

"If you owe your bank a hundred pounds, you have a problem. But if you owe a million, it has" John Maynard Keynes

KAT RIVER CITRUS COMPANY TURNS 100

On 9 December 1922 the Kat River Citrus Cooperative was registered - to celebrate this amazing milestone Katco (as it is known) invited the CGA Board, staff and 300 guests to celebrate this achievement with them at an event in the packhouse. For any business to survive for 100 years is a great achievement – but to thrive and grow over that period in a difficult environment is truly remarkable. The CGA would like to congratulate the Katco Board for leading this organisation – Jock Danckwerts (Chairman since 1998), Jannie de Villiers, Ernest de Villiers, Barry Mildenhall, Brian Mildenhall, Glenam Knott, Peter van Coller, Richard Danckwerts, Freek Dreyer and David de la Harpe provide the strategic guidance needed to position Katco for the next 100 years. As can be seen by the Board composition, one of the strengths of Katco and the East Cape Midlands region is the family values and the sense of community. The celebration event was excellently organised with all of the Katco family pitching in - this sense of family permeates throughout the organisation and is a strength that leads to better performance. At the event a slide show flighted the past Board members – with many descendants of the present Board serving over the past 100 years. As Chairman for 25 years, Jock has been a driving force in Katco's success – he also happens to have served on the CGA Board for over 21 years (the second longest serving Director on CGA after another Katco descendent George Hall on 22 years).

Katco's success is also due to the excellent quality fruit produced in the Kat River valley – with Jock commenting that the fruit sells itself (which makes the marketing budget wasteful expenditure!!). Coupled to that is the Katco management and staff's attention to detail and service excellence that keeps buyers coming back for more.

With the Katco celebrations, and earlier in the week celebrations to mark the spilling of the Kouga dam – it is interesting to note the growth in export volumes from these two regions. Katco has grown from less than 100 000 cartons in 2012 to over 2,2 million cartons in 2023; while Patensie grew from 2 million cartons in 2012 to over 13 million cartons. Both regions experienced significant growth between 2016 and 2017. With many young orchards both regions will continue to grow, and with a reliable water supply, Patensie should see some dramatic numbers in the future.

