



CGA
Grower
Development
Company

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newsletter



ED'S NOTE

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As we look back on 2025, it is clear that this has been a year of significant progress for the Citrus Grower Development Company (GDC) and the broader community of black citrus growers across South Africa. The momentum built over the past twelve months reflects not only the resilience of growers, but also the strengthening of partnerships between government, industry bodies, financial institutions, and technical experts who share a commitment to a more inclusive and competitive citrus sector.

The CGDC Grower Indaba in September stood out as a defining moment of the year. It brought emerging growers face-to-face with senior policymakers and industry leaders, creating an environment of frank discussions, shared learning, and strategic alignment. The election of the new CGDC executive committee signalled renewed leadership for transformation, while government's recognition of the citrus sector as a benchmark for inclusive growth affirmed the impact of years of collective effort.

The unveiling of the CGA's new Transformation Strategy underscored the industry's commitment to measurable, long-term empowerment that translates into profitable, intergenerational farming enterprises.

The GDC can look back at new partnerships for black growers with citrus nurseries across the country, at new funding models opening up for upcoming black growers, and at black commercial growers maturing into full export partners.

Equally important were the GDC's regional open days and study group activities. From Limpopo to Mpumalanga, these events demonstrated the power of targeted, season-aligned extension support. They connected growers to market opportunities, compliance expertise, and critical financing options - reminding us that transformation succeeds when knowledge and opportunity reach farmers where they are.

This season marked a milestone for the industry. National performance reached 203 million cartons exported in 2025, a substantial 22 percent increase compared to last season. Estimated volumes for the year were 171.2 million cartons, and growers exceeded this by more than 30 million cartons. The industry's record-breaking output confirms not only strong production - but also expanding participation by black growers. Notably, black growers contributed 9 million packed cartons this year, a 2.9 million-carton increase from last season. While the overall export figure remains modest in the national picture, many black growers are also sending fruit for juicing and to local markets, where prices have remained favourable.

As we look to 2026, the GDC's focus will be on deepening this progress: strengthening market access, expanding technical support, and ensuring that growth in production is matched by growth in opportunity.

The year ahead holds immense promise. With collaboration, clarity of purpose, and sustained investment in people, the GDC will continue to help build an industry where all growers can thrive.

MESSAGE FROM THE

CGA CEO



As we come to the end of 2025, I am proud to reflect on a year that showcased the productivity and the determination of all our growers. Despite facing challenges such as rising input costs and tariff barriers, the industry has once again demonstrated its ability to adapt and thrive.

This season was marked by strong export performance and continued demand for Southern African citrus in key markets. Our growers worked tirelessly to maintain quality standards, ensuring that consumers around the world enjoyed the freshness and flavour they expect from our region.

The year will be remembered for its record export number - over 203 million 15kg cartons were packed for foreign markets. It was also the year in which the United States' reciprocal tariff of 30% was imposed. It had a limited effect, as it was only imposed towards the end of the season, and growers were able to increase and fast-track shipments to the US before the tariff deadline. Some good news recently followed, however, with the announcement that oranges are exempt from the tariff. We hope that in the future all citrus types - including mandarins - will be exempt.

2025 will also be remembered as the year that the first signs of a possible logistics turn-around could be discerned. There were no significant bottlenecks at South Africa's ports. Transnet's achieved this through investments in new equipment and the introduction of employee incentives linked to productivity. There was also a high level of effective co-operation by all logistics players, including shipping lines, resulting in a more efficient logistics ecosystem.

The chain between orchards, ports and the foreign consumer is not merely a "supply chain" - it is an economic lifeline, and it has the potential to uplift tens of thousands of people in our country's rural areas.

The citrus industry plays a vital role in driving rural development by creating employment opportunities in regions where alternative economic activities are limited.

Citrus farming is labour-intensive, requiring workers for planting, harvesting, packing, and logistics, which provides thousands of jobs. These jobs not only offer income but also help reduce poverty and improve living standards in areas that often face high unemployment rates. By anchoring economic activity in rural spaces, the industry ensures that development is not concentrated in urban centres alone.

Beyond employment, the citrus sector stimulates local economies through its extensive value chain. From transport to packaging and agri-services, numerous small businesses benefit from the industry's operations. This multiplier effect strengthens rural economies by fostering entrepreneurship and supporting local suppliers. Additionally, infrastructure improvements often developed to support citrus farming, also enhance connectivity and access to markets for other rural enterprises, creating a broader platform for economic growth.

Ultimately, as the country's largest agricultural export industry, the citrus sector fosters resilience and sustainability in rural South Africa. By linking rural farmers to global markets, the sector generates foreign exchange earnings while reinforcing South Africa's reputation as a leading agricultural exporter.

This global competitiveness is, however, combined with impactful local empowerment initiatives, many of which are championed by the GDC. These initiatives position the citrus industry as a catalyst for inclusive growth that uplifts rural communities and empowers all South Africans to participate meaningfully in the economy.

To every grower, worker, and partner who contributed to this season's achievements: thank you. Your dedication ensures that Southern Africa remains a world leader in citrus production. Together, we look forward to building on this success in 2026 and beyond.

EMERGING GROWERS SHAPE THE FUTURE AT THE CGDC INDABA

The Grower Indaba of the Citrus Growers Development Chamber (CGDC) convened at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre outside of Johannesburg on the 11th and 12th of September 2025. The event brought together emerging growers, industry leaders, and policymakers to address transformation, sustainability, and profitability in South Africa's citrus sector. It was a unique opportunity for black growers from across the country to meet, discuss the industry and its challenges, and convene with a range of stakeholders. The gathering also elected the new CGDC executive committee - a leadership structure that plays a pivotal role in advocating for the needs of emerging growers, facilitating access to industry resources, and promoting equitable participation in the citrus value chain. Elder Mtshiza, Chief Director of the Department of Agriculture's Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme, attended the Indaba and commended the citrus industry for its outstanding progress in transformation. In her address to the delegates, she highlighted that the contribution of black citrus producers not only exceeds the national average across all agricultural commodities but also sets a benchmark for inclusive growth. This success positions the citrus sector as a shining example of how diversity and collaboration can drive sustainable development in agriculture. Speakers highlighted success stories of black-owned farms that have transitioned into commercial operations through mentorship, access to finance, and technical support.



CGDC
GROWER INDABA
Inclusivity | Equity | Diversity



The message was clear: transformation is a shared responsibility requiring collaboration between government, industry, and growers.

In a live video address to the delegates the Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, said: "Transformation cannot just be a slogan, it must be baked into what we do and backed by resources and practical pathways into the value chain." He also emphasised the goals set in "scaling up support for emerging farmers, expanding mentorship and financing schemes with measurable targets for hectares under production, packhouse access and export readiness".

Steenhuisen continued: "It's about dignity and livelihoods for rural workers. It's opportunities for smallholders to integrate into the global market and the ability of agriculture to anchor sustainable growth in an economy that desperately needs us."

One of the key inputs into the Indaba was presentations about the CGA's new Transformation Strategy. It sets out a structure and a roadmap for sustained empowerment that creates profitable farms, which are assets that can, as businesses, improve the lives of generations to come. The strategy also has as goal more accurate ways of measuring real transformation.

Find out more on the CGDC's website:
<https://cgdc.org.za/2025-cgdc-indaba/>



MOTHER & SON GROWING TOGETHER

It was over 10 years ago when Louisa Maloka Mogotsi decided to change career paths entirely. A social worker by profession, Louisa craved something that would feed and heal her soul, as she had done for so many others throughout her life.

It was at this point that she decided to apply for a farm through the Department of Rural Development. Louisa had no clear picture of what lay ahead; she didn't know if her application would be successful, let alone what kind of farm she may have been allocated. Months later, she received the call that her application and interview had been successful, she accepted the offer without even knowing it was a citrus farm she was about to become the owner of.

She arrived to old trees, unfamiliar terrain, and a community of workers who knew more about the orchard than she did – but she decided to lean in. She learnt from those that knew the farm, from the soil, and from the early mornings breathing in the Limpopo air.

"It was a giant leap – a social worker who doesn't talk money," she reflects on her early days, "But waking up in the morning, touching the soil, getting the support from the GDC and CGA... this is home. This is our farm."

Now, ten years later, the farm near Mooiooi – operated through her company named Healthy Life for Achievers – has become precisely that: a place where growth, patience, and generational legacy are being cultivated one season at a time. Louisa has learned the rhythm of renewal; replacing old trees with new cultivars, expanding their orchard, and building something her family can inherit.



Her son, Thuso, did not immediately share her dream. Coming from big city life, he admits he wasn't drawn to farm life at first. "At the beginning, I wasn't a fan," he laughs, "I just wanted to paint the town red."

But something shifted. He realised that the weekends he spent on the farm were the times he felt most at peace. "That's when the seed began to grow," he says. Today, almost 10 years later, he cannot imagine life outside citrus. "I have grown to love this industry. I can't see myself anywhere other than the citrus game."



The tractor, he jokes, is what initially drew him into the farm: "It excited me most!" But then he fell in love with the work – the fertilising, the pruning, and the thrill of seeing a season's labour ripen into fruit. Thuso describes it as "a beautiful challenge," the miracle of making something grow from nothing. He does, however, smile at the paperwork. The trees and harvest win over that every time.

Together, the mother-son pair have planted new trees, new fruits and expect new citrus harvests. What began as a quest to simply rehabilitate old trees for juice only, is now a commercial vision coming together. Their focus is long-term growth, building a farm that can carry their family name and their legacy – and create even more opportunity for others.

They remain committed to learning the business side of agriculture: pricing, human resources, legal frameworks, and market access. The GDC continues to support them in developing their marketing capacity and the skills needed to go to the international market. Louisa states that one of the biggest lessons she has learnt has been patience, particularly in understanding that renewal takes time – new trees need seasons to establish, and farmers need support. She credits the CGA's GDC for helping turn patience into progress, giving growers like her the tools to navigate the long journey, from a seedling to a legacy.

Louisa has big dreams for her farm – beyond fresh fruit. "We have this fruit. You can eat it, but what else?" She dreams of going into health products, cosmetics, and one day, their own distilled citrus-flavoured gin, "Mother and son. With our faces on it."

What began as a farm neither mother nor son expected, has become a shared identity and a shared dream; a testament to what can grow when land, learning, and legacy align. Their venture is no longer just citrus orchards, but a future being built one season at a time, from one generation into the next.



Citrus
Growers'
Association

SOUTHERN AFRICA

CRW





BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND OPPORTUNITY GDC OPEN DAYS EMPOWER BLACK CITRUS GROWERS

The Citrus Grower Development Company (GDC) continues to play a vital role in strengthening the participation of black growers in South Africa's citrus industry. Its annual regional open days are held across all citrus-growing regions, and these events bring together farmers, government departments, industry partners, and financiers to share knowledge, showcase opportunities, and connect growers to essential support networks.

The Open Days form part of a broader extension service that supports black growers throughout the year. Quarterly study groups in each region align training with the production season, ensuring farmers receive timely, practical guidance. The annual regional information days, such as those recently held in Limpopo and Mpumalanga, provide a platform for growers to connect directly with financial institutions, technical experts, and industry partners - empowering them to grow sustainable, competitive citrus enterprises. The Open Days have been scheduled for the Northwest region and Eastern Cape before the end of 2025.

Limpopo Information Day

On 4 September 2025, more than 150 delegates gathered at Ga-Rawesi Village under the Blouberg Local Municipality for the Limpopo Citrus Information Day. Attendees included growers, representatives from CRI, CGA-GDC, PPECB, Land Bank, Standard Bank, Khula Enterprises, River Bioscience, LCP Processing, and provincial extension officers from across the province. Presentations covered a broad range of critical topics, from compliance and biosecurity to pest management, training, funding, and market access.

Speakers included Mr Tshepo Mokgothu (PPECB), Mr Wayne Kirkman (CRI), Mr Mushe (River Bioscience), Mr Sam Louw (Citrus Academy), and Mme Princess Mogale (CGA-GDC). Financial and market support opportunities were presented by Land Bank, Standard Bank, Letaba Processing, and Khula Enterprises.

The day was made possible through strong industry support, with contributions from LDARD, RBX, Khula Enterprise, Du Roi Nursery, Rabek Beleggings, Mahela Nursery, Henlay Nursery, Laeveld Marble Hall, NewDawn, Easy Farm, Mabunda Farm, and Mulaudzi Farming.





Mpumalanga Information Day

The Mpumalanga event followed on 16 October 2025 at the Environmental Centre in Barberton, drawing around 100 delegates, including local growers, government representatives, and even members of the Royal Household in Baberton. The programme featured presentations on biosecurity, irrigation scheduling, funding opportunities, and training, led by experts from CRI, Netafirm, Standard Bank, Land Bank, Khula, PPECB, and the Citrus Academy. Sponsors included CGA-GDC, RBX, Khula, Laeveld Agrichem, Netafirm, PPECB, DARDLEA, and Komati Nursery.

Northwest Information Day

The day has been filled with meaningful engagement between citrus growers and industry experts, providing valuable insights to strengthen the sector.

Farmers interacted with representatives from financial institutions, market compliance specialists, plant health experts, and the Citrus Academy, gaining practical knowledge on funding opportunities, market compliance, timely fertilization, citrus pest and disease management, biosecurity protocols, and training and bursary opportunities for youth.

Acting Head of Department, Ms Kenalemang Bodigelo-Nyezi, standing on behalf of MEC Madoda Sambatha, reiterated the Department's commitment to supporting the citrus sector: "As a sector, we need to grow the citrus industry. The Department is ready to work closely with citrus farmers to improve productivity, expand market access, and build a resilient agricultural economy. There is a strong need to transform and grow the sector, ensuring emerging farmers are empowered and fully integrated across the citrus value chain."

The day has equipped farmers with the tools and knowledge to improve production quality, manage risks, comply with market standards, and explore sustainable growth opportunities. This Information Day has highlighted the importance of collaboration between farmers, the Department, and industry partners in building a competitive, inclusive, and resilient citrus sector in the Northwest Province.

The organizers thanked the Northwest Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for their support, which helped make the Citrus Farmers Information Day a great success.



The Grower Development Company (GDC) of the Citrus Growers' Association provides a structured, season-aligned support system to help black citrus farmers improve productivity, sustainability, and market readiness. Its core extension service offers a comprehensive menu of technical and business-development support. In every citrus-growing region with black farmers, the GDC hosts quarterly study group sessions, delivered at farm level and timed to match what is happening in the orchard during each stage of the season.

In addition, the GDC convenes an annual information day in each region. These sessions bring together external stakeholders—including banks, research bodies, development finance institutions, capacity-building organisations, and AgriSETA - to present opportunities and resources directly to growers.

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FINAL CITRUS EXPORT FIGURES FOR 2025

The Citrus Grower Development Company (GDC) welcomes the 2025 export season's final figures, which show continued growth and resilience in the South African citrus industry. Just over 203 million 15kg cartons were packed for export to global markets this year. This is a record-breaking figure and a 22% increase from the packed for export figures in 2024.

This increase reflects not only favourable growing conditions and improved logistics performance but also the growing participation of black citrus growers across the country. Black growers played a significant role in the production increase this year – contributing 2.9 million cartons more this year than in 2024.

"The industry's success goes hand in hand with inclusive growth," said Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of the CGA. "The GDC's work to expand the base of black commercial citrus farmers is vital to ensuring that transformation keeps pace with production."

The rise in export volumes was supported by strong international demand for juicing oranges and lemons, a smooth seasonal handover from northern to southern hemisphere producers, and improved port efficiencies driven by Transnet's operational reforms.

Looking ahead, the GDC emphasizes that continued growth in production must be matched by improved market access, especially in key destinations such as China, India, Japan, South Korea, the European Union, and the United States.

"Transformation and market development are two sides of the same coin," said Princess Mogale, Farmer Support Manager at GDC. "With fair access to markets and finance, black growers can play a far greater role in the industry's shared success."

The GDC remains committed to equipping emerging growers with the technical, financial, and market support needed to participate meaningfully in a rapidly expanding global citrus sector.





We want to thank our growers for
their dedication and hard work
throughout the past year.

Your commitment and resilience has
been an inspiration, and we truly
appreciate everything you do to
keep the citrus industry thriving.

May this holiday season bring you
well-deserved rest, joy, and precious
time with your loved ones.

Here's to a prosperous new year
ahead!