

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (06/25)

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Justin Chadwick 7 February 2025



"The difficulty lies not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones" John Maynard Keynes

FRUIT LOGISTICA 2025

I wish all southern African citrus growers could attend Fruit Logistica at least once in their lives – or, second best, I wish I could wear some kind of headset that would project the trade show experience to others as I walk through the maze of exhibitions representing every country in the world and their wonderful fresh produce. The Fruit South Africa stand really represents the fruits of your labour – it is absolutely incredible that the thousands of delegates all depend on you who plant the seed/tree/vine and toil throughout the year to produce a product that delights the consumer. It still irks me that growers get such a small percentage of the final consumer spend, while you put in the greatest effort and take the greatest risk.

The CGA team did excellent work representing the citrus industry. Albert was our presenter and showcased the southern African citrus efforts at both SIZA and SHAFTE events, while Deon was on a panel to discuss logistics. I introduced our new CEO, Boitshoko, to everybody as we walked around the show, and we had some really important meetings with key stakeholders, plotting the way to 260 million cartons by 2032. Jana accompanied Deon to meet with those who will ensure that the EU market is maintained as a significant destination for South African fruit.

The CGA Board was also well represented at the show – indicating the importance that they place on consumer interactions and market understanding.

One of the highlights was the World Citrus Organisation (WCO) meeting, where two critical aspects were discussed: HLB or Asian Greening and water. The spread of HLB around the world is alarming, and the consequences of establishment and spread have been industry-ending in many countries. And currently there are no real solutions at hand, despite the brightest minds and millions of dollars being spent annually to find solutions. Citrus is a thirsty commodity and climate change is impacting on the water supply that is keeping orchards alive and flourishing. The WCO delegates heard from South Africa, Morocco, Spain and others about water challenges and what is being done to establish efficient water use.

Attending the trade show were many of those who will be presenting at the CGA Citrus Summit – it was a wonderful opportunity to chat about the content of their presentations. With the Summit now sold out, I was still getting requests to attend – largely due to the amazing line-up of speakers. The fact that so many of the speakers were at Fruit Logistica confirms their importance and commitment to the global fresh fruit sector.

But most of all, I was blown away by how many people I have met over the past 25 years, how real friendships have been developed and how the CGA has grown in significance. I will miss the event after so many years of attending. I was so happy to introduce Boitshoko to all of these important contacts. The fresh produce family really is made up of an eclectic mix of wonderful people. Thank you for your friendship and for your support.

LOOKING BACK OVER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY

Looking back to the year 2000, none of the following existed: Citrus Research International, CGA Cultivar Company, CGA Grower Development Company, Citrus Academy, River Bioscience, XSIT, Citrus Marketing Forum, Variety Focus Groups, SIZA, World Citrus Organisation, CBS Stakeholders Forum, SA Fruit Journal, this newsletter, eCert, Agrihub, CGA Citrus Summit, CRI Research Symposium, Grower Development Chamber, Vision 260 and Orange Heart.

The CGA Group Boards, staff and stakeholders have developed all of these institutions and activities in the past 25 years to create a structured industry – with structure comes unity, planning and implementation. There is no doubt that a united industry organised in relevant structures with the right people leads to success.

THE CGA GROUP (CRI, RIVER BIOSCIENCE, XSIT, CGA CULTIVAR COMPANY, CGA GROWER DEVELOPMENT COMPANY & CITRUS ACADEMY) ARE SUPPORTED BY AND WORK FOR THE CITRUS GROWERS' OF SOUTHERN AFRICA