

“If we’re always guided by other people’s thoughts, what’s the use of having our own?” Oscar Wilde

CITRUS INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS SURVEY 2024

In many citrus-growing regions there seems to be signs of a potential skills crisis. We need to gather data on current and projected employment and skills availability in every region so that we can assist growers and plan ahead to secure skills. The Citrus Academy will be conducting the *Citrus Industry Employment and Skills Survey* over the next few weeks. Please be on the lookout for emails relating to the survey, or contact sive@citrusacademy.org.za for more information.

GROWER INDABA: PORTS

The CGA is a member-driven organisation, unashamedly catering for the needs of citrus growers in southern Africa. As we approach the 2024 citrus season, growers are concerned about the ability of the ports to handle the ever increasing citrus volumes. 2023 Proved to be a good year in terms of getting citrus volumes through the ports, but many challenges arose as the pome and table grape industries started their season. There is legitimate concern regarding readiness for the 2024 citrus season.

The CGA has been engaging with Transnet and have seen a focus on improving port performance. A group of growers have called for a Port Indaba – and the CGA have heeded this call. This will give grower members of the CGA the opportunity to hear what is being put in place in readiness for the 2024 season. It will also be an opportunity for grower members to assist the CGA in ensuring that all aspects of port logistics have been considered. An invitation has been sent to all growers and more information will be sent once arrangements are firmed up.

The Port Indaba will be held on Friday 8 March from 10h00 to 13h00 at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria. There will be tea/coffee on arrival and a lunch after the Indaba. For catering purposes please RSVP to tanya@cga.co.za

ROADSHOWS AND PORT INDABA ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND LOGISTICS AND SHIPPING OUTLOOK FOR 2024

On Tuesday 13th February, Mitchell Brooke attended the Port of Cape Town Stakeholder Dialogue session held in Cape Town. An address was given by both newly appointed Transnet Chairperson, Andile Sangqu, and Acting CEO, Michelle Phillips. We were given the clear status of Transnet operations and the outlook on the Transnet recovery plan in the ports and rail space. The CGA will communicate this vitally important message to producers during the upcoming roadshows and Port Indaba. We urge you to please attend.

The two CGA teams are rearing to go – the roadshows start next week already! My team will see growers in Senwes (Monday), Nelspruit/Eswatini (Tuesday) and Onderberg (Wednesday), while Paul's team will see growers in Ohrigstad/Burgersfort (Monday), Hoedspruit (Tuesday), Letsitele (Wednesday), and Limpopo River/Zimbabwe (Thursday).

Please RSVP to tanya@cga.co.za as all meetings are followed by a braai and we need numbers for catering purposes.

MSC's ADDITIONAL SERVICE FROM EASTERN CAPE TO EUROPE WELCOMED

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa is very pleased to welcome an additional direct shipping service from the ports of Ngqura and Port Elizabeth for the export of citrus. MSC, a global container shipping leader, has recently announced an additional service, running every Tuesday from the end of May to the beginning of September, during the height of the citrus season. MSC has provided the citrus industry with shipping services for many years and this expanded offering is a welcome development.

This additional service is good news for Eastern Cape citrus growers. Our members in Patensie, the Sunday's River Valley, and Kat River who export their high-quality citrus to Europe will be able to make use of this option, which helps to protect jobs and much needed foreign revenue for the country.