

Citrus Sustainability Forum of Southern Africa

28 February 2025

09:00-10:30

DRAFT MINUTES

AC: Albert Coetzee

PB: Paula Bester

CS: Chantelle Smit

1. Welcome

AC welcomed everyone. The meeting was recorded and AI was used, by attending the Forum all participants agreed to the use thereof. A Google Forms link was shared with participants which they could use to ask questions anonymously.

Apologies

Steve Turner, Paul Hardman and Sean Moore

Finalization of the agenda

No additional points were added.

Approval of the minutes of 6 December 2024

Minutes were taken as correct and approved.

2. Update on the local Sectoral Emissions Targets (SETS) - AC

- There is a process underway to develop SETS for seven policy sectors in South Africa, as part of South Africa's declaration of its Nationally Determined Contribution in terms of Green House Gasses (GHG), as part of the Government's obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement. Primary agriculture is one of these sectors, while pack houses will most likely be included under Industry and Trade.
- The reduction targets were published for public comment in April 2024 by Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE).
- Agbiz coordinates engagement with the DFFE, which includes various agricultural organisations, to evaluate current information available, data gaps, research needs and policies and measures to ensure the values proposed are accurate, realistic and not limiting the expansion of industries.
- The aim is to allocate or publish SETS by the end of 2025.

3. Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) – AC

- CBAM is not a country-to-country arrangement, it is an EU Law aimed at EU Businesses and the carbon value.
- Producers who import products into Europe with a carbon value of less than 50 tons per annum, is exempted from the measures related to CBAM.

- Current sectors included are cement, iron, steel, aluminium, fertiliser, electricity and hydrogen.
- CBAM is implemented in two phases.
 - The transitional phase entails only collecting the data and the reporting thereof. This phase is currently running until the end of 2025.
 - The definitive phase starts from 2026. This entails the buying and selling of certificates. Each sector has free allowances, which will be gradually phased out by 2034.
- The possibility of inclusion of agriculture in CBAM in the future is vague.
 - The official indication from Europe shows that agriculture might be included in the CBAM by 2030.
 - A new legislative process on the scope of extension is expected by early 2026.
 - On the contrary, Vicente Hurtado Rao, head of CBAM at DG TAXUD said during a recent EU Chamber of Commerce and Industry meeting in South Africa that agriculture will not be included in the expansion as agricultural products are not currently traded on the Emission Trading Scheme.
- The possible impact on the citrus industry if the CBAM scope were to include agriculture is estimated at R392 million annually, which excludes cooling. When including cooling, the figure amounts to R661 million.

4. The Carbon Journey of South African Citrus Industry – CS

- 34% of all citrus hectares in South Africa currently calculate their carbon footprint.
- Fertiliser, electricity and fuel are on-farm carbon hotspots.
- The industry has shown a declining trend in the amount of electricity being used on farms.
- Electricity and packaging are pack house carbon hotspots.
- The industry has also shown a decrease in the amount of electricity being used in pack houses.
- In our cooling facilities, electricity and refrigerant leakage are the hotspots. Electricity and Refrigerant gasses are factors with high emitting values, contributing significantly to our total emissions.
- Gwynne Foster (GF): Is the information carried over to the new owner if a farm is sold. CS: Yes, the records are carried over.
- CS shared recommendations on how to lower the respective carbon hotspots.
- Please contact chantelle@bluenorth.co.za for participation and queries.

5. Update on the EU Green Deal - AC

- The EU Green Deal has evolved into the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture after widespread farmer protests in Europe in 2024. This led to the creation of the European Board on Agriculture and Food (EBAF).
- EBAF recently published their Vision for Food and Agriculture, a guiding document on their reviewed stance towards Food and Agriculture in Europe.
 - Key focus points:
 - Trade: Protecting EU farmers against unfair trading practices.
 - MRL's and Import Tolerances: Substances banned for use in Europe should not be allowed back into Europe through Import Tolerances. An Impact assessment will start early in 2025 to review these active substances.
 - Fast tracking of the registration of bio-pesticides.

- Compliance: EU Farmers are overburdened by compliance requirements. The Commission will also develop and gradually phase in a voluntary benchmarking system for on-farm sustainability assessments to allow simplification and benchmarking to go hand-in-hand.
- Packaging: Bigger focus on the life cycle and circularity of packaging. Mainly focussed on plastics, with the compostability of surface labels or stickers affecting the export citrus industry in the shorter term. Acceptable standards to which Member States want their food labels to be composted to will become clear during 2025. Certain Member States already indicated home compostability as a requirement. Stronger movement to using more recycled content and to make sure we use the minimum amount of material that is needed to protect the fruit.

6. Other Matters

- **Industry Position Papers**

After the CSF of 6 December 2024 on retailer requirements, Position Papers were finalised to articulate the position of the export citrus industry on Food Safety and Sustainability retailer requirements. These are available on request to use in discussion with retailers and other clients. Please contact AC or PB.

- **Pest Control Operator Regulations**

- Pest Control Regulations were already published in 2011 and require operators who use restricted agricultural remedies to have a Pest Control Operator (PCO) licence.
- Restricted Agricultural Remedies were only defined in 2023.
- After registration holders reviewed their formulations, a indicative list of restricted agricultural remedies was made available in December 2024.
- CGA and Citrus Academy recently directly engaged with the acting Registrar and it became clear that the Registrar's Office is open for suggestions from grower associations on how to make the regulation more feasible.
- Grower associations in South Africa are busy jointly applying for a nation-wide dispensation for a phase-in period of the regulations.
- ZJ: There is a confusing message coming from the plant protection product distributors that growers need to apply for a PCO as soon as possible.
- PB: They are correct, as the PCO Regulations currently stands a grower needs a PCO licence in the field of agriculture and forestry to buy restricted agricultural remedies (not all remedies), which might have repercussions for the agchem distributors as well.
- ZJ: Various farmers do not have a qualification, but experience in handling chemicals for various years. Who will supervise that farmer for 6 months?
- PB: Although some of the academies offering the short course training offer a supervision service, the qualification requirements (particularly the cost involved) are also addressed in the dispensation application for consideration by the Registrar.
- Cutting Edge 410 was shared. Restricted Agricultural Remedies registered for use on citrus or in citrus orchards are indicated there. An updated cutting edge will follow soon.

- **Food Safety Update: Mancozeb and Benomyl**

- Benomyl/Carbendazim: All Benomyl/Carbendazim containing plant protection products will be phased out for local use under Act 36 as previously indicated. The registration holders will not apply for derogation and will also not be importing new stock into the country.
 - EU MRL: Current MRLs of 0.2 ppm for oranges and grapefruit and 0.7 ppm for lemons, limes and mandarins still apply – however, these MRLs have been under revision for quite some time now and the expected changes were previously communicated to the industry.
 - The latest proposal for voting contains the draft MRL of 0.01 ppm for oranges, grapefruit and mandarins, but no MRL proposal for lemons. The new proposal still needs to be voted on, but will likely apply from September/October 2025. It is unclear what the new MRL on lemons will be and when it will apply.
 - Mancozeb: The reclassification of mancozeb is underway under Act 36, and will most likely be approved.
 - EU MRL: The current MRL of 5.0 ppm for all citrus types will most likely not change in 2025. Any potential MRL changes are more likely to occur in Q1 of 2026 at this stage.
 - GF: Are the Smallholder Development Programmes in NAMC and PPECB collaborating with CGA and other industry associations on these PCO matters?
 - AC: To be discussed with Lukhanyo Nkombisa (LN) from the Grower Development Company as he is best positioned to answer that question. AC put GF and LN in communication via email.
 - Ilze Swart (IS) asked if the recording of the Crop Life webinar is available on PCO Registration Guidelines. PB to ask Crop Life to circulate communication again. (To circulate with minutes)
- 7. Date of next meeting: 9 May 2025**
- 8. Close**

Documents to be circulated to CSF members:

- PDF Power Point Presentation
- Latest Crop Life SA communication on the PCO Regulations