

TRANSFORMATION NEWSLETTER – April 2013:

During April the Executive of the Chamber had a meeting, where some outstanding activities that will lead to development can be implemented this year were discussed. The Chamber wants to ensure that 2013 is the year that noticeable progress is made in terms of farmer development. Regarding stakeholder relationships the Chamber wants to ensure that there are no programmes aimed at grower development by stakeholders that we don't know about. The Transformation Manager was therefore tasked to keep an eye on all development programmes planned by the different stakeholders. Another ongoing activity is government relations, working together in building a vibrant and sustainable relationship in support of the citrus grower.

Government Relations

As you know there were some pending MoU's that the Chamber proposed to different province where the CGA operates. The purpose of these MoU's is a commodity approach in providing citrus farmers support, as we believe that working together we can make a difference. During the month of April the Transformation Manager and the growers of the Eastern Cape spent more time engaging with the EC Department.

For the past three years the CGA has been requesting the Department to give an ear to what we are proposing. The Transformation Desk was invited by the Portfolio Committee of the EC Dept of Agriculture to attend a meeting and give an overview of the industry and services we render in support of citrus farmers. After that very successful meeting the Portfolio Committee agreed to support the MoU proposed by CG, as it will assist the Department in providing meaningful support to the EC citrus farmers. The Department and CGA are in the final stages of signing the MoU.

The CGA made history by signing an MoU with the National Department of Rural Development. This MoU is not focused on the National Department but includes all provinces where citrus is grown. The CGA finds it imperative to work closely with rural development as the department has many programmes that are aimed at developing the smallholder farmers on the ground. The chairperson of the Chamber and the Transformation Manager were mandated by the Development Chamber and CGA Board to sign the MoU.

It is important for CGA to work closer with the Department especially as the Department is buying citrus farms and giving them to communities or individuals to farm. This will assist us to coordinate support for those individuals or communities so that they don't fail. It will also assist us in expanding our database. There are a number of programmes that the department wish to implement where the CGA can be of use in advising the Department going forward. This MoU will also assist greatly in the implementation of the current Recap programme.

It has also been reported previously that Mpumalanga has an MOU pending. A meeting with the Department is to take place very soon and all the chamber representatives are urged to be part of these meetings as they represent the rest of the constituencies.

In Limpopo there is a current MoU focusing on extension with the Department of Agriculture. When the time arrives for the MoU to be reviewed we will also make sure that we include holistic support of the citrus farms in the province, not only focusing on extension services. There is a meeting pending with Rural Development for Limpopo and the Chamber representatives are urged to attend it centres around Recap.

In KZN we are still waiting for the Department to respond to our request for a meeting and once again all representatives should be available when the date of the meeting is confirmed..

This year looks like it will be a productive year but it will depend on all of us working together for a similar goal to be achieved at the end of the day.

