

*Statement by Justin Chadwick CEO - CGA*

## South Africa sends first lemons to China

It was in 2004 when Minister Didiza was in the same position as she is in now, that the first protocol for the shipment of citrus fruit from South Africa to the Peoples Republic of China was signed. It is fitting therefore that the Honourable Minister is here to witness an improvement in that protocol – this improvement is by ways of a revision in the treatment temperature applied to lemons in transit to this key market. Back in 2004 the Minister invited CGA to accompany her to China – we are delighted that the Minister was able to agree to this invitation to witness this important event herself.



highlighted the importance of an effective public private partnership when it comes to market access matters.

One must not underestimate the amount of time spent by Department Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development officials and technical experts from Citrus Research International (CRI) in bringing a conclusion to this process. This process started in 2015 when the Department and CRI hosted Chinese scientists in June of that year, while the basic groundwork was done by CRI scientists in 2013. This process has



The South African citrus growers invest R150 million annually in research so as to support the work of the Department in their negotiations and deliberations. The positive results that we are witnessing today means that the lemon sector of the citrus industry continues to meet its potential, which alone generates in excess of R9 billion in foreign exchange earnings, and keeps 20 000 workers in gainful employment, uplifting rural communities in the Eastern and Western Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, leading to vibrant rural communities and downstream opportunities.

We are sure that the Chinese consumers will benefit from getting access to this healthy fruit, produced at the highest ethical and food safety standards by growers who treasure their position as responsible environmental stewards.

The CGA would like to thank the Minister and her Department for their unwavering commitment to getting the job done and the protocol revised, to the citrus growers in South Africa for funding the research that underpins the negotiations, and to Citrus Research International for conducting this research.



Overall, the local citrus industry sustains 120 000 jobs and contributes around R30 billion in export revenue each year. With production expected to grow by a further 500 000 tons in the next 3 to 5 years, the CGA looks forward to continue working with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and other key partners to open and expand access in China and other markets, including the US, India, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines and the European Union, and in this way continue contributing towards job creation and inclusive growth in South Africa.

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