

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (5/21)

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Justin Chadwick 12 February 2021



“The test of courage comes when we are in the minority. The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority”

Ralph W Sockman

CYCLONE ELOISE

The 22 January 2021 newsletter warned of the impending cyclone Eloise, and the associated destructive rain and winds. As it happens it seems that the cyclone was good to our industry – although considerable rain was measured (and social media videos and photographs capture incredible sights of dams spilling and rivers running) it seems to have fallen in the right places, and the destructive winds seem to have abated. The Tzaneen dam has lifted from just over 24% to about 60%, Ebenezer dam from 28 to 62%, and the Kwena dam on the Crocodile river lifted from 28% to 57%.

I did a round-up of CGA Directors to get information from the regions. Marius Bester reported that *the Oranjerivier-region was not really impacted in terms of very high rainfall caused by cyclone Eloise in the citrus producing area of the Lower Orange River, although we did record very good rainfall – December 2020 until now = 150 mm. Considering that the average rainfall for the region is about 120 mm per annum, we actually recorded higher rainfall over the first two months of 2021 (125 mm), than the annual rainfall for the area. The biggest concern at this stage in terms of rainfall is the possibility of flooding of the Orange river due to high rainfall occurring in the catchment areas of the Vaal- and Orange rivers, which could cause damage to the farms bordering the river. The rain was not good though for the table grape and raisin producers in the region, who suffer huge financial losses due to the wet conditions during their harvesting season, causing waste and decay to the product.*

Smit LeRoux reports that *Ohrigstad/Burgersfort had between 120mm and 200mm and on the mountains up to 300mm. Our area had no damage caused by Eloise, she did cause our rivers to start flowing for the first time in 4 years, and our dam is at 55%, before Eloise it was 8% full.*

Paul Bristow from Zimbabwe reports *we had between 90 and 110 mm of rain from the cyclone and fortunately with very little wind. Orchards drained quickly and there was no visual damage. The boreholes and pumping points on our river banks were badly flooded by floodwater breaking the normal flow levels and sweeping away piping and cables to the submersible pumps. Something that has happened in the past. We are fixing them and reinstalling, and hopefully we will be back to normal in a few weeks. We are overall very happy with the exceptionally good rains we have received this year. The damage is part of what can happen, and we have to accept it. This is farming!!*

Tommie Landman reports that *Hoedspruit (Lower Blyde) ranges between 250 to 300 mm. Graskop, the centre of the Blyde catchment in the mountains had 680 mm for the month of January. Blyde dam over-flowing 2 January already. During Eloise it was 230 cubes/sec at its peak. Orchards very wet but no real damages. Mango farmers struggles a bit with fruit dropping from the trees due the very wet conditions.*

VARIETY FOCUS GROUPS (VFG)

The Chairmen of both the Grapefruit Focus Group and Lemon Focus Group have called for early meetings to start planning the 2021 season. The Grapefruit Focus group met this week Wednesday (10/2), while the Lemon Focus Group is to meet on Wednesday 24/2. This year's focus groups have formalized membership from the FPEF – thanks to those who have joined from the FPEF.

The first job for the Focus Groups is the crop estimate – and Portia Magwaza (CGA Research Economist) is working with VFG representatives in compiling the first estimate.

These estimates will be considered at the Citrus Marketing Forum (CMF) on 17 March 2021 – the CMF will once again be held as a virtual meeting. Details will be shared soon.

WEEKLY STATISTICS

R3.7 BILLION: this is the estimated amount that citrus growers in South Africa invested in new orchards in 2020. This investment translates into sustained jobs, rural development and foreign exchange earnings.

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