

COLIN PAINTER – REST IN PEACE

I was devastated to learn of Colin's passing last week. Colin was a friend to many in the industry and he will be missed. I asked some stalwarts of the industry in the Eastern Cape to share some memories.

Colin picked up the batten from his father Cliff, an excellent farmer of Riverside Enterprises Estate, in pioneering modern citrus production practices on large scale in the Eastern Cape Midlands. Concerned about the disastrous waste of the new easy peeler varieties that Riverside had pioneered in the Eastern Cape, he travelled around the country and to Spain to learn the Post Harvest Techniques required in successfully exporting the new easy peeler varieties. This resulted in him pioneering the first degreening processes followed by precooling at packhouse and shipping to port in refrigerated reefer containers to maintain the cold chain to the EU/UK.

Colin embraced deregulation, playing a pioneering role in the Eastern Cape Midlands in the Direct Marketing concept. Since leaving Riverside Enterprises, Colin threw his energy into developing business plans for emerging black farmers in the Eastern Cape. In many cases this included assisting farmers who had been leasing their lands for many years in finally receiving the much-needed title deed they require to raise crop loans, assisting them to be able to farm independently from government assistance.

WORLD CITRUS ORGANISATION (WCO) RELEASES 2024/2025 FORECAST

The WCO has released forecasts for production and exports for the northern hemisphere crop. Production and exports are forecast to drop year on year by 9% - with production dropping to 27.3 million tons and exports to 8.4 million t. Oranges make up 51% of the citrus basket (14 million t), soft citrus 28% (7.7 million t), lemons 16% (4.9 million t) and grapefruit less than 3% (0.8 million t). The biggest decrease in production is in the soft citrus sector at almost 11%, followed by grapefruit (-9%), oranges (-9%) and lemons (-6%).

Spain remains the dominant producer in the northern hemisphere at 6.2 million t (3.3% lower than 2023/4); followed by Turkey at 5 million t (-18%), USA at 4.5 million t (-4%), Egypt 4.4 million t (-20%), Italy 2.8 million t (-12%), Morocco 2.1 million t (+12%) and Greece at 1.1 million t (-1%).

Spanish exports will be down by 4% to 3.1 million t. Turkish down 21% to 1.6 million t. US down 4% to 500 000 t. Egyptian down 17% to 1.7 million t. Italian down 11% to 200 000 t. Moroccan will increase by 27% to 550 000 t. Greek exports will decrease by 4% to 425 000 t. WCO members can get more information from the WCO secretariat. Eric Imbert and Alexandre Touchelay from CIRAD gave an interesting summary of the statistics at the WCO meeting last week. The drop in the forecasted trade in citrus for 2024/5 comes after a slight recovery in the 2023/24 season at 13.9 million tons. There was a record-breaking crop in the Mediterranean with all time high volumes in both Turkey and Egypt while Spain and Morocco had short crops. The red sea crisis had an impact on northern hemisphere trade as there were difficulties in reaching the Asian and Middle East markets with a switch to other markets (particularly for Egypt).

Global fruit trade is about 68 million tons – with a trend from 2010 to 2021 of adding 1 million tons per annum. Since 2021 this had reversed with trade decreasing by over a million tons per annum. Many experts believe this is a result of climate change – with impacts felt on bananas, citrus and mangos (amongst others).

Grower members of CGA can contact justchad@iafrica.com for a copy of the presentations

Eric Imbert will be a keynote speaker at the CGA Citrus Summit in March 2025.

CGA CITRUS SUMMIT – RECOGNISING ACHIEVERS IN THE CITRUS INDUSTRY

The CGA aims to acknowledge those who have been recognised on either a provincial or national level since the last Summit. We would appreciate any information regarding citrus growers that have received awards in the past year – please send information through to tanya@cga.co.za.

Summit registrations are gathering pace with half the seats now taken.