



JULY 2019

## newsletter



# Ed's Note

This quarter, I am excited to present you the youth-focused newsletter. As the Citrus Growers Association - Grower Development Company, we decided to highlight and showcase the work being done by our young citrus farmers across South Africa.

For South Africa to realise its full potential, we should take advantage of the youthfulness of our population. Young people must be integrated into the productive side of the agricultural value chain instead of seeing them only as a consumer market. Young people need easier access to land, capital and access to academic courses that will help strengthen their knowledge and skills on farming. Student debt interferes with their ability to secure additional credit and bank loans.

We live in an age of constant change, and even traditional industries like farming, are no longer immune from technological disruption. Farming is becoming one of the fastest growing careers for young people as more are getting degrees in agriculture and taking an interest in food production.

Young people are becoming farmers for many reasons, whether it be wanting locally sourced food for themselves, having a farm as a source of income, or even to further sustainability efforts and technological advancements.

Young people are more food-conscious and prefer locally sourced organic produce, many have decided to open their own farms and specialty shops and we witness this every day with the sudden interests in the kind of citrus information we provide.

As CGA - Grower Development Company we believe that, given the opportunity, young farmers have the potential for success in food production from the standpoint of entrepreneurship, innovation and technology adoption.

Experts believe young people are well poised to bridge the gap between complex issues, such as

## in this issue

Letter from the Editor

*Citrus farmer partner with local Agri-College*

Word on the Street

**Farming Features: A New generation of women in Agriculture**

- Thendo Mashadzha
- Makolobe Olga Lamola
- Nyumani Mathebula
- Mlaudzi Mukondeleli

**Second Generation Citrus Farmer picks up tools from Father**

From the Desk of Citrus Growers Association CEO

**Young agriculture entrepreneurs recognised**

Opportunities in the Citrus Industry for Young People

rural versus urban, conventional versus organic and local versus import, that is currently polarizing the production agriculture sector. The agricultural sector is faced with many challenges and we believe that an open, integrated industry will be one of the solutions.

This newsletter is dedicated to the young farmers who are making headway in the sectors as well as highlighting some of the opportunities available for young people.

There are plenty of opportunities in agriculture. As CGA- Grower Development Company, we are committed to seeing young people established and thriving in the agricultural sector.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the farmers who have opened their farms to train and teach the youth. Special mention to Tzaneen's Mariveni Citrus farm currently hosting four interns for a period of two years. Grateful thanks also go to Unifrutti Packhouse in Sundays River Valley for opening the gates for our young people to learn and develop skills within the Citrus Sector.

The young farmers featured in this newsletter share their dreams with us. We all have a role to play in building and developing our industry.

I trust you will enjoy this special Youth Month edition.

**By Lukhanyo Nkombisa**



## *my* Citrus in the media

### **Citrus farmer partner with local Agri-College for an exchange programme**

Grower Ms Louisa from Healthy Life Citrus has partnered with Taung Agricultural College in the North West to provide an internship programme for students studying Agriculture.

The successful applicants will be appointed as interns for six months and will undergo on-the-job development training in technical, professional, public service, business and life skills relevant and crucial for them to learn about the Citrus Industry. The purpose of the internship programme is to:

- Mentor future professional Citrus Farm Managers.
- To get students to help out with programmes such as irrigation, fertilisation, pruning, fumigation, sanitation
- To build interest, empowerment and growth in the Citrus Industry (skills transfer).
- To expose partners to the existence and of the CGA
- To create awareness and interest in the industry, leading to growth.

As part of the training programme, CGA - Grower Development Company has been invited to Taung Agricultural College to conduct guest lectures so that students can gain experience from practicing farmers.



## *Wordy* on the street

1. In May the New York Times published an article titled, "Millennials 'Make Farming Sexy' in Africa, Where Tilling the Soil Once Meant Shame," The article was written by Sarah Maslin Nir who featured young farmers in West Africa and their quest to change the face of farming in Africa. They call themselves "agripreneurs."
2. According to Wandlile Sihlobo agricultural

economist and head of agribusiness research at the Agricultural Business Chamber (Agbiz) in South Africa, "Young people with a passion for farming must not wait for land - they must find avenues to access training in the meantime so that they are better equipped for when the land becomes available. This must include approaching farmers directly for experience in farming.



## A New Generation of Women in Agriculture

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude towards the farmers that have opened their farms to train and teach the youth. One of our citrus farms in Tzaneen, Mariveni Citrus is currently hosting four interns for a period of two years. The programme was pioneered by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF). This programme was implemented to empower young graduates and to help them acquire the necessary skills to become emerging farmers.

The programme places Agriculture graduates who aspire to be involved in Agribusiness in future in farms across South Africa. The programme is also one of the commitments made by CGA - Grower Development Company growers to host young agricultural graduates to get experience in farming. The young farmers are featured in this newsletter as they share their dreams with us. We all have a role to play in building and developing our industry.



*From left:  
Makolobe Olga Lamola,  
Thendo Mashadzha,  
Nyumani Mathebula and  
Mulaudzi Mukondeleli*

### Thendo Mashadzha

Thendo Mashadzha, is a 35 year old female from Limpopo province who completed her BTech in crop production at the Tshwane University of Technology in 2010.

Thendo is one of the beneficiaries of the DAFF internship currently placed with Mariveni Citrus Farm under Limpopo Department of Agriculture (LDARD) for two years. Mariveni citrus farm specializes in citrus and banana production. In both of these fruit types, Thendo mostly focuses on plant maintenance which includes irrigation as well as



weed and pest control. She is also involved in sanitation, scouting and fruits sizing this specific for citrus.

The farm also has a banana pack house and Thendo has learnt how to pack bananas for local as well as international markets. When asked about her career prospects, Thendo said, "In future, I wish to see myself as one of the best female commercial farmers who will be known all over the world for having played a role in changing the economy of South Africa."

## Farming features

### Makolobe Olga Lamola

Makolobe Olga Lamola is a 32-year-old woman with a Diploma in Horticulture from the Tshwane University of Technology. She is currently one of the four interns working at Mariveni Citrus Farm. She is mostly involved in citrus production which includes general maintenance of plants such as irrigation, fertilizing, pest control, scouting, sanitation, fruit sizing and weed control.

Her goal for the future is to become one of the best female farmers not only in Africa, but the world. She wants to create employment opportunities for unemployed youths in South Africa, to help

emerging farmers connect and have access to international markets.

When asked what farming meant to her, Makolobe said, "I have so much passion for Agriculture. As farmers say, no farmers no food. The future of this country looks bright if young women like me are given an opportunity to make a difference in farming."



### Nyumani Mathebula

Nyumani Mathebula, a 27-year-old female from Limpopo in Tzaneen (Nkowankowa) with a Btech in Crop Production from Tshwane University of Technology. Nyumani is currently enrolled at Mariveni Farmers Co-op under the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Nyumani is mostly involved in citrus production which includes general maintenance of plants such as irrigation, fertilizing, pest control, scouting, sanitation,

fruit sizing and weed control.

When asked about her future, Nyumani said, "with the skills and experience acquired at Mariveni Farm, my future plan is to run my own citrus farm possibly in my community. This will help to empower the community and reduce unemployment, especially amongst the youth. I would also like to be involved in Agri businesses where I can also help other emerging farmers on how to manage their farms and increase our economy through exports. They say, "farmers aren't made but they are born" and I think I was born for this."



### Mulaudzi Mukondeleli

Mulaudzi Mukondeleli is a 31-year-old female graduate from Tsianda village in Limpopo Venda. Mulaudzi completed her National Diploma in Horticulture.

At Mariveni Farm her daily duties include citrus production which includes general maintenance of plants such as irrigation, fertilizing, pest control, scouting, sanitation, fruit sizing and weed control.

When asked about her future, "Mulaudzi said, "I want to see myself owning a farm to contribute to reducing the unemployment rate in South Africa. One day, I will be the number one supplier of quality citrus fruits in the world"





## *my Second Generation Citrus* farmer picks up tools from Father

### Mihlali Mgadle

Mihlali Mgadle was born and brought up in King William's Town in the Eastern Cape and one day hopes to take over from his father, Mr Zukile Lawrence Mgadle, a citrus farmer at Ripplemead Citrus farm. The Mgadle family has been farming for more than 25 years and exports to various markets overseas. We would like to thank Unifruitti Packhouse in Sundays River Valley in Eastern Cape for supporting Mihlali.

Below is Mihlali's journey as to how he has become a farmer: I started working from the farm from a very young age. During the school holidays the whole family would go to the farm to help and assist my father in various fieldwork processes (planting, growing, harvesting, scouting) and work in the packhouse, that's where my love for Logistics developed at a very tender age - being curious about where are these oranges going and to who and how do they get their destination. My father has always been passionate about farming, always encouraging me about farming but not forcing me.

In 2018 after my graduation my father advised me to go and learn more on logistics, and that's when he introduced me to Unifruitti S.A. (Pty) Ltd in January 2019 - Dunbrody Citrus Packhouse. The Packhouse is situated in Sundays River Valley in the Eastern Cape which is responsible for 60% of South Africa's citrus production, lemons in particular.

This was the most exciting period of my life as I was going to be involved in the logistics and the Citrus value chain. To kick start my career with this approach was a sign that I would be able to gain more skills and knowledge that I could take back and assist my father in running the family business at our Ripplemead Citrus Farm in Peddie, E Cape.

The citrus value chain is complex and ever changing and requires skills and more learning on an almost daily basis. The Unifruitti Packhouse is one of the most well-organised Packhouses in the country with state-of-the-art machinery with a wide range of areas that one can learn from. Since my arrival at the Unifruitti Packhouse, I have found myself treated as one of the family, warmly welcomed by the area manager Mr Deon Joubert who is in charge of all operations and also some of the staff members and role players who have been in the citrus industry for decades.



A few months after joining Unifruitti to gain more experience and knowledge, the Unifruitti management had the confidence to promote me to Ambient Containers and Special market Controller to oversee different roles in the logistics department, my new roles as follows:

- To oversee the logistical chain and export ambient loads.
- To oversee the ambient loads and containers management.

To me, being given this role and being trusted with it, really encouraged me a lot as it meant I was doing it right.

Part of my work entails preparing loads for export to various countries and markets such as China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Spain and Indonesia. These markets need a focused person as they are very strict with marking requirements. I have to communicate with Unifruitti head office in Somerset West on a daily basis to ensure that pallet stocks that are due for exports are prepared on time and addendums and consignment notes are done correctly for loading according to customer's specification and also in line with PPECB quality standards.

I was also advised during planning for this season that the expected volumes for export coming from Unifruitti Dunbrody farms is estimated at 3,2 million cartons to be exported to about 70 countries. To me, this was huge and gives me more experience to understand the value chain and also what needs to be in place in order to achieve this output. Also, what I have learnt is that teamwork is key in this industry.

What I can say to my fellow youth in agriculture is that it's true that agriculture or farming is not for the faint-hearted and requires patience and hard work that pays off at the end of the day if done correctly. The experience that I will gain over the next few years will be beneficial to my father's farm, especially as now that the Provincial government of the EC department of agriculture have built a state of the art Packhouse for my father and other two Citrus farmers in the area.

I think I will be able to add value when I'm done with my training at Unifruitti and I'm looking forward to learning more - as I have mentioned, every day we learn new things that can enhance and improve the business.

## *From the Desk of Citrus Growers* Association CEO, Justin Chadwick



Congratulations to Wayne Mansfield, who farms citrus at Suid Agter Paarl in the Western Cape for winning the prestigious Agricultural Excellence Award: Commercial. Wayne has been supported by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and CGA Grower Development Company (CGA GDC). CGA Director Vangi Titi and CGA GDC General Manager Lukhanyo Nkombisa were at the ceremony to congratulate Wayne.

As Youth Month (June) drew to a close it is worth looking at the contributions made by the citrus industry (through the work of the Citrus Academy) in the youth development space. Of the 345 delegates who attended the fifteen Citrus Production Short Course, 181 (52%) were under the age of 35. Since 2014, eighteen learners have completed a Citrus Business Management Learnership.

Looking at the bursary fund – the Citrus Academy has disbursed R20 730 967 between 2006 and

2018; benefitting just under 300 students. The Citrus Academy believes in student care – and provides so much more than just funding. Over this period the Citrus Academy provided 67 learnerships, affected 18 graduate placements, found vacation work for 106 students, presented a Ready, Steady, Work program to 42 students and provided 140 students with industry exposure through attending industry events such as conferences and trade shows.



## Young agriculture entrepreneurs recognised at Awards Ceremony

At the #YAFF (Youth in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) award ceremony last week in Port Elizabeth, the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries recognised some of the young top performers in the agriculture and forestry sectors. The importance of the fresh produce industry to the country's economy was underscored by the fact that the winners in the categories for both commercial and smallholder agriculture were fruit and vegetable producers respectively.

The laureate in the excellence in commercial agriculture category was awarded to Wayne Peter Mansfield of Fruitfield Farming in Paarl, Western Cape.



**Dr Mogale Sebope of the Western Cape department of agriculture with Wayne Mansfield and Lukhanyo Nkombisa, general manager of the CGA Grower Development Company**

Wayne's path to becoming a farmer was an unusual one: he started as a fruit buyer, procuring second grade fruit from the many fruit farmers in the area for resale through informal channels. Today he leases land to produce lemons for both the export and the domestic market.



# Opportunities in the citrus industry for young people

## Bursary

The Citrus Academy is a non-profit company that was established by the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa to enable human resource development in the Southern African citrus industry. The Academy is tasked with addressing specific challenges faced by the industry, being low production skills levels, employment equity, scarce and critical skills, black economic empowerment, and the quality of skills delivery.

The Academy provides funding to cover tuition, accommodation, meals, books and stationery, research costs (postgraduate students only), and other expenses related to a students' studies through its bursary fund. Closing date: 30 September.



Are you studying one of the following qualifications:

Plant Production, Crop Production, Plant Pathology, Horticulture, Soil Science, Entomology, Microbiology, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Management, Agricultural Production Management, Agricultural Engineering, Industrial Engineering or Mechanical Engineering.

Province: Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Kwa Zulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape and Western Cape.

## Candidate Requirements:

Bursary Fund students have to maintain a minimum D-average and may not fail any main subject outright.

Undergraduate, certificate and diploma students have to perform a minimum of four weeks vacation work per year.

All students are expected to work in the citrus industry on completion of their studies for a minimum period equal to the period for which they received support.



# Opportunities in the citrus industry for young people

## Citrus Business Administration Short Course

The Citrus Business Administration short course is ideal for anyone involved in the citrus production system who is looking to improve their skills in financial accounting (including budgeting), stock management, human resource management, production management and marketing. The

course is aimed at giving attendants a solid understanding of these aspects, which will help them to perform better in their current positions and open opportunities for career advancement. The course is also a springboard for the Citrus Business Management e-learning programme, which leads to a full qualification.



Ideal for anyone involved in the citrus production system who is looking to improve their skills in financial accounting (including budgeting), stock management, human resource management, production management and marketing.

For more information  
visit [www.citrusacademy.org.za](http://www.citrusacademy.org.za)



## Production Learning Material

The Citrus Academy has developed learning material for core unit standards belonging to the AgriSETA's Plant Production qualifications from NQF level 2 to 5. Unit standards have been grouped in skills areas for easy access. A set of learning material has been developed for each individual unit standard. Each set consists of a learner guide, facilitator guide, and assessment guides of learners and assessors. For more information, visit [www.citrusacademy.org.za](http://www.citrusacademy.org.za).

Pick me!

Pick me! is an online information sharing platform for job seekers and companies seeking employees. Candidates are listed as either Citrus Academy Bursary Fund graduates or job seekers with citrus-related qualifications.

Bursary Fund graduates and/or candidates with citrus-related qualifications can email their CVs and relevant information to Londiwe, our Bursary Fund Admin Assistant, at [pickme@citrusacademy.org.za](mailto:pickme@citrusacademy.org.za)