***FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (42/19)***

**(Follow me on Twitter justchad\_cga)**

*Justin Chadwick 18 October 2019*

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| ***“If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I’d spend six sharpening my axe”– Abraham Lincoln*** |

**EXPERIENCE**

A teacher who had been working for twenty years lamented that he had one year’s experience repeated twenty times. In 1999 Dr Hoppie Nel, Peter Nicholson and Marc Solomon interviewed me for the post of CGA CEO – and I started in that position on 1 October 1999. For those with elementary mathematics you will work out that that was twenty years ago. Unlike my teacher friend, the citrus industry is so dynamic that every year has thrown up very different challenges and opportunities. Most of the time what I planned to do for the week on a Monday, is completely changed by Tuesday. It is this dynamic nature of the industry that keeps those involved sharp and engaged. After twenty years in the job I am still learning every single day – what a pleasure. I want to thank Messrs Nel, Nicholson and Solomon for putting their trust in me, the Board for their guidance and leadership, and to every citrus grower for allowing me to represent them over this period. Working for, and with, growers is an incredibly enriching experience – there is no other group in the world that is so creative (‘n boer maak ‘n plan), so hospitable, so demanding, so positive and so energetic, that I know of. And interestingly citrus growers the world over have the same attributes. I have been fortunate enough to visit most citrus producing countries around the world – and wherever I have been I have experienced the same attributes that make southern African citrus growers such good people.

**TRANSNET PORT TERMINALS UPDATE (Mitchell Brooke)**

Feedback given at the CMF held in Paarl last week gave a clear indication that Transnet Port Terminals will need to focus on implementing all necessary measures to ensure that the poor productivity is rectified ahead of the 2020 season. The disruptions to shipping programmes this past season resulted in massive losses and has put South Africa, as a reliable supplying country, on the back foot. As CGA, we have been engaging with different government spheres, and in particular with Minister Gordhan – principally to ensure Transnet receives all the financial support it needs to put in place all the staffing and equipment requirements it needs. All procurement has been centralized within National Treasury, which is seen to be delaying normal procurement processes to some extent. We have also been engaging with Transnet Executives on a monthly basis to receive feedback on the implementation of identified requirements for each terminal and more importantly Transnet’s strategic direction (in terms of ports and rail) for the fruit industry. CGA met with Transnet on Thursday 17 October where we received an outline of the fruit industries’ strategic footprint. One left the meeting satisfied that Transnet are putting in place structures and resources to provide more focus on the fruit export industry going forward. There are however two areas of concern at this time ahead of the 2020 season. 1) The level of staffing to be recruited at the various container terminals (E.g. up to 250 people are required at Ngqura), this includes adequate training. The timeline for this process stretches to March 2020, and 2) refurbishment of cranes (particularly at PE) and maintenance of existing landside equipment (there is a backlog in maintenance on straddles and RTG’s at the terminals). There are 35 new straddles on order for Durban and Transnet are pushing for soonest possible delivery, at this time we are not sure if they will be in service for next season. We are happy to hear that Transnet will be transferring a crane from Durban to PE (the PE terminal must remain as a strategic port for the regions citrus exports which compliments Ngqura).

At this time DCT, Ngqura and Cape Town terminals vessel productivity has not changed materially since June and is still on average 40% lower than normal. More on this topic will be provided in the coming months as the 2020 export season commences. Watch Carte Blanche this Sunday for an excerpt on Transnet featuring interviews with the citrus industry.

**PACKED AND SHIPPED**

