marketing Forum from 2006 to 2008, chartering some stormy seas and overseeing some stormy meetings.

Arend enjoyed what he did. He lived to work. He loved the citrus industry. In fact, he did not regard what he did as work. The way he saw it, if he loved something then it was not work. He is still working as a consultant in the industry. You could also easily identify Arend at meetings as he was always wearing his branded, leather jacket.

CGA CITRUS SUMMIT – ASSESSMENT

Thank you to all those delegates who completed the assessment form at the recent CGA Citrus Summit – these assessments assist the 2025 Summit organizing committee to improve. If you did not complete the form please take a few minutes to do the online assessment <https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/lUzNeE>

