Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele

20 February 2026

Week 8/26

# FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

*"We cannot live better than in seeking to become better."*
*- Socrates*

## SOUTH AFRICA'S CITRUS GROWTH AND LOGISTICS

In his 2026 State of the Nation Address, President Cyril Ramaphosa offered South Africa a welcome moment of consensus when he highlighted one of our country's remarkable achievements: citrus. As lawmakers applauded SA's position as the world's second-largest citrus exporter, the hearts of many in the citrus industry rightfully expanded with pride. But as welcome as this recognition was, it is another part of the President's address that carries even greater weight for our future - not the celebration of what we have achieved, but the renewed commitment to transforming a logistics environment that will define the future.

Citrus production continues to grow steadily. Yet growth alone cannot secure long-term prosperity. Only when growth is paired with market access and efficient logistics, can it turn record harvests into economic betterment for all.

On the market access front, things are moving. There is an early framework deal with China and negotiations with the US on a mutually beneficial trade deal is continuing.

On the logistics front, the SONA was especially meaningful. The President's pledge to "turn around the performance of our rail system and ports" is significant. His commitment to expanding public-private partnerships in logistics stands among the most promising developments for our industry.

We already see the shift taking shape. The partnership between Transnet and ICTSI at Durban's Container Terminal Pier 2 - which handles the bulk of South Africa's citrus exports - is set to bring renewed operational discipline and stability. As the CGA, we remain convinced that more private-sector partnerships are the answer.

Progress on rail, although modest, is measurable. While far from a turnaround, limited increase of rail shipments this past season signals momentum. Historically, rail carried most of the citrus crop. Today it transports around 5%. Yet rail remains substantially more cost-effective and up to four times more fuel-efficient than road transport.

Although mining has traditionally dominated rail planning and investment decisions, citrus represents one of South Africa's most compelling growth opportunities in the logistics landscape. Last season, the industry exported more than 203 million 15kg cartons. By 2032, we have the potential to reach 260 million.

When the President, relatively early in his SONA, stated that South Africa is "investing across our country in roads, bridges, rail lines, ports, dams, wind and solar farms" it was not for nothing that he started this investment list with "roads". Rural roads in particular are the basic facilitators of the economy. Citrus cannot arrive at ports in peak condition if it has been bruised from potholes along the way. Damaged trucks also multiply costs. Poor roads "steal" from progress being made in improving rural livelihoods.

The recent floods in Limpopo, the heartland of our citrus exports, have shown how indispensable resilient rural roads are. Some roads remain damaged and need repair before the upcoming export season begins.

Our industry stands by to ensure that the logistics promise of this moment becomes a reality. With the right logistics foundation, we can reach new heights - creating jobs, supporting rural livelihoods, develop communities, and strengthening our place on the global stage.

## CGA GROWER ROADSHOWS

The first week of roadshows have been concluded. Thank you to all who attended these essential gatherings. During the week of 3-5 March, Boitshoko and his team will visit the Boland and Western Cape, and Northern Cape regions, while Paul and his team will visit Patensie, Sundays River Valley, and Eastern Cape Midlands regions. It will be KZN's turn on 11 March. Kindly RSVP to Tanya at tanya@cga.co.za to ensure you are catered for.

## INTERESTING FACTS

Since acquiring their farm in 2010, Batlhako Temo in the North-West has grown from 16,000 mostly manually irrigated trees yielding 500 tons, to 28,635 trees producing 1,127 tons in 2024, with 30% of the trees not yet bearing fruit. A true story of resilience and hard work worth celebrating.

## CGA GROUP INFO

**CITRUS SUSTAINABILITY FORUM (CSF)**

**Date:** Friday, 27 February
**Time:** 09h00 to 10h00
**Registration:** https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/39892188745794?p=K09YsBFJFSbZPSZNB9
**Meeting ID:** 398 921 887 457 94
**Passcode:** Bn9P6go7
**Contact:** Paula Bester (pb@cga.co.za)
**Topic:** Agrochemical residue analysis on citrus