

ED'S
NOTE

2020 has been a tumultuous year for all South Africans, as well as the rest of the world, with the Covid-19 pandemic completely changing the way we live and interact with each other.

I am pleased to say that despite the immense challenges posed by the pandemic, the CGA Grower Development Company (CGA-GDC) has continued to provide assistance to black citrus farmers, and as a result, growth in fruit exports from black growers has continued during the current season.

One of the main highlights of the year was putting out a call for applications for the R307 million Economic Transformation Black Citrus Growers Programme that will run for the next three years. The funding will be made available to black growers across the country for orchard establishment, expansion and rehabilitation, as well as on-farm development of various infrastructure including packhouses, bulk-water supply and irrigation systems.

We have received a number of great applications from black citrus growers over the past few months and look forward to announcing the first batch of successful beneficiaries in the new year.

We are also pleased that Covid-19 has presented us with the opportunity to strengthen our partnerships with provincial governments in grower regions including Limpopo, the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, which are yielding great results. More detail on successful partnerships with the Western Cape and Limpopo governments are shared below. The CGA-GDC looks forward to continue growing these relationships in the coming year, so that we ensure black growers receive the critical support they need to grow their enterprises.

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We also welcome the gazetting of the new statutory export citrus levy on Friday, which will be funded by over 1 200 citrus growers from 2021 to 2024, in order to ensure the long-term competitiveness of the sector, as well as the sustainable growth and support of black-citrus farms operating within the citrus industry. 20% of the new levy will be allocated to transformation interventions and we share more detail on these programmes below.

The national lockdown also had a devastating impact on many of our rural communities and we also share more information below on how citrus farmers stepped in to provide much needed relief to needy families during the crisis.

While 2020 has been a long, tough year for the country, I am proud that our black citrus growers embraced the opportunities that were provided to them and, as a result, continued to contribute to another record breaking export season.

The CGA-GDC would like to wish all members of the citrus industry and their families a well-deserved rest over the festive season, and a very happy new year.

Lukhanyo Nkombisa
General Manager of
the CGA Grower
Development
Company



MESSAGE FROM THE

CGA CEO

For the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) and its 1400 growers, 2020 has been an extremely stressful, yet highly rewarding and educational year. The start of the citrus season coincided with the government's declaration of a national lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which brought most of the country to an absolute standstill.

As a sector, the citrus industry quickly acknowledged that we were extremely privileged to be allowed to continue operating during the lockdown and thus committed to doing what it could to fulfil our responsibility of contributing towards the country's food security.

The CGA COVID-19 Response Committee (CRC) was established to co-ordinate the industry's response to the pandemic. The CRC held 20 meetings in total between April and August and developed a risk assessment and action template in order to identify the degrees of risk across different value chain links in the industry, in order to come up with responses to these challenges.

The most immediate priority was to safeguard the health and safety of workers across the citrus value chain. Workers becoming infected with Covid-19 could result in pack houses, cold stores and shipping terminals closing down.

Other risks that were identified included:

- Citrus not being pre-cleared for export markets due to inspectors falling ill and overseas markets being halted;
- Restrictions on the movement of seasonal workers between provinces to harvest and pack citrus fruit;
- A shortage of containers that were stuck in other overseas ports and disruptions to logistics chains, which could result in citrus building up in cold stores and the free flow of cargo being halted; and,
- A reduction in staffing at the South African ports due to the lockdown, which had a serious impact on port operations.

Some of the interventions and initiatives rolled out by the CGA over the past few months to address these challenges included the following:



- The drafting and distribution of 44 memos to over 3 000 stakeholders between April and July to ensure that industry stakeholders had access to credible information on Covid-19 developments;
- The preparation and distribution of regular market reports to the industry;
- The delivery of surplus citrus to communities most in need through the CGA's Orange Heart Fruit Drive initiative;
- The development of two sets of guidelines for growers and packhouses, which was distributed in order to ensure the health and safety of workers while also ensuring regulatory compliance within the workplace; and,
- The Citrus Academy developed a COVID-19 Compliance Officer training manual and trained over 300 compliance officers within the industry.

Overall, the proactive steps taken to address risks as they arose and the closer partnerships we have formed with government and other stakeholders has meant that our industry has emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic stronger and more resilient than before.

The outbreak has also resulted in an increased demand for citrus across our export markets, as people have turned to Vitamin C to boost their immune systems, which means we expect a record-breaking export season this year.

I would like to thank every grower for the role they have played in ensuring the industry continued to operate during the crisis. We certainly could not have weathered this storm without the proactive steps that were taken by all our growers to minimise the spread of Covid-19 on their farms and ensure lockdown regulations were adhered to at all times, while continuing to deliver top-quality fruit to our exports markets.

I wish all growers and their loved ones a safe and prosperous festive season. We look forward to working with all of you to take the industry to even greater heights in 2021.



CASP

FUNDING EMPOWERS LOCAL GROWERS TO REACH NEW HEIGHTS

While the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a number of our usual face-to-face engagements with growers and key stakeholders having to take a back seat, this does not mean our partnerships with various government departments came to a standstill.

This includes the highly successful Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) that has been rolled out by the Western Cape Government in partnership with a number of role-players, including the CGA-GDC.

This programme was introduced 16 years ago and has focused on providing funding to small-scale farmers, in this case, citrus growers to create employment opportunities, improve infrastructure on their farms and assist them to become market-ready.

Each year, a Commodity Project Allocation Committee (CPAC) assesses applications received from farmers and distributes funding.

The CPAC is made up of individuals from the specific commodity involved. When it comes to the citrus industry, the committee comprises representatives from the CGA and the CGA-GDC, along with officials from Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA), the African Farmers Association of South Africa (AFASA), and individuals from partner organisations, such as HORTGRO and the Cape Agency for Sustainable Integrated Development in Rural Areas (CASIDRA).

CASP funding is generally awarded to economically viable and sustainable projects which contribute towards South Africa's food security, while having the potential to create and sustain jobs.

Wayne Mansfield (34) who owns Fruitfield Farming, just outside of Paarl, is one of the citrus growers who has benefitted from the programme. Since 2015/16 he has received CASP funding to the value of R 4 788 868, which has enabled him to secure fencing, vehicles, lemon trees, labour, fertilizer, orchard sprayers and an irrigation system for his farm.

Mansfield, who spent years as a street hawker and



selling fruit at local markets is now an award winning farmer, producing Grade 1 Eureka cultivar lemons on his farm.

He grew up in Pniel and started assisting his uncle after school and on weekends to pack fruit to be sold at the Epping market. After school he began buying fruit from local farms and selling these on his own. One of the farms he bought lemons from was Fairview Wine and Cheese Farm.

In 2013, Wayne signed a lease with the owner of Fairview, Charles Back, for a 12 hectare lemon orchard and applied for CASP funding from government. His farm has grown in leaps and bounds over the years and not only sells lemons to local clients but also exports to overseas markets including Europe, Russia, the Middle East and the Far East. The farm also provides critical permanent and seasonal employment opportunities in the area.

"We would certainly not be where we are today if it weren't for CASP funding and the WCDoA and the CGA-GDC. I am so grateful that the Department believed in me and my business, because we would not have grown the way we did had it not been for the assistance and support we have received from them and the Citrus Growers Association" says Mansfield.



CASP

FUNDING EMPOWERS LOCAL GROWERS TO REACH NEW HEIGHTS **CONTINUED...**

When asked about his short and long term plans, Mansfield shared that he seeks to plant as many hectares as possible over the next 5 years, in order to increase Fruitfield Farming's volume and tonnage – this would directly translate into the creation of much-needed jobs in his community.

"With regard to my long term plans – I am hoping to build my own packhouse within the next 10 years, so that I can pack my own produce and export it with my own brand name, which has a small piece of my surname in it. This is very

important to me, seeing as we are a family run business".

The CGA-GDC company is proud to be a partner in this fantastic government project, which provides small-scale citrus growers with the support and assistance they need to become meaningful contributors within South Africa's agricultural sector and was pleased that the Covid-19 pandemic did not affect its roll-out over the past year.

PROVINCIAL PARTNERSHIPS BEAR FRUIT IN

LIMPOPO

The CGA-GDC is also pleased to have strengthened its relationship with the Limpopo provincial government over the past few months. Representatives from the CGA and CGA-GDC attended several meetings with the Limpopo MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Nandi A. Ndalane (MPL), and Head of Department, Ms Ramatsimele Jacqueline Maisela over the past few months.


These meetings subsequently led to citrus growers being invited to present at the Provincial Economic Cluster, on interventions required from government to support black growers in the province, including the improvement of key logistics infrastructure.

In mid-November, a resolution was passed to establish a work stream committee comprising a range of provincial government departments and the CGA-GDC to ensure black owned citrus farms receive the support they needed for their

continued growth and expansion. Some key areas the committee will be focusing on is repairing critical road and water infrastructure in farming areas and the refurbishment of a number of packhouses used by black citrus growers.

The CGA-GDC looks forward to its participation in this committee going forward in order to represent the interests of black growers and to continue highlighting areas where they need government intervention and support.

These highly successful partnerships with local government are being explored and developed in other provinces too – with positive outcomes and great cooperation taking place in the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga as well. We look forward to sharing more on the outcomes of these successful engagements and partnerships in the new year.





GAZETTING

OF NEW CITRUS EXPORT LEVY

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has welcomed last week's gazetting of the new statutory export citrus levy by the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Thoko Didiza. The new levy will be funded by 1 250 citrus growers over the next four years and will ensure both the long-term competitiveness of the citrus industry as well as the sustainable growth of black-citrus enterprises within the sector.

The new levy will translate into an estimated R1 billion investment by local citrus growers into the sector, starting in 2021 through till 2024.

A key funding area will be ensuring greater transformation within the industry. The CGA-GDC, in partnership with the CGA, has developed a transformation plan for the sector that will be rolled out over the next four years. The strategy focuses on amplifying the voice of black-owned citrus enterprises, to ensure that their needs and concerns are heard and addressed, while empowering black enterprises to reach their full potential. This includes increasing the ownership stake of PDIs in the citrus industry, increasing the number of black-owned citrus enterprises in the citrus value chain and supporting these enterprises to grow sustainably, supporting government departments and agencies to optimise their services to black-owned citrus enterprises, and supporting sustainable socio-economic development in rural areas.


It is with these goals in mind that 20% of the new levy will be allocated to programmes that support the Transformation Plan. These will include:

- Enterprise and supplier development programmes
- Skills development programmes
- Management control and ownership programmes
- Socio-economic development programmes in rural communities
- Programmes aimed at ensuring the sustainable growth of black owned enterprises as well as greater representation of black growers in industry leadership positions

With the citrus industry expected to increase its exports by over 500 000 tons over the next five years, investment in research and development is critical in order to ensure the sector remains competitive in overseas markets. For this reason, the new levy will also be allocated to Citrus Research International (CRI) to provide research and technical services to growers. This is a pre-requisite for gaining, retaining and optimising market access, which is a key priority for the industry over the short, medium and long-term.

The remainder of the new levy will be allocated to a number of other programmes including working with government and other stakeholders to improve national transport infrastructure and logistics capacity, including the country's rail and port operations.

The industry is expecting another record breaking export season in 2021, and the CGA is confident that the new levy will enable the industry to grow its market share even further, in order to create more jobs and obtain increased revenue for the country's economy over the next four years and achieve meaningful and sustainable transformation within the sector.





ORANGE

HEART FRUIT DRIVE TO CONTINUE DONATING CITRUS IN 2021

The outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequent national lockdown has had a severe impact on our economy and a devastating impact on our poor communities, with an ever-increasing number of households experiencing food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition.

Given that the lockdown has had such a debilitating impact on thousands of livelihoods, the CGA quickly decided to provide assistance by facilitating the delivery of surplus citrus to communities most in need. Overall, in excess of 1 600 tonnes of citrus have been distributed to families across the country, through the CGA's Orange Heart Fruit Drive initiative.

In addition, many packhouses and growers also distributed citrus, food parcels and other donations to the communities they operate in, across the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Kwa-Zulu Natal. CEO of the CGA, Justin Chadwick, says that citrus growers have been overwhelmingly generous in their donations.

"Through partnerships with various stakeholders including Food Forward SA, the Department of Social Development and local municipalities, we have ensured that these citrus donations have reached households most in need during the pandemic."

Citrus contains a large number of nutrients and antioxidants which offer numerous health benefits,

including lowering people's risk of heart disease and strengthening their immune systems. This is also the reason why the industry has seen an increase in demand for citrus across its export markets during the 2020 season, as consumers looked to boost their health in response to Covid-19.

"By contributing towards the nutritional value of the food parcels being distributed to poor communities, we hope we can help ensure better health outcomes beyond the pandemic", said Chadwick.

It has been extremely heart-warming to hear about the many lives that have been touched by these donations including the elderly and school children in rural communities who received oranges on a regular basis.

The CGA is truly thankful to every grower who opened their hearts and donated citrus over the past few months, and appreciates all the partners who helped facilitate and assist in the distribution of these donations to ensure that they reached households hardest hit by the pandemic.

The success of this initiative will see the CGA strengthening and expanding on these partnerships in 2021, so as to ensure that the Orange Fruit Drive is able to continue supporting rural communities across the country during these difficult and unprecedented times.



Members of rural communities receive citrus donations from citrus growers and Food Forward SA, via the CGA's Orange Heart Drive initiative



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Happy holidays!

FROM ALL OF US