

“Anti-social behaviour is a trait of intelligence in a world full of conformists” Nikola Tesla

The following question was posed last week: *Only three South African schools have had at least one representative in each of the victorious Springbok World Cup Squads (1995, 2007, 2019 and 2023). Can you name the schools?*

There were a number of people who answered correctly, the correct answer being – Maritzburg College, Paarl Gimnasium and Grey College, Bloemfontein.

KOUGA DAM SPILLS

On 24 May 2022 I visited the Kouga dam with Petrus du Preez and Phillip Dempsey (CGA Director for Patensie) to view the Kouga dam – then at under 5% full. Petrus and a group of growers and concerned citizens in that area were holding weekly prayer sessions, praying for rains to fall. I promised Petrus that I would return when the dam exceeded 100%.

What a pleasure it was to honour that commitment as a group of Patensie growers, representatives from Gamtoos Water and RBX, and the Chairman of CGA went to witness the water flowing over the wall, sending up a spray of mist to cool us off as we sipped on some champagne and gave thanks for the beautiful sight of a full dam. The growers utilising the Gamtoos river have persevered with water rationing and have invested heavily in boreholes to keep their valuable orchards alive. Through this resilience they have survived to a point where they now have secure water for some time to come.

Grower unity is a key objective of the CGA, and the gathering on the Kouga dam wall reflected the fact that the Patensie region has faced the challenges as a unified group. The Patensie growers were reminded that they are part of the greater southern African citrus family, a family that watched with concern the extended drought in that region, and shared in the prayers for rain.

The Patensie region has almost doubled since 2015 – with export volumes increasing from 7.2 million cartons to 13.2 million cartons in 2023. The growth is in no small measure due to mandarin volumes increasing from 1.2 million to 4 million cartons. With a lot of young orchards in the region, assured water will play a big role in southern African citrus reaching the 260 million carton level by 2032.

WORLD CITRUS ORGANISATION (WCO) ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Those who did not attend the WCO Annual Outlook Conference really missed out. Philippe Binard presented the 2023/4 northern hemisphere projections, which were then professionally assessed by Eric Imbert of CIRAD. The Conference was ably facilitated by Chris White – who then moderated a discussion between citrus industry representatives from Spain, Turkey, Morocco, Israel and the USA. Some interesting dynamics were shared. For those who missed it please visit the WCO website www.worldcitrusorganisation.org.

The rest of the Outlook Conference looked at the impact of climate change on the global citrus industry. Excellent speakers from major citrus producing countries gave a good insight into how climate change is impacting the industry.

CONGRATULATIONS TO LAVHENGWA NEMOARANI

Many will remember the late Israel Nemoarani who served on the CGA Board for many years. Israel's son, Lavhengwa, and his wife now run the family farm – Easy Farm. In the 2023 edition of the Toyota New Harvest of the Year competition, Lavhengwa was a finalist – as was his father Israel in the 2009 running of this competition. Lavhengwa was one of five finalists – just missing out on top spot but winning a trophy for his good work on the farm. A previous winner – Pieter Nortje – has gone on to do great things in the citrus industry. This is a tightly contested competition and the citrus industry commends Lavhengwa for so ably representing the citrus industry and getting so far in the competition. He is a great example for other newer entrants to the industry, and is a feather in the cap for the CGA Grower Development Company who have assisted him in his journey.