



FRUIT
South Africa
**FRUIT INDUSTRY
VALUE CHAIN ROUND TABLE
TRANSFORMATION WORKING GROUP
ANNUAL REVIEW
2022**



rural development
& land reform

Department:
Rural Development and Land Reform
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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Anton Rabe, Convenor

Fruit Industry Value Chain (FIVCRT) Transformation Working Group (TWG)

CONVENER FOREWORD

In 2022 the fruit industry continued its strategic transformation focus on achieving a fully transformed industry by 2038. The FIVCRT TWG serves as a platform to effectively track the transformation activities in the industry, to ensure alignment with the transformation strategy within a value chain approach. It also acts as a platform for the various industry bodies to share experiences and learnings which contributes to a culture of duplicating on successes and preventing mistakes. This publication reviews these activities for the 2022 calendar year (notwithstanding certain references to the financial year).

The launch of the Blended Finance Scheme by the Land and Agricultural Development Bank of South Africa (Land Bank) count amongst the positive highlights of 2022, with the fruit industry pledging its support of the scheme. It is foreseen that the various industry structures will assist in the roll out of the Scheme given their hands on experience at grass roots level as to what the needs of emerging stakeholders are.

As in the previous years, 2022 posed mainly macroeconomic challenges for the agriculture sector. We continued to navigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the world adjusted to the new normal. The sector was also further impacted by geopolitical factors such as the Russia-Ukraine war that led to an increase in input and shipping costs.

These were feared to present setbacks for emerging growers who have limited resources and experience.

Despite all these challenges, the fruit industry persisted with the execution of its transformation initiatives, with an adjusted focus from drawing new entrants to ensuring the sustainability of those already in the industry. This will remain the directive of the industry for the foreseeable future. Industry efforts in the 2022 season paid off, as the total fruit hectareage by black growers increased to 16 346 (up by 269). This remarkable achievement is undoubtedly thanks to focused joint efforts between the industry and government.

The long-term nature of the fruit industry and its significant barriers to entry acutely affect previously disadvantaged individuals (PDIs). Therefore, the industry continues to advocate for sustainable public-private partnerships in transformation. And going forward, the industry will continue to showcase its transformation activities to stakeholders to highlight its efforts, transformation successes and challenges. This is to ensure that the industry's transformation strategy remains aligned with that of the government and other stakeholders for sustainable growth of black fruit growers and other participants in the fruit value chain.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AgriSETA	Agricultural Sector Education Training Authority
ARC	Agricultural Research Council
BAWUSA	BAWSI Agricultural Workers Union of South Africa
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BEEBS	Black Economic Empowerment Bursary Support
BCP	Black Commercialisation Programme
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGA	Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa
CGA-GDC	Citrus Growers' Association Grower Development Company
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
DEL	Department of Employment and Labour
DFPT	Deciduous Fruit Producers' Trust
dtic	Department of Trade, Industry and Competition
EDAC	Economic Development Advisory Committee
EDF	Enterprise Development Funding
ETBCG	Economic Transformation of Black Citrus Growers
FET	Further Education and Training
FIVCRT	Fruit Industry Value Chain Round Table
FMS	False Codling Moth Management System
FNB	First National Bank
FPEF	Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
IT	Information Technology
LDARD	Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
LDS	Land Development Support
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAMC	National Agricultural Marketing Council
NLAAC	National Land Acquisition and Allocation Control Committee
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PDI	Previously Disadvantaged Individuals
PPECB	Perishable Products Export Control Board
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PUC	Production Unit Code
QMS	Quality Management System
SAAGA	South African Avocado Growers' Association
SALGA	South African Litchi Growers' Association
SAMGA	South African Mango Growers' Association
SANCU	South African National Consumer Union
SAQ	Self-Assessment Questionnaire
SATI	South African Table Grape Industry
TOC	Top of the Class
TWG	Transformation Working Group
USB	Universal Serial Bus
WCDaA	Western Cape Department of Agriculture

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Fruit Industry Value Chain Round Table (FIVRCT)

Measured progress requires effective dialogue between relevant stakeholders. Therefore, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and Fruit SA established the FIVCRT. It seeks to foster collaboration amongst stakeholders to secure an enduring competitive advantage for the fruit sector. The work of the FIVCRT is divided into six working groups, viz, transformation, employment and worker welfare, research and development, trade, local market, and resources. The main stakeholders are DALRRD, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) as well as the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL); parastatals like the Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB) and the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC); Fruit SA and its member associations; labour unions, e.g., BAWSI Agricultural Workers Union of South Africa (BAWUSA)), and South African National Consumer Union (SANCU); as well as civil society.

The FIVCRT comprises five working groups:

- Transformation (Leader: Mr A. Rabe)
- Employment and Worker Welfare (Leader: Rev N. Pieterse)
- Research and Development (Leader: Dr N. Motete)
- Trade (Leader: Mr D. Donkin)
- Resources (Leader: Mr A. Kruger)
- Local Market (Leader: Bonani Nyhodo)

This review explores the work of the Transformation Working Group (TWG) during the calendar year of 2022. All indicators and activities link back to the transformation strategy, which was adopted in 2018. At the core of the transformation strategy is a goal to have a fully transformed fruit sector by 2038 with Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) growers contributing 30% of fruit, 30% of exports and having 15% ownership across the value chain.

1.2. Purpose of the TWG

Firmly on the transformation radar of the fruit industry are the entry and sustainable participation of black¹ South Africans (including the youth) in the economy of the primary and secondary fruit value chain. The TWG facilitates, monitors, measures and reports on the agreed transformation plans and targets.

1.3. Focus of the TWG

It makes sense for the TWG to limit its focus to the economic development² and growth dimensions of transformation. These are vital for the sustainability and profitability of businesses. The TWG addresses the following key areas:

- ownership:
- increasing the number of black commercial fruit growers
- increasing black ownership and participation in the fruit value chain in local, national and international markets
- ensuring that previously disadvantaged individuals (PDIs) and groups receive title deeds of properties.
- enterprise and supplier development (business skills, training, mentorship, technical information and extension, access to funding and access to markets)
- management and control (promotion of black people as board members, and for executive roles)
- increasing the availability of black and skilled human capital in the fruit industry.

¹ As defined in the BEE Charter as Black, Indian, Coloured and South African Chinese

² The labour, housing and social/socio-economic dimension of transformation are being addressed within the Employment and Worker Welfare Working Group

1.4. Objectives of the TWG

The output of the TWG is guided by these objectives:

- transformation target development and a framework that encourage existing and new initiatives/programmes in the fresh fruit industry (for individual business success)
- periodic review and redefining of the fruit industry and subsector strategies and action plans
- matching the development of economic business models to prevailing circumstances
- creating a platform for the identification and resolution of transformation challenges in the fruit industry
- collating information and statistics on fruit industry initiatives and programmes, and informing stakeholders in and around the sector accordingly, through reports and media exposure.

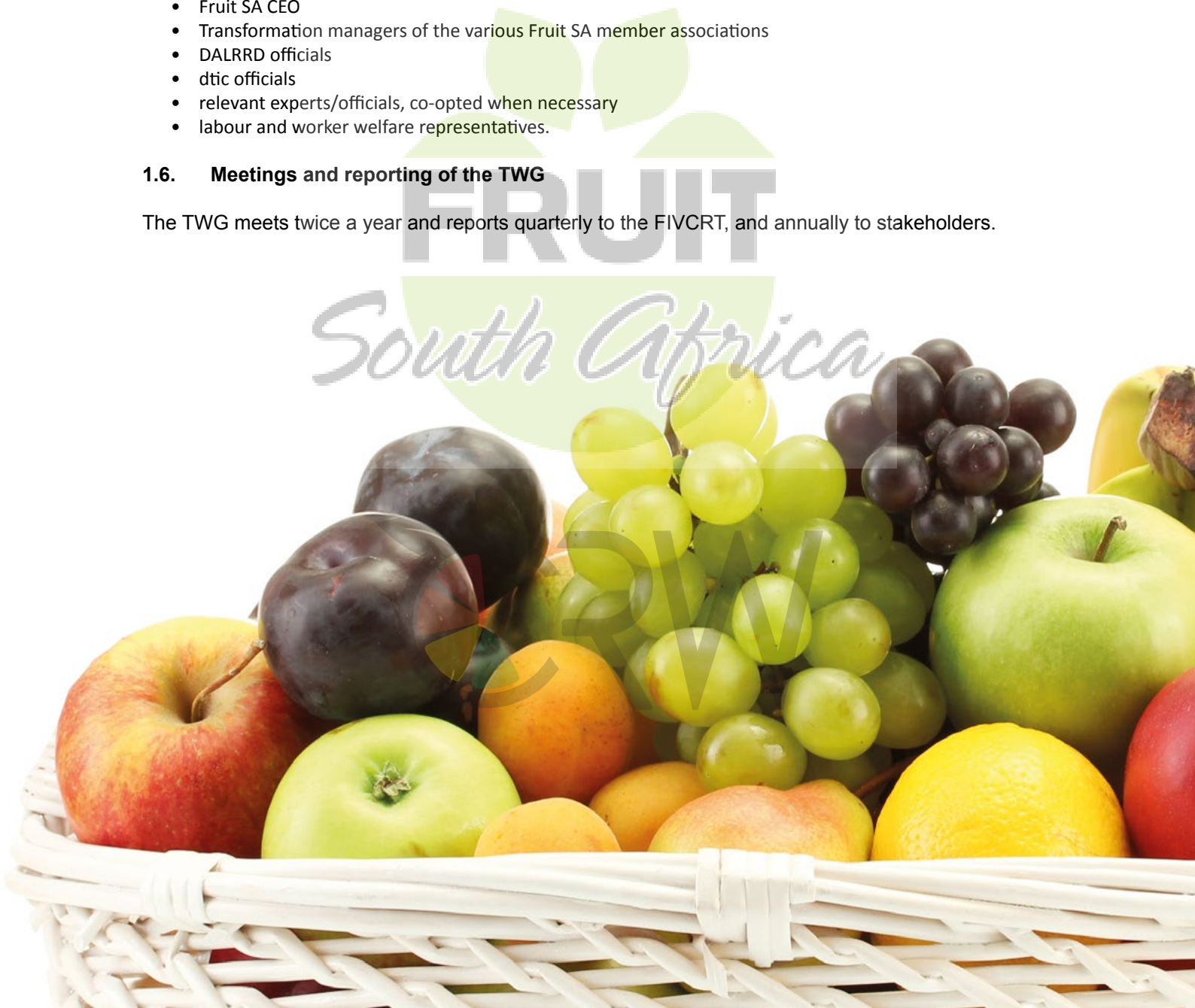
1.5. Membership/composition of the TWG

These are the TWG stakeholders:

- Fruit SA CEO
- Transformation managers of the various Fruit SA member associations
- DALRRD officials
- dtic officials
- relevant experts/officials, co-opted when necessary
- labour and worker welfare representatives.

1.6. Meetings and reporting of the TWG

The TWG meets twice a year and reports quarterly to the FIVCRT, and annually to stakeholders.



2. ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS OF THE TWG



The number of fruit farm hectares under black ownership saw an uptick from 24 435 in 2021 to 32 521 in 2022, while the number of hectares under fruit production by black growers increased from 16 077 in 2021 to 16 346 in 2022 (up 1.7%).



The volume of fruit produced by black growers grew from 362 893 tonnes in 2021 to 563 384 tonnes in 2022 (up 64%).



And the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum (FPEF) achieved BEE compliance with level 7 recognition as a Qualifying Small Enterprise under the amended agriculture sector scorecard, for specialised entities following BEE audit in 2022.

3. SUBSECTOR REVIEWS

3.1. CITRUS GROWERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (CGA)

The CGA Grower Development Company (CGA-GDC) and the Citrus Academy are non-profit companies, authorised and resourced by the CGA to address transformation needs in the citrus industry. Between them, they have established a range of support mechanisms for emerging growers.

3.1.1. The CGA-GDC

CGA-GDC Agricultural Extension Services

Agricultural extension is the primary delivery system for information to growers in South Africa (Stevens & Van Heerden, 2016). Relevant and accurate agricultural information is crucial for improved agricultural production and sustainable food security in South Africa. Agricultural extension builds growers' capacity to be self-reliant and provides a good platform to assist growers in meeting trade requirements in export markets, which ultimately contributes towards food security. Extension services also help growers keep abreast of advancements in technology, to help increase their productivity and income.



Land preparation, Land Development Support (LDS) project Three by Pence.

New-entrant grower

Four new-entrant growers were recorded, owing to continued efforts by the CGA-GDC. The new entrant growers are supported with farm assessment. The farms are assessed for the suitability of planting citrus varieties.

Table 1: New-entrant growers

Region/province	Farm name	Ha	Classification	Status
Mpumalanga	Ajuri Trading	50	LDS Project	Awaiting implementation
Mpumalanga	SA Renaissance	30	LDS Project	Awaiting implementation
Eastern Cape	Addo Drift	06	CGA Jobs Fund	CGA Jobs Fund Pipeline Project
Western Cape	Makwani Farming	11	CGA Jobs Fund	CGA Jobs Fund Pipeline Project

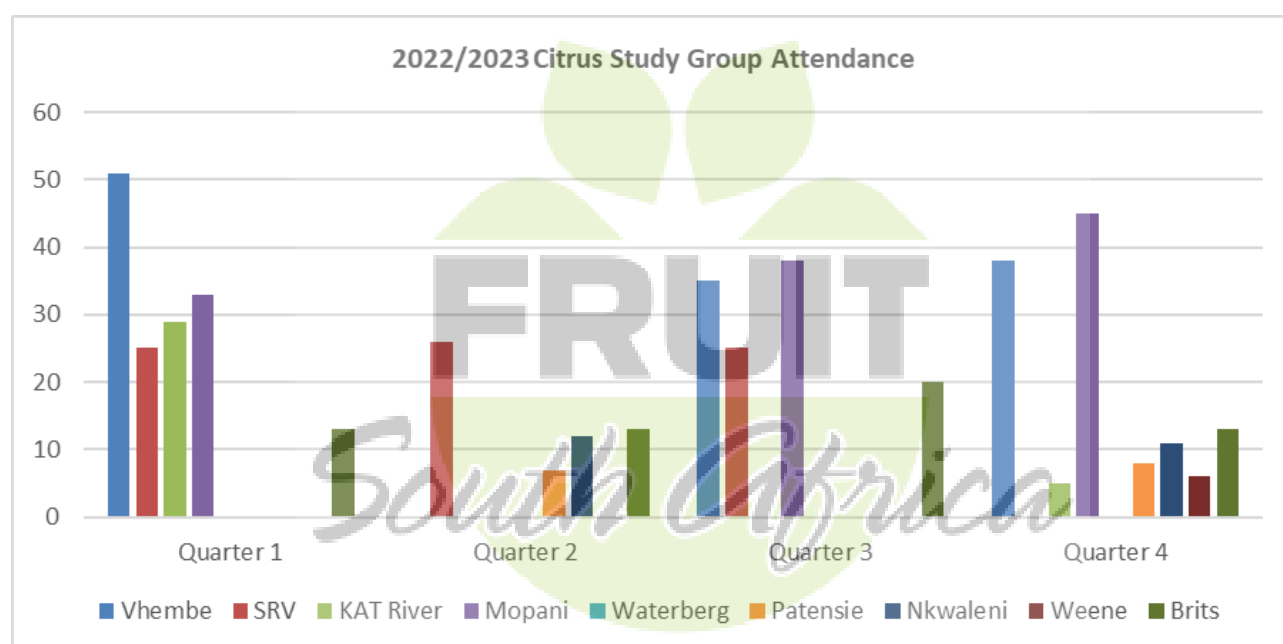
Study Group Meetings

The main aim of the study groups is to gain knowledge and to share best practice methods among the group members. Groups are hosted at a different venue each month, for growers to learn from their fellow growers' cultivation techniques.

A total of 9 citrus study group sessions were held – three in the Eastern Cape, three in Limpopo, two in KwaZulu Natal and one in the North-West. The four annual study groups constitute one quarterly session hosted by each region. The Waterberg citrus study group had to be cancelled due to challenges of officials in the Waterberg district.

A total of 16 citrus study group sessions were hosted by each of the nine study group regions, attracting a total of 448 people.

For context, the graph below indicates attendance of study groups during the 2022/23 financial year (however, this review focuses on the 2022 calendar year):



Study group demonstration, Intathakusa Farm

Information Days

The purpose of the information day is to give emerging growers an opportunity to interact with the citrus technical teams, training providers, financiers, government departments, and other relevant stakeholders. Information days are annual events hosted by the CGA- GDC. A total of four information days were planned and hosted in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and North-West.

Attendees for the four information days totalled 371, which was a good turnout.

Quarter (Q)	Date	Region	Attendees
Q1	08/06/2022	KwaZulu Natal Information Day	41
Q2	06/09/2022	Limpopo Information Day	165
Q2	20/09/2022	Eastern Cape Information Day	80
Q3	24/11/2022	North-West Information Day	85
Total		4	371

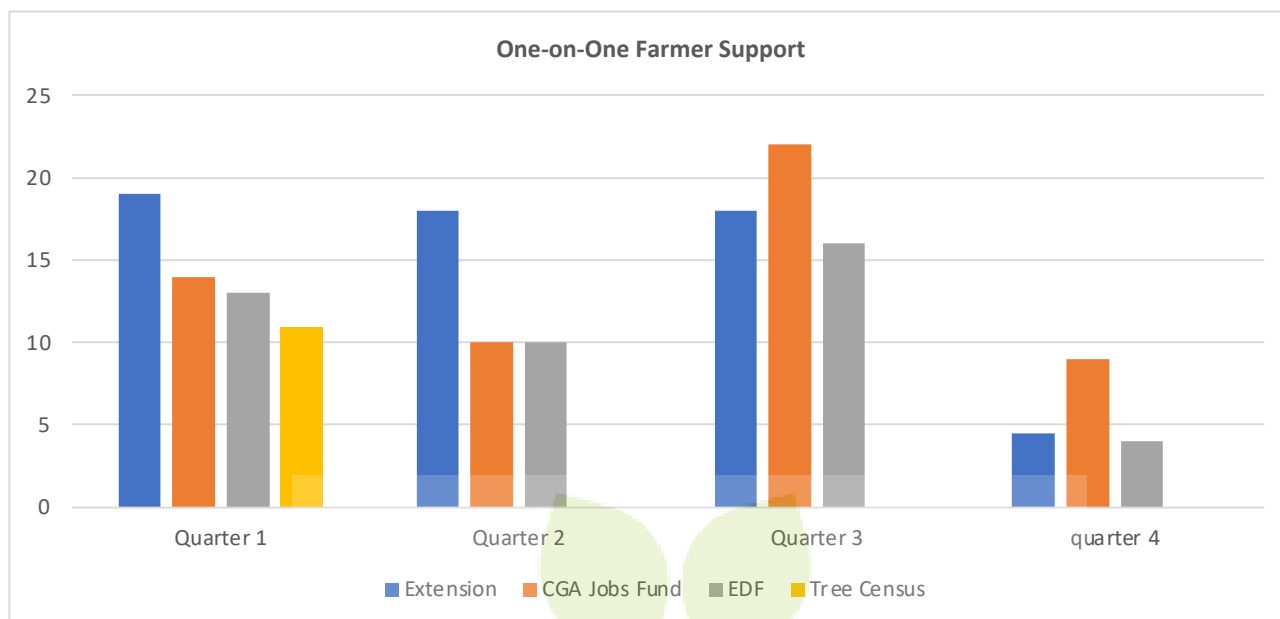
One-on-one grower support

Held in a relaxed setting, the one-on-one sessions are aimed at giving the grower access to vital information and individual dialogue. The sessions aim to assist growers in addressing citrus production and marketing challenges in their respective farming areas, spur general interest, and stimulate their involvement in extension activities.

A total of 185 one-on-one grower visits were conducted by the Production and Technical Support team during 2022/23 financial year. The spread of visits was as follows:

- 76 Extension Services
- 55 CGA Jobs Fund
- 43 Enterprise Development Fund
- 11 Tree Census

Quarter (Q)	One-On-One			
	Extension	CGA Jobs Fund	Economic Development Funding (EDF)	Tree Census
Q1	19	14	13	11
2	18	10	10	0
Q3	18	22	16	0
Q4	21	9	4	0
Totals	76	55	43	11



Tree Census

The CGA GDC appreciates the crucial role of reliable data in improving yield efficiency and profitability in agriculture. The building blocks of working towards an integrated monitoring and evaluation tool is an in-depth understanding of the various operational and project process flows, as well as access to reliable data. Without it, one cannot provide reliable insights and analyses.

The table indicates the progress followed by the GDC to build an accurate tree census (TC) database.

Program data completeness for 2022

Province	#Growers	#Growers with TC	Data completeness
Eastern Cape	38	32	84%
KwaZulu-Natal	9	5	56%
Limpopo	41	28	68%
Mpumalanga	8	4	50%
North West	5	4	80%
Northern Cape	4	4	100%
Western Cape	9	4	44%
Grand Total	114	81	71%

Value chain participation of black growers

118



Currently, 118 black citrus growers own a total of 7 693 ha under citrus production.

8.8 m



In terms of market performance, about 8.8 million cartons of all citrus exports were from black growers, with over 250 000 tonnes sold to national fresh produce markets.

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The number of exporting growers rose from 50 in 2020 to 78 in 2021 and declined to 76 in 2022.

Economic Transformation for Black Citrus Growers (ETBCG) (Jobs Fund)

The Jobs Fund project is in its third year of implementation. *The table summarises progress to date.*

Farm name		Approved funds	Disbursed funds	Planted hectares	Permanent jobs		Seasonal jobs		Implementation milestones
					Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	
1	Mystic Blue Trading (Pty) Ltd	R15 000 000	R13 767 598	39,90	8	1	25	69	Planting 67 ha – 60% completed. Grower will not plant further. Vehicles and equipment – 100% procured, includes packhouse equipment. Infrastructure – 100% fencing, 60% irrigation, 100% DeGreening room. Working capital – remaining amount of R1 232 402 funding balance for maintenance of young trees. 1 permanent job 69 seasonal jobs
2	Sikhula Sonke Enterprises (Pty) Ltd	R6 000 000	R4 951 470	10.20	20	20	72	72	Planting 21,65 ha – 47% completed (10.2ha). Equipment and vehicles procured – 100%. Infrastructure – 80% irrigation and fencing. Working capital- none requested.
3	Luthando Farms (Pty) Ltd	R5 632 600	R5 018 436	14.09	5	0	6	10	Planting 16.06 ha – 88% completed(14,09ha), 2 ha remain for Sept 2023. Irrigation infrastructure – 100% completed. Vehicles and equipment procured – 100%. Remaining tranche for working capital, 2 ha planting.
4	MF Binco/Mouton citrus (Pty) Ltd	R20 100 000	R17 664 415	0.00	63	14	167	63	Generators and power grid- 100% completed. Solar panels – 0%. <u>Enabled activities.</u> Mouton Planting 150 ha – 0%. Packhouse expansion – 100%. Solar system and substation. installation awaiting Eskom/NERSA approval.
5	Ikamva Lethu Farms (Pty) Ltd	R30 000 000	R18 863 200	0.00	49	31	488	38	Planting 100 ha – 100% completed. Equipment and vehicles procured – 100%. Infrastructure – 80% irrigation and fencing, access roads. Working capital – Remaining tranche mostly for working capital
6	Kopano Citrus (Pty) Ltd	R12 421 718	R7 026 969	0.00	11	2	42	14	Equipment and vehicles procured – 0%. Infrastructure –100% irrigation and fencing (savings due to additional support). Working capital – remaining tranche, mostly for working capital.
7	Cedar citrus (Pty) Ltd	R14 800 000	R11 627 793	0.00	22	2	186	31	Planting 15 ha – land prep and irrigation completed. Planting resumed in April. Generators and power grid- deposits paid. Solar panels – deposits paid.
8	Sun Orange	R11 746 205	R0	0.00	0		0		Planting 35.5 ha – 0% completed, due in Aug 2024. Land prep completed. Working capital being tracked but none claimed thus far. Grant agreement outstanding.

Since inception of the programme, there has been a clear shift in criteria for approving applications, and in revision of implementation plans. This has impacted significantly on projected jobs for the programme. The programme has noticeably supported infrastructure that produces short-term jobs. Furthermore, the green field orchard establishments currently do not have the capacity take on seasonal jobs. Some of the jobs will be actualised post the life of the project.

Enterprise Development Funding

The fund is dedicated to existing black-owned and -managed citrus businesses, to address specific needs within the business. Total EDF allocation for 2022 amounted to R27 million, adding to the outstanding EDF of 2021, and the total fund amount for the 2022 season came to R36.5 million. Due, to the challenges encountered by the citrus industry, in particular the rising input cost, the focus for the year was on funding chemicals and fertilisers. The motivation behind this was to save the current crop. This was a deviation from the previous years, whereby the focus also included expansion and mechanisation. Growers were then requested to submit their spray programmes to establish their needs and enable allocation of resources. After receipt of these, an allocation plan was developed according to the size of the enterprise.

Province	Number of farms supported	Funds Allocated
Limpopo	32	R10 097 529.49
Eastern Cape	31	R16 289 399.22
Mpumalanga	4	R2 498 297.35
Western Cape	3	R1 397 463.93
KwaZulu Natal	5	R3 186 588.20
North-West	5	R1 697 857.27
Gauteng	1	R99 591.00
Total	81	R35 266 726.46

SIZA Environmental Standard

The SIZA Environmental Assurance model has been designed to assist growers in evaluating their current compliance and environmental risks, both on-farm and at regional/catchment level. This process is accomplished through the completion of a Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ), the results of which feed into a risk profile report. The latter can be used to address market requirements, while also informing the drafting of site-specific improvement plans and farm environmental management plans and monitoring systems. The questions included in the self-assessment questionnaire run from minimum legal requirements to leading practices across four main topics, viz. water, soil, energy, materials, and waste; and farm ecosystems and biodiversity.

Training on the SIZA Environmental Standards was done at the two identified sites – Kat River and Sundays River Valley. The scope of work included training, and a comprehensive Quality Management System (QMS) in line with the SIZA standard. The QMS captured site-specific practises and processes, and on-site gap analysis, management plans, risk assessments, and explanation of policies and procedures. As part of the implementation of the standard, the biodiversity assessment and invasive alien plant clearing plan were conducted for some growers.

Programme participation

Kat River Valley		Sundays River Valley	
Farm Name	Number of participants (11)	Farm Name	Number of participants (11)
Gatyena	1	Siyaphambile	1
Oakdene	2	Mbuyiselo	1
Letas	2	Glengrove	1
Zanentlutha	1	Willowtree	1
Torties	1	Sophumelela	1
EASSE	2	Siyathemba	1
		SRCC	1
		Luthando	3
		Belvoir	1



Training on the SIZA Environmental Standards at the Sundays River Valley



Training on the SIZA Environmental Standards at the Kat River Valley

3.1.2. Citrus Academy

Citrus Academy Bursary Fund

The Bursary Fund provides financial support to learners at academic institutions all over South Africa who are studying towards qualifications related to the citrus industry. Up until 2022, the Bursary Fund had awarded R28.6 million, constituting 969 bursaries to 354 beneficiaries. Of the 354 individual beneficiaries, 78% are PDIs and 55.4% are women. As at the end of 2022, 90 of 252 Bursary Fund graduates are employed in the citrus industry and 85 in other fruit sectors, government departments and agencies, and academia.

The BEE Bursary Support (BEEBS) is part of the Citrus Academy Bursary Fund and supports black-owned enterprises. Its purpose is to subsidise study costs for relatives of black growers and employees of black-owned citrus enterprises, from school level. This way, the internal capacity of these enterprises is grown over time, and succession planning gets underway. Up until 2022, at least R5.5 million had been awarded to 76 beneficiaries in the form of 278 BEEBS bursaries.

Several Citrus Academy workplace learning programmes have served to expose Bursary Fund students to workplace experience, making them more employable (including vacation work, internships, and graduate placements). The Citrus Academy's industry exposure programme enables students to attend research symposia and conferences related to their field of study. During 2022, seven students benefited from workplace learning programmes, and 21 attended industry events with the support of the Citrus Academy.



IFPA South Africa Conference

Citrus Academy learning aids and programmes

The written learning material and audio-visual learning aids developed by the Citrus Academy cover a variety of citrus production practices. The audio-visual content developed to date explores integrated pest management, citrus planting management, citrus pruning, citrus propagation, plant structures and functions, safe handling of agrochemicals, citrus packhouses and citrus harvesting. In addition, the Monitoring and Inspection for Phytosanitary Markets module forms the basis for an e-learning programme to certify monitors and inspectors on citrus farms and in packhouses.

BEE enterprises may obtain electronic copies of the audio-visual modules on USB, at no charge; these are regularly distributed at study group meetings and on information days. The USBs are also part of the Citrus Short Courses resource packs, which many owners and staff members of BEE enterprises have been sponsored to attend. Plus, the audio-visual modules can be accessed at no cost on the Citrus Academy YouTube channel, where many growers, packhouse owners, workers, students, lecturers, extension officers, and others, have come to learn more about citrus production.

Citrus Academy E-learning Programmes

In addition to its commitment to imparting the latest in skills delivery, the Citrus Academy also enables the provision of training programmes to remote rural areas through mobile learning resources. In keeping with these objectives, the Academy launched its online learning platform in 2019.

In 2022, Ready-Steady-Work – a work-readiness programme – was added to the platform, to assist work-seekers in finding employment and preparing for the workplace. Development of the Citrus Secondary programme was also concluded, to enable school learners to achieve a qualification in citrus production by the time they leave school. The programme will be piloted at three secondary schools in 2023, with full implementation in all citrus-production regions in 2024.

Citrus Short Courses

Since 2018 when the first Citrus Academy short course was held in Fort Beaufort, in the Eastern Cape, the Citrus Academy has continued to develop needs-based short courses for citrus production, citrus export supply chain, and citrus packing. In 2022, two more short courses were added, dealing with Citrus Packhouse Quality Control and Citrus Economics. In 2022, 31 owners and employees of BEE citrus enterprises were sponsored to attend citrus short courses.



Citrus Production Short Course in Letsitele

Economic Transformation of Black Citrus Growers (ETBCG) Programme – Skills Development

The ETBCG skills development initiative aims to equip new and existing employees of ETBCG beneficiaries with relevant skills and capacity. The Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority (AgriSETA) funds the implementation of learnerships, skills programmes and bursaries related to the programme, to the value of R12 988 585, for the duration of the project. The CGA is tasked with the overall implementation, management, and oversight of the project and has assigned the Citrus Academy to implement the skills development activities.

In 2022 the Academy implemented five Plant Production (National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 2) and two New Venture Creation (NQF level 4) learnerships, in addition to five Citrus Packhouse Worker Induction skills programmes. This produced learnership qualifications for 121 learners, with 110 completing skills programmes in Brits, the Nkwaleni Valley, Citrusdal, Thohoyandou and the Sundays River Valley. Bursaries were also awarded to 10 beneficiaries at various tertiary institutions in South Africa. All learners involved in the programmes were PDIs.



3.2. HORTGRO

Executive summary

Hortgro, as the national umbrella deciduous fruit commodity body for the pome fruit and stone fruit industries, has made significant progress in implementing transformation initiatives within the industry during the 2022 financial year. The commitment of this sector of the fruit industry to sustainable development and inclusivity is evident through various initiatives aimed at creating a globally competitive, equitable, unified, and economically transformed deciduous fruit industry.

Emerging from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges, the 2022 financial year was super-challenging for the industry. Soaring input costs driven by (amongst others) the Russia-Ukraine war, load shedding, logistical difficulties, and unfavourable weather conditions significantly impacted growers and the broader industry. Industry profitability, productivity, and market realisation were acutely affected by these. In response, Hortgro has refocused on transformation to safeguard existing growers and investments, and to create an environment conducive to meaningful and sustainable transformation.

Collaboration with organisations such as the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA), Fruit SA and other stakeholders at national level is essential in working towards an inclusive industry. In April 2023, the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) was established, comprising independent individuals and representatives from the industry, and emerging growers. This committee offers guidance and input for the economic development strategy, ensuring alignment with industry needs and existing government guidelines. The appointment of the Economic Development Manager, along with the completion of the transformation office team, signifies industry commitment to driving economic development and transformation. The diverse expertise and stakeholder representation in the EDAC facilitate a collaborative approach to address challenges and promote sustainable growth.

Hortgro represents a diverse membership base of 1 158 growers (small-scale/emerging and commercial) engaged in apple, pear, plum/prune, peach/nectarine, apricot, and cherry production in the value chain. As a major export sector within agriculture, the deciduous fruit industry provides employment to over 60 500 permanent on-farm workers. This contributes to the economic and social development of rural communities where fruit production is concentrated. To sustain and grow the industry inclusively, Hortgro focuses on research and development, trade and trade development, and transformation. The current total number of hectares under black ownership in the deciduous fruit industry is approximately 18 790 ha with approximately 4 500 ha under fruit production.

Transformation objectives

The Hortgro strategic framework, approved by the NAMC for 2019 – 2023, serves as a guiding framework for industry functions, activities, and utilisation of levies in alignment with transformation objectives. Transformation in the pome and stone fruit industry encompasses BEE, land reform, skills and capacity building, and socio-economic development. These objectives are pursued through strategic partnerships with industry stakeholders, government entities, and commercial growers, emphasising the importance of public-private partnerships (PPP).

Hortgro has played a pivotal role in developing the new-generation of growers and sustainably transforming the industry through various economic and socio-economic initiatives. However, the current economic realities pose a risk to sustaining previous and current initiatives aimed at establishing a new generation of growers and value chain participants. To mitigate these risks, partnerships between the public and private sectors remain crucial. Hortgro values its partners and stakeholders for their contribution to the development process. Previous achievements in transformation have been made possible through these partnerships. Although the rate of transformation remains a challenge, Hortgro reaffirms its commitment to economic development and transformation within the industry.



3.2.1. Economic development initiatives

Fruit Value Chain Financing Project (Hortfin)

Hortgro recognised the limited access to commercial finance as a major challenge hindering the commercialisation of businesses within the fruit value chain. To address this, Hortfin was initiated in 2018 as a ring-fenced debt facility aimed at providing comprehensive financing and support for economic growth, sustainable development, and job creation. However, the available grant funding for Hortfin is insufficient to meet the required level of interventions for agricultural development and long-term transformation. Current discussions with Development Impact Funders and commercial institutions aim to expand the fund and address additional developmental needs and requirements. The total financing that has been allocated to approved projects, from inception to date, is R299 million. This is a combination of funding from various funding sources, which includes industry, the Jobs Fund, the WCDoA, First National Bank (FNB) and the Landbank.

Partnership with the WCDoA

The collaboration between Hortgro and the WCDoA through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) and the Black Commercialisation Programme (BCP) has fostered greater support and collaboration. As implementation agent for the WCDoA, Hortgro has been able to contribute to project management, financial support, technical expertise, and mentorship.



A decade of transformation

The table features industry pome and stone fruit data to illustrate the degree of black agripreneurs' participation within the industry.

Pome and Stone Fruit Industry Data

Province	Total area planted (ha) in 2022. Industry	Total area planted (ha) in 2022. BEE	% BEE ha of total industry	No. of BEE entities	No. of 100% black-owned enterprises	No. of equity shareholding enterprises
Western Cape	48 235	3 626	8%	64	31	32
Eastern Cape	4 891	796	16%	10	6	4
Free State	712	0	0%	0	0	0
Limpopo	562	10	2%	1	1	0
Mpumalanga	284	43	15%	4	4	0
Northern Cape	195	0	0%	0	0	0
North-West	139	0	0%	0	0	0
Gauteng	56	0	0%	0	0	0
Kwazulu-Natal	6	0	0%	0	0	0
Grand Total	55 080	4 475	8%	78	42	36

Participation of black agripreneurs in the value chain

Ownership	Packhouses	Cold storage	Nursery	Marketing	Agro-Processing	Input supplier
100% Black owned	7	3	2	5	1	2
Equity	2	1	0	1	3	0

Bursaries

The Hortgro bursary programme focuses on scarce and critical skills linked to research projects that address industry needs. The programme aims to provide equal opportunities to historically disadvantaged individuals. In 2021 and 2022, R253 809 and R582 050 were allocated to bursaries, respectively.

3.3. SOUTH AFRICAN TABLE GRAPE INDUSTRY (SATI)

Maintaining the status of South Africa as the preferred country of origin for retailers around the world is a shared responsibility. Therefore, SATI maintains its focus on building an inclusive and sustainable industry. The basis of the SATI strategic objective is to create a progressive, sustainable, and equitable table-grape industry that prioritises transformation as a key tenet in becoming a dynamic growth-oriented industry representative. Amongst its notable achievements are providing targeted enterprise development support to eight black-owned businesses and supporting black students in advancing their agricultural studies.

For sustainable transformation, SATI prioritises advocacy for relevant projects at farm level, enhancing economic development, land reform, training, and capacity building. These actions are aligned with the NAMC guidelines and aim to enhance the viability of the agriculture sector. SATI views transformation as the creation of equal opportunities for black agriculturists and entrepreneurs, whereby they participate as owners, co-owners, managers, and professionals in the table-grape industry. They must have an equitable share in the economic benefits of the industry.

Introduction

The 2023 season will be recorded as a season where volumes declined substantially compared to the previous season, and where weather conditions and the Cape Town Port undermined the potential of the crop. Also of great concern is the increase in minimum wage, which was once again far above inflation. SATI is equipping itself better to mitigate effectively against these types of increases.

But despite these challenges, the table-grape industry remains committed to responsible land reform.

The image features Senior Supervisor Nico Erasmus demonstrating pruning expectations to one of his employees. The pruning season commenced in July 2022 in preparation for the 2023/24 harvest.



Pre-season preparation



Enterprise development

The bulk of the SATI transformation budget is spent on projects and services related to enterprise development.

The Vineyard Development Programme remains a flagship support mechanism for black growers, to renew and expand their businesses. This contribution is a multiplier for acquisition of further support. The extreme challenges experienced by black growers during this season underscored the absolute importance of the programme.

Through the programme SATI continued to support Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) initiatives with vineyard renewal and expansion projects on farms.

Another key component of the programme is the facilitation of requisite guidance for growers' decision-making on cultivar selection. Cultivars planted by these growers during the reporting period were mainly 'Sweet Celebration', 'Autumn Crisp' and 'Sweet Globe'. The production figures of the table-grape farms that received support over the last five years have increased substantially; the performance of these newly-planted vineyards compares well with industry norms.

During the reporting period SATI supported emerging growers with approximately R3 million via the Vineyard Development Programme. SATI is proud to have walked this journey with emerging growers. SATI is pleased to announce that financing for Elize Boer, the first black female recipient, has been facilitated and supported by this programme. Elize will develop and farm a table-grape unit herself with the support of her partner and their supporting network.



Elize Boer, co-owner and production manager, prepares to plant vineyards

Helpdesk

SATI's helpdesk supports potential and existing BBBEE initiatives with the planning, performance, and compliance of their businesses. The bulk of the budget was spent on resource utilisation studies, recommendations, and mentorship. Through the helpdesk, support with business plan development, feasibility studies, resource utilisation, compliance management, mentorship, extension services, and management tools can be considered to increase performance and monitor progress. Approximately R 351 694 was spent on specialist services to support the BBBEE initiatives with the bulk of the funds used at 100% black-owned farms. This type of support is very important for the grower to make informed production, financial and marketing decisions.



Left: Soil map example, which informs the grower of soil structure, potential etc.



Right: Excavation equipment preparing the soil for planting.



Above: An example of a pick logger that captures harvesting of bunches.

During the reporting period, SATI supported growers to adopt new technology, including logging systems, and to make use of external bookkeepers for financial compliance.

A pick logger project was piloted to determine harvesting patterns in a specific production block.

The SATI technical manager supported some of the black growers to track the cold chain of their consignments to the end destination. This was done to measure pulp (fruit) and air temperatures. The image shows an example of cold chain tracking information shared with the grower.

SATI supported growers who were interested in partaking in the Frudata study group. Obtaining this information is valuable, to assist the growers to benchmark their performance with that of other commercial growers in their area. The Frudata report highlights norms in the area, allowing the grower to identify and rectify areas of concern. Some of these indicators are cost (direct production cost, packaging, and marketing cost, etc.), income per cultivar, and sound and unsound arrivals (amongst others).



Above: Piet Minnaar, new owner and majority shareholder of Saamstaan Boerdery in the Hexrivier production region, De Doorns, Western Cape

SATI's collaboration with the Deciduous Fruit Producers' Trust (DFPT) through the Hortfin initiative, facilitated access to finance valued at more than R80 million, to date, for BBBEE initiatives.

Through its official partnership with the WCDoA, SATI recommended three table-grape projects for funding to the value of approximately R 9 million.

Skills development

Our training support programmes are structured to support young professionals through bursaries and work experience opportunities (like holiday work or placement at other stakeholders for land reform beneficiaries and their workers).

In the 2022 academic year, SATI bursary funds supported 12 black students with subsidised tuition fees, study material, accommodation and living expenses. All 12 bursary holders are youth, comprising six females and six males.

SATI congratulates these students who obtained their qualifications



Ms Chidney Stringer
(HonsAgric Business
Management)



Ms Asanda Thusi
(BAgric Viticulture)



**Ms Karabelong
Masoleng**
(BAgric Viticulture)



**Ms Nonkululeko
Masikane**
(MScAgric Viticulture)



Mr Anele Sigadala
(MAgric)

SATI is proud to have played a part in the academic journeys of numerous individuals who are now working full-time in industry.

Mr Andries Daniels was supported during his PhD studies and was the first black individual to achieve a PhD in Viticulture. Following a 17-year career at the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Andries recently joined the newly-established Vine Academy and Model Farm in Kakamas as a lecturer.

Mr Shaun Langenhoven was supported during his MSc Plant Pathology studies and has been employed at Tessara for the past 6 years, currently fulfilling the role of research scientist.

Miss Nonkululeko Masikane was supported during her MSc Viticulture studies and is currently employed at the ARC as a research technician.

The Modular Course in Table and Raisin Grape Production is presented by industry experts from SATI and Stellenbosch University. The course, which is usually presented over 18 days, includes several modules and covers topics such as the viticultural aspects of table-grape production, harvesting and the postharvest handling of table grapes, and it provides an overview of the table-grape industry. Land reform beneficiaries in the table-grape industry are subsidised to attend the course.

The targeted candidates for this course include new entrants to the industry; land reform beneficiaries; farm workers; junior, middle and senior production managers and extension officers.

SATI helps growers facilitate on-farm training for their staff. The industry subsidised six land reform beneficiaries to attend a leadership programme with Mazars. Leadership teams on farms take responsibility to educate their workers.

Visit to California Information Day

SATI facilitated a study tour for two black growers and the transformation manager, to attend the cultivar breeder's information days held in California. The delegation attended the International Fruit Genetics (IFG), Sunworld, and Grapa field days, as well as the Global Grape Summit in Bakersfield. They also visited Wonderful Nursery in Wasco – the largest vine nursery in North America – to learn more about quality plant material.

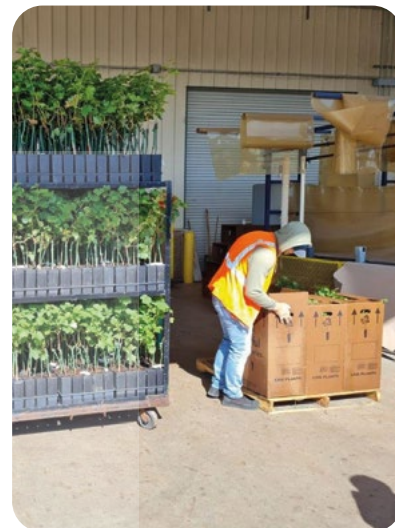
The delegation visited commercial table-grape growers, to observe field packing, how plastic is used to protect their crops, and their cooling facilities.



Above left: Forced air cooling tunnel observed during the California study tour.



Above centre: Well developed vine root system seen at Wonderful Nursery in California.



Above right: Packing of vines observed at Wonderful Nursery in California.



Left: Covering of vines with plastic at Wonderful Nursery in California

Socio economic development

SATI funds and supports Agri's Got Talent, the flagship corporate social investment (CSI) initiative of the industry. It's a singing competition and life skills programme for agricultural workers in the deciduous fruit and wine industries. The initiative is presented as a joint venture between the WCDoA, Hortgro, Citrus Growers Association, Vinpro Foundation and SATI.

SATI also subsidised the Bergrivier Table Grape Association for its block competition, an initiative that gives recognition to farmworkers for their knowledge, skills, hard work and contribution to the industry.

SATI continues its commitment towards building an inclusive and sustainable industry.

3.4. SOUTH AFRICAN SUBTROPICAL GROWERS' ASSOCIATION (SUBTROP)

The South African Subtropical Growers' Association (Subtrop) manages the affairs of the South African avocado, litchi, and mango growers' associations.

For the past few years, Subtrop has been working on transformation aligned activities that have paved a way for the current growth. The subtropical industry has seen a consistent increase of black participants in the value chain. Additionally, the Subtrop partnership with the departments of agriculture in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and nationally has continued to strengthen. An MoU has been signed with both provinces, to strengthen the collaborative provision of technical advisory services, skills and business partnership, and research and development.

The industry has continued with its support towards emerging growers and providing solutions towards the value chain for parties. This is done through regular communication around initiatives and resources to facilitate transformation, connecting people interested in transformation initiatives, kick-starting transformation initiatives, inspiring active participation in transformation, and addressing challenges relating to transformation.

Subtrop has continued to strengthen its five transformation pillars namely, Education and Training, Development, Grower support, Black Grower Database and Long-term Projects.

Key focus areas are enabling technical knowledge and skills of on-farm production, accessing, and enabling sustainable markets for black growers, conducting operational study groups, protecting and sustaining current establishments, and fully transforming the industry.

Subtrop Transformation Summit 2022



Pieter Buys (SAMGA chairperson), Derek Donkin (CEO, Subtrop), Minister Thoko Didiza (DALRRD), Stephen Mantsho (Transformation Manager, Subtrop)

On 26 May 2022 Subtrop hosted its Transformation Summit at the Fairview Hotel. The goal of the Transformation Summit is to inform, connect, inspire and address challenges relating to transformation.

The event was officiated by Mr Pieter Buys (Chairperson of Subtrop) and the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Mrs Thoko Didiza. The 2022 Subtrop Transformation Summit drew around 200 participants to engage on mapping the road to success. Several black growers and processors were able to showcase their potential. The participants included emerging and commercial growers, managers of farms, government officials, the private sector, banks, and non-grower members.

Presentation topics also included pertinent issues affecting emerging growers in the current environment. And it was good to be reminded that black growers also have the ability to participate in the business of agriculture.

Mr Buys highlighted the significance of the summit in terms of industry growth. Whereas the Subtrop Transformation Coordinator mapped the industry history, as well as its vision. He also reiterated to growers the importance of viewing and treating farming as a business.

Minister Didiza stressed the importance of funding and challenged the banks to operate fairly in the agriculture sector. The financial sector has to be reminded that agriculture depends on Mother Nature, which presents an unpredictable scenario. She also challenged black growers to become robust decision-makers in their enterprises.



Attendees of the Subtrop Transformation summit

Allesbeste donates 20 000 avocado trees

During the Transformation Summit, Mr Zander Ernest from Allesbeste donated 20 000 trees to the Venda growers for their development. He hopes that this gesture will challenge the industry and other big operations to own their role of transforming the industry. Mr Ernest added that transformation and sustainability of emerging growers require an effort from both the industry and growers.



Presentation of the donation to Subtrop



Seedlings donated by Allesbeste

Area committees for Vhembe (Venda) Region

The growing participation and interest in subtropical commodities in Vhembe pose challenges and opportunities. The growers in the region have established area committees for different Subtrop commodities to promote participation in their affairs. These area committees make their decisions based on their regional knowledge and are mandated to deal with matters that fall outside the scope of the Subtrop Transformation office and government officials.

Bursaries

The South African Avocado Growers' Association (SAAGA) offered bursaries aimed at assisting previously disadvantaged students to pursue careers within the subtropical fruit industries in South Africa.

Bursaries are awarded to those studying towards a BSc Agriculture degree (majoring in Agricultural Economics/Horticultural Science or related fields) and cover academic fees and accommodation costs.

The recipient of the 2021 SAAGA bursary was Ms Yaone Charity Moseki studying towards a Diploma in Plant Science, at the North-West University.

Study groups

Study groups continue to play a major role in equipping growers with knowledge. Subtrop invited speakers from various establishments to present.

SAAGA

- Two study groups were held in Mpumalanga (Bushbuckridge) on post-planting techniques and post-harvest management, using video content for context and insight.
- On the 17th of August 2022 a study group on weed control and fertilisation was hosted by the growers in Vhembe (Venda).
- On 25th of May 2022 Allesbeste Boerdery hosted the Venda study group at one of their commercial farms. The study group touched on all aspects of farm management, and the group was exposed to planting, pruning and harvesting in commercial farming. It was beneficial for new entrants in particular, to learn about packaging in packhouses.
- On 27th of May 2022 Marensky Farming operation hosted the Mpumalanga study group. The visit exposed emerging growers to farm management practices, allowing them to identify practices that are lacking on their farms and to plan corrective actions. Growers were also taught the importance of pruning, proper harvesting and fruit handling, and different spraying methods.
- On 7th of December 2022 a study group was hosted by growers in Vhembe (Venda) on pests, diseases, and scouting. The study group talk was done by representatives from ARC Nelspruit.

South African Litchi Growers' Association (SALGA)

- A study group focusing on Post-harvest Management was hosted by the Venda study group on the 10th of March 2022. Questions on mulching, stack removal, spraying and general post management were addressed.
- Mr Bram Snijder hosted a litchi exposure session for the Venda Study group in Halls farms on the 27th of May 2022, which was truly informative. Through this visit, growers were shown better ways of doing things in commercial farming such as farm layout, planting, pruning, and harvesting.

- A study group on fertilisation, and pest and disease management were hosted in Venda at Netshifhephe's farm on the 18th of August 2022.
- On the 9th of December 2022 a study group was hosted by growers in Vhembe (Venda) on harvesting, marketing and record keeping. The presentation was done virtually by Mr Snijder.

South African Mango Growers' Association (SAMGA)

- A study group focusing on Post-harvest Management was hosted by the Venda study group on the 10th of March 2022. Questions on mulching, stack removal, spaying and general post management were addressed.
- A study group on mango flowering and fruit protection was hosted in Venda under the Tshifudi Village on the 17th of August 2022.
- A study group focusing on Mango harvesting practice, marketing and post-management was hosted on the 7th of December 2022. The study group also focused on helping growers with Production Unit Code (PUC) registration.

The Subtrop Grower Development Programme

Subtrop received a discretionary grant from AgriSETA for the training and development of growers in the Vhembe district. The purpose of this project was to train 20 emerging avocado growers on farming operations, agri performance management, financial management, sales and marketing, and strategic farm management.

The grant was used for the Subtrop Grower Development Programme. EDUPARK was the service provider contracted to develop, administrate, and implement the Subtrop Grower Development Programme. They have a wealth of experience in training and development work in agriculture in the Limpopo Province for the past 16 years.

The objective of the training programme was to provide the targeted growers with a sustainable solution that will help them improve their overall farming operations, implement better financial management controls, increase their access to the market, and ultimately contribute to their profitability through a structured training and coaching approach.

The programme commenced in July 2022 and included seven training days spread over six months with one-on-one grower support and coaching sessions on the farm.



Study Group Demonstration

The content was divided into these five programmes:

- Implementation of an agri performance management system on all the targeted farms by growers attending the 2-day performance management programme.
- A two-day financial management course for non-financial managers, customised for agriculture.
- A one-day sales and marketing workshop to train growers on sales and marketing processes in agriculture.
- Growers attended the two-day Strategic Farm Management course and received a copy of the "Strategic Approach to Farming Success" book by Dr Wim Nell,.
- A structured coaching process focusing on farm visits and telephone support.



On-Site Study Group

Database

The Subtrop database continues to be instrumental in facilitating the management of activities and provision of services to the growers. In the last four years, the growth of Subtrop enabled notable expansion of its membership base. The evidence-based information in the database has been useful in planning, as well as customising services and support to growers' needs. The table shows the number of growers and hectares planted in each subtropical commodity.

	Number of black growers				Hectares owned by black growers			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Avocado	66	79	96	123	444	565	605	1104
Mango	75	82	89	102	486	515	542	706
Litchi	32	40	42	60	133	158	169	248

Currently there are 123 emerging growers producing avocados, 102 producing mangoes, and 60 producing litchis, representing a 20% increase from 2021 figures. The total number of hectares owned by emerging growers has also increased from 1 316 ha in 2021 to 2058 in 2022. This increase was mainly due to an increase in area planted for avocado.

Transformation success stories

Celebrating excellent managers in the industry – the story of Phillip Mofokeng

It's commonly known that farm managers are responsible for managing and carrying out duties associated with the day-to-day and long-term management of the farm. This is the case with Mr Phillip Mofokeng, Senior Production Manager at Peu Group also known as Mangeke Group. Phillip has worked in the subtropical industry for the past 25 years. His career commenced as a labourer at the Magalies Cooperative Association, working with tobacco. He later advanced to Westfalia Fruit in 1997 where he worked as an area manager responsible for 280 ha of both avocado (270 ha) and macadamia (10 ha).

Background

Phillip did a management course with UNISA Business School of Leadership, which helped to hone his leadership skills. He started his career in the early 1970s while working with his father in the Free State, Vredeford area ploughing the land using an ox. Their focus was on maize and sunflower, which were planted on their 4.8 ha land.

Phillip notes that it is not easy to be a black farm manager but has managed to overcome adversity in his many years in management. He has changed various things at his workplace, one being encouraging the employees to adopt a constructive attitude.

He also highlights the importance of building a good relationship with junior managers and supervisors for effective coordination of the farm activities. This boosts productivity and ensures that targets are met.

Throughout his career, Phillip has trained several individuals, one Jack Malemela from Westfalia, who started as a labourer and is now part of the senior administration of the company.

Phillip cites emotional resilience as an essential quality for effective farm management.

He also emphasises the crucial economic role of agriculture. Most of what we eat, drink and wear are thanks to agriculture, and we depend heavily on this sector. Thus, natural resources must be taken care of, if we want to become a food, fibre and timber producing nation. Agriculture is the future.

Industry transformation

Phillip has expressed his passion for transformative changes in the industry. The number of black commercial growers' farm managers, and those upcoming in the industry reflect these changes. He concluded by saying, "the future of the industry is bright and equal representation will be seen in the future."



Mr Phillip Mofokeng

3.5. FRESH PRODUCE EXPORTERS FORUM (FPEF)

The Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum (FPEF) is a voluntary, non-profit organisation with more than 140 members, accounting for over 90% of fresh produce exported from South Africa. Members of the FPEF comprise fruit exporters, grower-exporters, export and marketing agents, packhouses, logistics businesses and other service providers. Whilst membership is voluntary and open to all South African fresh produce exporting companies and industry service providers, strict accreditation criteria and a specific code of conduct apply to ensure that only competent and reliable marketing agents and grower-exporters are admitted to the Forum.

The neutral and representative status of the FPEF enables it to raise funds for the export industry to ensure attendance of major international trade fairs such as Fruit Logistica Berlin and Asia Fruit Logistica, during which the Export Directory is distributed. Essentially a service organisation, some of FPEF's services include industry transformation, generic promotions for new and existing markets and the distribution of information to members.

The FPEF continues to make strides towards achieving its transformation vision of facilitating a significant shift in the inclusion and sustainable participation of black South Africans within secondary agriculture in the fresh produce export value chain.

FPEF Graduate Placement Programme

The FPEF Graduate Placement Programme is a flagship transformation programme, with – arguably – the greatest potential to transform the industry beyond the farm-gate in the long term. The period under review was another record year for the programme, with 16 graduates appointed in 11 FPEF member companies as the programme continues to gain momentum. The total number of appointments since the inception of the programme in 2016, is 54.

The programme boasts a high retention rate, with 72% of the graduates having been employed in permanent roles since the programme's inception.

Agrijob provides a high level of service in managing the recruitment services for the programme as a service provider to the FPEF. They meet with each FPEF member company to understand their needs before introducing them to suitable candidates. The FPEF made a monthly salary contribution of R5 000 for the first 12 months to FPEF member companies, for each graduate appointed.

In August 2022 the FPEF participated in the Agrijob AgriCareerConnect virtual career fair, represented by Makhosazana Ngwenya (an FPEF graduate employed at Zest Fruit), as well as Johannes Brand (FPEF Transformation Manager). The career fair serves as an opportunity for the FPEF to showcase its Graduate Placement Programme and was a great success with excellent attendance from students across multiple disciplines from 6 universities (the Universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria, Free State, Kwa -Zulu Natal, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga).

The FPEF also creates networking opportunities for the graduates with their peers: A networking lunch was hosted in May 2022 in Stellenbosch and a second in Paarl in November 2022, in collaboration with Fruitworks. Fruitworks are an FPEF member and passionate supporters of the programme.



FPEF graduates enjoy time together at a networking event in Paarl



Top of the Class (TOC) Fruit Export Value Chain Training Programme

The TOC Programme covers the fruit export value chain from field to fork and is aimed primarily at employees in junior to middle management positions within fruit export companies, packhouses and logistics companies. It is also a valuable training tool for emerging growers and exporters.

Participants gain great insight into the whole value chain, and additional knowledge regarding their own area of responsibility. Topics include quality management; compliance; cold chain management; primary production, packing and packaging; road, sea and air freight; documentation; consumers, markets, and the role of exporters.

A total of 90 individuals completed the course in the 2022 calendar year, bringing the total number of people trained since the programme launched in 2004 to 1 208.

During 2022, the programme was offered twice, in an interactive, online format in May and again in September. Attendees comprised 39 industry employees nationally. The course was also run within the Fruitways Group, primarily as an induction programme for new employees and interns, but also for the Human Resources Department.



Emerging grower and emerging exporter market access support

In March 2022 the FPEF Transformation Manager facilitated a training session to assist in preparing eight emerging fruit growers from the Western Cape for attendance of Fruit Logistica Berlin. The trip to Fruit Logistica Berlin was sponsored by the WCDoA.

Since 2018 the FPEF and several of its members have supported Ikarabele Legae in his dream to become a fresh produce exporter. Ikarabele comes from Soweto and has studied and worked in China where he learnt to speak Mandarin. In 2022 he joined the Lona Group through an introduction by the FPEF, where he is currently working as junior trader gaining further experience in the industry. In July 2022 he received a Top 200 Young South Africans award from the Mail and Guardian for his contribution to Rural Development in South Africa.



Mail and Guardian awards ceremony

In September 2022 the FPEF Transformation Manager addressed emerging citrus growers in the Eastern Cape at a CGA-GDC Grower Day on current logistics challenges in the industry. This was part of on-going collaboration with primary grower organisations to assist in improving export market access for emerging growers.

Additionally, the FPEF continues to provide a “help desk” for aspiring and new emerging exporters to guide them in the process, with a focus on risk management as well as a minimum of two years’ free FPEF membership with full benefits.

FPEF Annual Transformation Webinar

The FPEF hosted its annual transformation webinar on 15 September 2022. The focus of the webinar is to challenge and inspire business leaders in the fruit industry towards playing an active role in furthering positive and effective transformation in their businesses.

This year the speakers were Dr Mathews Phosa, a leading figure in South African business and politics and Ikarabele Legae, a young fresh produce exporter from Soweto.

Dr Phosa highlighted the importance of transforming our industry to create jobs, build the economy and drive middle-income growth. He acknowledged that legislation alone will not be successful in transforming the industry. We need to build on the success of public-private partnerships, he said.

Ikarabele, shared his inspirational journey, from young school leaver in Soweto to studying in China and entering the fresh produce export sector in South Africa. Ikarabele noted that our industry is in a shakedown phase, where the strong will survive but the weakest will fall away. Consequently, he cautioned that transformation cannot only be approached from a political perspective, but that we also need to view it within the context of the current business reality. The webinar was expertly hosted by Ndumiso Hadebe, an award-winning economist, entrepreneur and CEO of KH Research Equity Partners. It concluded with a Q&A session in which both speakers shared valuable insights.

FPEF BEE Certification

Once again, the FPEF achieved BEE compliance with level 7 recognition as a Qualifying Small Enterprise under the amended agriculture sector scorecard, for specialised entities following a BEE audit conducted in September 2022.





✉ admin@fruitsa.co.za

🌐 www.fruitsa.co.za

☎ +27 12 007 1150

📍 Grain Building, Agri-Hub Office Park
477 Witherite Road,
The Willows, Pretoria, 0040

📘 facebook.com/fruitsa.co.za

🐦 @FruitSAfrica

