

“We are what we repeatedly do; excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.” Aristotle

CGA STRATEGIC PLANNING

This past week has been both the most uplifting and the most concerning of my time at CGA (going on for 23 years now). Let us start with the positive. Uplifting because of the level of discussion that the CGA Board, invited guests and CGA staff had at the two-day strategic planning session. The level of leadership, the ability to put industry issues ahead of personal agendas, the experience in the room and the spirit of team work was inspiring. Uplifting because we came up with plans – for sure there are challenges – but we have a plan. Will the plan work? We believe it will – and we will do our damndest to make it work. We will share it with CGA membership and take on board any tweaks required that address the challenges. The level of input from CGA staff made me proud of our team – they dedicate their time and passion to the industry; they live and breathe citrus and feel the pain and the pleasure of all the ups and downs in our industry.

On to the concerning part – we face some huge hurdles. Yes, we have plans – but often the execution and outcomes of these depend on other stakeholders. We are going to need to increase our own EQ, learn to work better with partners, get better at understanding our own flaws and how others perceive us; and work on getting buy-in to execute the plans.

So what does the plan entail? It is no longer enough for growers and their Association to restrict activities to producing and packing an excellent quality, safe, nutritious and healthy product. If growers do not pay more attention to what happens to their fruit post packhouse, if they do not take some measure of control, over the logistics and consumer experience, the challenges will persist.

The strategic planning exercise came up with 9 projects: 1) To put in place the enabling environment that will allow the industry to export, at reasonable returns, the long-term prediction of 260 million cartons of citrus in ten years’ time, which will boost job creation, rural development and foreign exchange earnings. This project will also explore the local market and processing sector as they are essential elements in grower sustainability and export success. 2) Ports – while a lot of work has been done on improving port efficiency, current port operations will not handle this expansion. CGA will work with DPE, Transnet and other stakeholders in working towards world class ports in South Africa. 3) Shipping – freight rates, equipment availability and scheduling have since 2021 become the most devastating element in the supply chain. Unfortunately, shipping lines have destroyed many businesses in South Africa (and from what I hear around the world). Many more citrus businesses will fail in 2023 if this is not addressed. 4) Road and Rail – the citrus industry requires fruit to be transported great distances from packhouse to port. The present road infrastructure is not coping with volumes and rail is not alleviating the problem. To move the expanded volumes, there needs to be considerable investment in this infrastructure. 5) Cold Stores – with the possibility of increased EU measures, the industry needs to assess capacity and capabilities of cold store infrastructure. 6) Stakeholder relations – in particular government. Industry success is dependent on an agile, enthusiastic, energized, competent and capacitated government, specifically in those divisions that deal with industry issues. We have to act in unison, be a strong team in enabling the growth of the industry. We have the same objectives – we can make it happen. 7) Information and intelligence – there are a myriad of data sets in the industry that, if mined and analysed correctly, can assist citrus industry stakeholders to make informed decisions that benefit all in the value chain. 8) Communication – we need to find the magic formula for communicating with CGA members, stakeholders and the general public. Many tensions are due to misunderstandings and/or perceptions. Efficient, proactive communication can alleviate this pain and foster a united approach to challenges and opportunities. 9) Commercialisation of CGA Group activities – through the investment in RBX. The CGA has entered the commercial arena; and this needs to be managed and structured in such a way that it is done in line with grower mandates and ensures benefits to the members.

PACKED AND SHIPPED

End of Week 42 Million 15 Kg Cartons	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original Estimate	Latest Prediction	Final Packed
SOURCE: PPECB/AGRIHUB	2020	2021	2022	2021	2022	2022	2022	2021
Grapefruit PP (17kg)		2.7 m	2.6 m	2.3 m	2.0 m			
Grapefruit Class1&2 (17kg)		12.8 m	12.2 m	12.8 m	11.2 m			
Grapefruit	16.0 m	17.5 m	16.7 m	17.2 m	15.0 m	16.8 m	16.8 m	17.5 m
Mandarins	23.7 m	30.9 m	31.8 m	29.3 m	31.8 m	34.5 m	32.3 m	30.9 m
Lemons	28.4 m	31.0 m	34.7 m	29.4 m	34.1 m	32.3 m	34.8 m	31.0 m
Navels	26.0 m	27.2 m	27.8 m	27.2 m	27.4 m	28.7 m	27.9 m	27.2 m
Valencia	48.9 m	54.8 m	53.6 m	52.3 m	50.9 m	58.2 m	53.8 m	55.0 m
Total	143.0 m	161.4 m	164.6 m	155.4 m	159.2 m	170.5 m	165.6 m	161.6 m